Challenges and interventions of school administrators in the retention of professional teachers in private schools

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ABSTRACT
This phenomenological qualitative study investigated the challenges and intervention strategies in the retention of teachers in private schools in Iligan City, Philippines. The researchers administered interviews to select private school administrators and teachers as the second data source. Three (3) significant themes were identified in strategies for retaining professional teachers: holistic teacher development, well-being and support, and nurturing a positive environment. Three (3) significant themes were derived from challenging experiences in keeping professional teachers: retention and turnover, mindset, and compensation. Four (4) significant themes were derived from the intervention strategies to retain professional teachers in private schools: supportive environment, innovative problem solving, empowerment, and professional and spiritual growth. It is recommended to administer tailored interventions, provide consistent leadership training, foster ongoing professional development, implement continuous strategy evaluation, and empower teachers through leadership skill development and grants for further studies to improve teacher retention in private schools.

Keywords: administrators, challenges, intervention strategies, retention, professional teachers

INTRODUCTION
Every business, school, or government agency requires a leader who can set the direction and vision for the organization. This person should inspire and motivate people to achieve the organization’s goals. The leader fosters a positive work environment, encouraging teamwork and maintaining open communication channels among team members (Anderson, 2017). Similarly, each school needs a principal to manage and supervise teachers to deliver quality education and carry out educational programs, projects, and services. The principal is accountable and responsible for administering the overall school operations. Republic Act No.9155 stipulates that school principals must display excellence in leadership to manage the school’s duties and responsibilities (Morales & Sapin, 2020). Therefore, a school administrator must understand the psychological processes of effectively motivating teachers toward institutional goals (Sumipo et al., 2020). The principals serve as the supreme authority in their respective schools. They are entrusted with significant roles and responsibilities, ensuring the school provides quality education through effective instruction (Morales & Sapin, 2020).

School principals in other countries like China hold a high moral standard of leadership (Walker & Qian, 2017). They have set strict roles and expectations for school principals’ personal and professional behaviors (Ministry of Education, 2013). The principal should connect with the teachers through regular class observation. In this manner, principals can communicate their feedback on the teachers’ performance, which builds collaboration for improvement. School heads are considered the most influential people who can build and develop teacher performances (Villanueva et al., 2021).
The managerial skill of a school head is essential to enhance the performance of teachers as well as to improve instructional supervision practices in schools. It is vital to get the employees to obey fully. Accordingly, the school heads' functions in the day-to-day performance of school activities include encouraging, leading, issuing orders, directing, and leading their subordinates (Villanueva et al., 2021). Therefore, it is expected that if school leaders want to have a successful and productive day with their subordinates, they must consider and inspire them professionally. However, it is sad that in most private institutions, school leaders face problems or challenges of varied issues. One is retaining qualified teachers (Cardino & Naparan, 2024). This concern is felt by most private schools in the Philippines and schools in other parts of the world. This continuing problem mostly happens at the basic education level. Considering a teacher shortage, this problem becomes more critical (Martson, 2014).

Retaining teachers in their positions is crucial for schools' success for various reasons. Financially, it can be challenging for small schools to bear the costs of recruiting, hiring, orienting, and providing initial professional development. The financial burden of replacing a teacher encompasses costs associated with dismissal, recruitment, employment, and instruction (Ching et al., 2023). Private schools typically have limited budgets, so the outlay for supplementary recruitment, work, and education is amplified (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Moreover, several factors, including the working environment, can impact a teacher's decision to remain at a school or leave (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). When teachers believe that the school does not provide the necessary resources to perform effectively in the classroom, they are likelier to quit their jobs (Baraquia, 2022; Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Other factors to consider why teachers leave are insufficient support from school leaders, student discipline issues, limited faculty input and autonomy, and, to a lesser extent, low salaries (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). In addition, teachers leave their schools because of employment at government schools, better job opportunities in other private organizations, greener pastures, and termination of contracts or services (Azabo et al., 2019).

Contrary to salary increases as one of the reasons for teacher retention, Shuls and Flores (2020) posited leaving the salary increases or benefits as a strategy to retain teachers, as mentioned in their paper, due to the often-constrained budgets of schools and the complexity of how schools are funded. Modest salary increases have a tiny effect on teacher retention and that there are less expensive and more influential strategies to improve teacher retention (Zacaraev, 2021). According to Jeffrey (2020), acknowledging that monetary compensation is not the sole motivator that yields favorable outcomes is essential. Non-monetary incentives pertain to anything that fulfills human desires beyond financial gain. Non-monetary incentives that can boost employee satisfaction include job enrichment, collaborative leadership, acknowledgment, commemorative plaques, and trophies.

According to the study conducted by Flores (2020), educators who worked in educational institutions with supportive, informative, and motivating leaders showed a greater inclination towards having a favorable outlook towards teaching. These, in turn, have been established to result in teachers staying in the profession for a more extended time. Supporting new teachers and helping them grow increases the likelihood of retaining good teachers in teaching (Citkowicz et al., 2016). Another influence that can increase teacher retention is the climate linked to a healthy school culture where teachers feel valued and encouraged. Teachers may only sometimes seek greener pastures but always choose a workplace that nurtures them (Sumipo, 2020). On the contrary, a toxic school climate in which educators feel undervalued or ignored might increase the likelihood of staff turnover (Shatri, 2020).

Another factor that motivates teachers to stay in school is the opportunity to develop. Completing postgraduate studies provides teachers with theoretical and practical knowledge, and teachers' understanding of educational theory has a positive effect when applied in practice.
opportunities for growth and advancement is a motivating factor that affects teacher retention in school (Sumipo, 2020). Investing time and effort in organized educational opportunities grounded in thorough research and customized assistance for teachers within the initial five years of their profession is essential for administrators to consider retaining teachers (Reitman & Karge, 2019). Likewise, a competent employer must know how to allure and maintain human resources to ensure employees feel valued (Matimaran & Kumar, 2017).

School administrators should maintain a positive relationship with their staff by treating all employees equally and assigning tasks fairly. They should also interact with both teaching and non-teaching staff to identify any potential conflicts or issues that may arise. As an integral part of the organization, teachers should understand the school’s limitations and avoid actions against its values. Teachers should also exhibit appropriate conduct that fosters comfort and an agreeable work environment while maintaining harmonious relationships with their colleagues to attain job contentment (Barihasion et al., 2023; Malinao & Agustin, 2023).

Most of the studies revealed various concerns about teacher retention problems. Retaining the best and most experienced teachers in private schools can help improve the quality of graduates. There were also varied ways or strategies to implement to prevent teachers from leaving other schools or job opportunities. Hence, more studies need to be conducted on school administrators’ interventions to retain professional teachers in private schools. Anchored on Burn’s transactional and leadership theory that highlights the connection between leaders and followers (Stewart, 2006), the study explored the following research objectives: administrators’ strategies in retaining professional teachers in private schools and the challenges and interventions in retaining professional teachers in private schools. These objectives will help researchers find possible effective intervention strategies and demonstrate an understanding of the different lived experiences of school administrators in retaining teachers. Furthermore, this research will promote the most effective intervention strategies that help administrators provide responsive programs that effectively increase the retention of qualified teachers in private schools.

METHODS

Research Design

The chosen phenomenological approach, specifically the transcendental or psychological perspective proposed by Moustakas (1994), prioritizes representing participant experiences over the researcher’s interpretations. As Moustakas (1994) articulated, phenomenology seeks to derive meanings from appearances, unraveling essences through intuition and reflection on conscious acts of experience, ultimately leading to a nuanced comprehension of ideas, concepts, judgments, and understandings. By adopting a qualitative transcendental phenomenological methodology, the research emphasized capturing firsthand accounts to gain a deeper understanding, aligning with Husserl’s foundational work (Butler et al., 2017).

Research Environment

The researchers conducted the study in eleven (11) private schools in Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Philippines. These private schools are categorized as either sectarian or non-sectarian schools. Sectarian Schools are educational institutions with a religion or Christian Living Subject in their curriculum. They are run by a religious denomination or under diocesan schools. However, there are sectarian schools that are family-owned. Other sectarian schools have the name “Christian” tag with the school’s name. The city is also a place of a known state university in the Philippines. Thus, after earning experience in private
schools, teachers transferred to work in this public university. Other teachers also opted to work in public elementary and high schools after earning qualification and experience from private schools.

**Research Participants**

Using purposive sampling, the researcher selected eleven (11) administrators in private schools in one of the cities in Lanao del Norte, Philippines with at least two (2) years’ experience as an administrator and two teachers with at least two (2) to three (3) years teaching experience in the same institution.

**Research Instrument**

The main instrument in this study were the researchers. They utilized interviews using set of questions aiming to gain insight into the private school administrators’ perspectives on the challenges they face in retaining professional teachers and their intervention strategies for retaining experienced or professional teachers. In the interview, the researchers asked one or more participants to ask questions and record their answers with the respondents’ approval to create written transcripts and get relevant information to understand the phenomena (Creswell, 2012).

**Data Gathering Procedure**

After seeking consent, the researchers set individual interviews to the research participants. The participants were told they could ask questions while in the interview process.

**Data Analysis**

This study used the transcendental phenomenological method in analyzing the research participants’ experiences. Specifically, Moustakas’s (1994) transcendental phenomenology focused less on the researcher’s interpretations and more on describing the participants’ experiences. It began by setting aside the researchers past information to allow the phenomenon under investigation to present itself in its fullness in a given situation. It is followed by horizontalization. The researchers identified and highlighted significant statements in the data and groups these into themes. As themes were developed, the researchers assigned a working definition to each code. The textual description is attached to these themes such that participants’ lived experiences are visible. This description captures the surface-level aspects of the phenomenon as expressed by the participants. The next stage is the structural description. Building on the textual description involves exploring the relationships, connections, and essential features that depth the experience. It goes beyond the surface and explores the “how” and “why” of the experiences, seeking to uncover the fundamental aspects that shape the phenomenon (Flick, 2014). The transcendental reduction entails eidetic reduction, beginning from the point where consciousness is treated as the field for seeing, for an intuitive experience. If the transcendental can be looked at, seen, and described, then this intuiting must grasp the transcendental fact in essence (Marinay, 2020). The final stage is the composite textual-structural description where the researchers involved synthesizing the textual and structural descriptions into a comprehensive and universal representation.

**Ethical Considerations in Research**

The researchers hold the responsibility of safeguarding research participants against potential risks or harm linked to their involvement in the study. They adhered to ethical management practices while conducting research that aligns with established standards in the field of education. One of the study’s objectives is to ensure that all participants adhere to widely accepted norms for ethical, professional, and scientific conduct throughout the research’s design, implementation, dissemination, and reporting phases.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies for Retaining Professional Teachers in Private

The administrators revealed strategies for retaining professional teachers in private schools through providing holistic teacher development, promoting well-being and support, and nurturing a positive environment.

Providing Holistic Teacher Development. This theme refers to the established harmonious working environment, spiritual growth, job satisfaction, teacher empowerment, well-being support, work-life balance, personal enrichment, and building a solid connection with the school. The administrators’ encouragement mirrors their support for the growth of the teachers that develop them holistically. This development focuses on all aspects of the individual. This strategy entices teachers to remain in private schools. The participants narrated their thoughts on this theme.

One thing is their professional growth. We are taking good care of their professional growth. We send them to seminars and trainings. We also encourage them to take further study like masteral. -P2

I offered professional development for my teachers, like taking a master’s degree, but nobody accepted the offer. There are those taking master’s degrees on their own because they do not like to be tied up or give back a return service. -P4

We usually have yearly retreats, holding them somewhere while taking time to stroll and enjoy. We also have what we call monthly recollections. Because we are molding our teachers not only mentally but also spiritually. That is our guide. I, myself, what first attracted me here is our monthly recollection and a yearly retreat. We also have that BEC, Basic Ecclesial Community. -P9

We also assist those who are taking masteral and doctoral studies. It is like a 75% subsidy from the Dio. This is for the administrators to prepare them for the future leadership role. -P10

The school administrators underscored an administration that prioritized the professional development of its teachers. This showed education was valued, and institutions invest resources in the continuous growth and improvement of educators. It reflected the school's commitment to continuous learning. The in-service training conducted by the school administrator before the start of classes recognized the importance of preparing educators adequately for their roles. The administrator’s techniques in holding this activity helped to equip the teachers with skills and pedagogy to effectively transmit quality learning among the students. The preparation could initiate more creative strategies appropriate to their specialization. The early in-service training could help ease out the burden of teacher’s preparations of their teaching resources. Holistic teacher development prioritizes teachers’ personal and emotional growth (Aung, 2020). It aims to provide a learning environment that fosters the entire person, acknowledging the interconnection of intellectual, emotional, and social components of human experience.

The administration’s supportive approach toward teacher development reflected transformational leadership that involved behavioral strategies aimed at inspiring individual effort by tapping into employees’ higher-order needs. Through this approach, leaders aim to motivate employees to go beyond their self-interest and align their actions with organizational goals. Aligning to transformational leadership is the cultivation of a shared understanding of organizational objectives and how they contribute to desirable outcomes. In essence, transformational leadership encompasses a range of behaviors geared towards developing, sharing, and sustaining a vision that encourages employees to transcend their interests in pursuit of collective organizational success (Nielsen et al., 2019).
Promoting well-being and giving Support. Teachers’ well-being refers to providing teachers with an appropriate workload, rewarding their efforts, promoting professional development, and fostering a healthy work environment. Administrators have shared insights on well-being and support as stated below:

We will try to know the reason for the transfer; for example, 2 to 3 years ago, a teacher planned to transfer to a sister institution somewhere in Davao. We know the reason: it is about housing near the campus because of her little kids. Because of that, we offer one of the buildings in the school to house her and her child. So, the teacher did not continue to transfer because we were able to provide the need. -P6

Every time they have problems, with open arms we give our support to them. We encourage them to open up because with open arms we are willing to help. -P5

“Well, during the Pandemic especially, we see to it to check on the teachers’ mental condition. Even up to the present we continue the same thing because we are not only after of their performance in school but also on their mental and physical health.” -P10

The narrative underscores the vital interplay between organizational management and societal norms, emphasizing the imperative of fostering supportive workplace cultures. By prioritizing employee retention, well-being, and satisfaction, organizations not only bolster productivity and resilience but also reflect broader societal values of empathy, compassion, and equity. Ultimately, the narrative points towards a symbiotic relationship between organizational practices and societal constructs, wherein the cultivation of supportive workplaces aligns with broader societal aspirations for human flourishing and well-being. The scenario supports the idea that meeting fundamental requirements and providing a supportive work atmosphere may boost job satisfaction and retention (Aung, 2020). The statement that indicates that teachers in good mental and physical condition are inclined to possess higher self-confidence and job satisfaction.

The statement embodies key principles of transformational leadership theory, emphasizing a holistic approach to employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. By prioritizing employee retention, satisfaction, and mental health support, the school administration fosters a culture of empathy, compassion, and collaboration. Open communication channels facilitate transparency and collective problem-solving, while flexible income opportunities underscore an understanding of individual needs. Ultimately, the narrative aligns with the transformational leadership theory’s focus on inspiring and motivating employees to transcend their self-interests, fostering a supportive environment conducive to personal growth, organizational success, and societal well-being (Sharifirad, 2013b).

Nurturing a Positive Environment. This theme refers to creating a workplace setting that promotes well-being, stimulates healthy relationships, appreciates teachers’ accomplishments, and nurtures academic achievement. The participants stated:

“A good relationship with them, monetary for my teachers, is just secondary because we can hold them as long as the school has a very good relationship with each other.”-P1

“One factor that motivated them to stay here is the working environment. So, we see to it that we also have a prayer meeting and team building every month, which counts a lot. It’s not only for the teacher’s professional development but we also develop them spiritually”-P3

When you talk to them as much as possible in a friendly way. Because the way you deliver as a leader counts a lot. If you instill fear in your teacher, that will be a deterrent factor that eventually they will leave even if you have provided them with training. It will not matter to them if you have that kind of attitude. Your vibe as a leader cascades to
your employees. However, if you are a happy and energetic leader, indeed, they would love to work. -P3

The emphasis on professional and spiritual development, particularly in the context of being a Catholic school, suggests that the school prioritized a holistic approach to nurturing its staff. The mention of leadership development and spiritual bonding during recollection and prayer time indicated a commitment to fostering academic and professional growth and personal and spiritual well-being. Research indicated that opportunities for continuous professional development positively impact teacher satisfaction and commitment (Hirsch, 2014; Kouni et al., 2018). Schools investing in teacher growth provide a more fulfilled and engaged teaching staff. This narrative provided an inkling to administrators that spiritual activity augment positive school culture.

The enticing positivity mentioned in the statement is an evident characteristic of transformational leadership, where the leader’s energy uplifts and motivates the team, contributing to a positive work atmosphere. The mention of fear-based leadership aligns with transactional leadership, where leaders use a more authoritarian or punitive approach. The negative impact on trust, job satisfaction, and the potential for teachers to leave despite training reflects the drawbacks associated with transactional leadership, especially when fear is a dominant factor (Hoxha, 2019).

Administrators’ Challenges in Keeping Professional Teachers

Keeping highly qualified teachers may take much work and challenge among administrators and all others. The administrators’ challenging experiences in keeping professional teachers in private schools included teacher retention and turnover, a mindset not open for development, and low compensation and benefits.

Teacher Retention and Turnover. This theme refers to understanding why teachers stay in their jobs (retention) or leave (turnover) in schools. It involves looking at whether teachers are happy, if the work environment is good if they get chances to learn more, and if the school supports them well. It is often influenced by compensation, job satisfaction, and workplace culture. The participants stated:

I think it was when our math teacher left in the middle of the school year in favor of public school. More so, her uncle was working at the division office. That time, I was so stressed about who could replace her. -P4

“The greatest challenge is the opportunity. The external opportunities. How can we compete in terms of salary, especially since we have international schools where the hiring rate is so attractive.”-P3

If you are an administrator in a private school, you have to accept that the teachers will always look for greener pastures for their growth. You cannot make them stay. -P7

The narratives highlighted broader implications for the educational system. The frequent departure of teachers in the middle of the school year posed challenges for administrators and impacts students’ learning experiences. School teacher turnover leads to staffing issues and affects student achievement and the overall school environment (Cruz, 2016). This turnover could disrupt the continuity of teaching and learning, requiring time and effort to find suitable replacements. Private schools also often faced challenges in competing with larger institutions, particularly in terms of offering competitive salaries to attract and retain qualified teachers. This financial competition could limit the resources available for staff salaries and other essential expenses. According to Sumipo (2020), Employee compensation needed to be appealing, reasonable, and competitive. Administrators must navigate individual circumstances that may lead teachers to leave, such as family reasons or career advancement opportunities. Balancing the needs of staff members with the operational requirements of the school could be complex and challenging. The issue of employee compensation emerged as a significant
concern, particularly for smaller private schools that may struggle to offer competitive salaries compared to larger institutions.

The findings demonstrate a clear alignment with the principles of transformational leadership theory. Transformational leaders possess a clear idea of where they want to go and why they want to go there. They communicate this vision to their teachers in a way that inspires them and motivates them. When teachers feel that they are part of something important and meaningful, they feel happier and are less likely to leave their jobs. It feels like working with a friendly group of people, making everyone more inclined to stay.

Mindset Not Open for Development. It refers to some teachers with a mindset or way of thinking resistant to change or improvement. Teachers are not open to trying new things, learning new methods, or developing their skills further. They prefer sticking to the way they have always done things. They are not very enthusiastic about embracing new ideas or opportunities for growth. It is like having a mindset that is not very flexible or open to development. The administrators stated

“The challenges we encountered were having these teachers in this generation. No understanding of their generation compared to us. Because this generation they are more what is this the way they handle things. We found out that they cannot just multi-task. Especially if you are a teacher, you must have that skill or ability to handle responsibilities aside from teaching, but this generation cannot easily do that that.” - P2

Sometimes it is the attitude of the teacher that contributes to the challenge. There are times they feel bad when they are reminded of some things. Particularly, this problem happens to those teachers who have been in the service for quite a time. I even told them outside our work you can call me your friend, your aunt or even your Grandmother. -P9

According to Malinao and Agustin (2022), administrators or managers play a crucial role in maintaining a positive and engaging culture within the workplace or school. They created a culture of enthusiasm, passion, and efficiency among employees, enabling them to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. Leaders were also responsible for motivating and supporting others to work with zeal, ultimately contributing to accomplishing company goals and objectives. A leader influenced significantly impacts employee commitment, and practices implemented by leaders can enhance the likelihood of sustained commitment, directly influencing employee turnover.

Moreover, Employee loyalty could depend on the leadership style of the management or the group. Though they held leadership skills primarily to communicate with their subordinates and listen to them when needed, such poses a significant challenge that must be addressed. One of the sources of motivation for employees to stay with employers, be dedicated to their responsibilities, and protect and preserve their organizational concentration is management’s leadership style. The victory of any company depends upon the quality of its employees and their loyalty in the long run. Transformational leaders exemplify ethical behavior, which earns them a crucial level of respect and trust due to their moral conduct. Hence, texts reflect the transformative influence of leaders who inspire growth, foster supportive environments, and uphold ethical standards, reflecting the principles of transformational leadership theory (Budur & Poturak, 2021).

Low Compensation and Benefits. It means that employees receive less pay and fewer additional perks or rewards from their employer. It indicates that the salary and extra benefits provided to workers are not competitive or not as generous as in another school.

I think we observe the teachers’ desire for greener pastures, we cannot do anything to prevent them from that aspect. However, when it comes to other concerns, I think we can have a resolution to them.]-P3,
“Our school is a small school. Teachers’ salary is one of the many things I want to improve and fight to the administration to help also the teachers in terms of their compensation.” -P8

Addressing teacher salary challenges requires a multifaceted approach, considering economic realities, transparency, and proactive efforts to secure adequate compensation and support from school administrations. Hence, teachers who aim for better opportunities may still choose to leave. This decision is often driven by a desire for improved working conditions, including a more supportive environment, better facilities, or a school culture that aligns with their professional goals. Organizations should focus on implementing effective strategies that prioritized these factors in order to boost employee performance and ultimately achieve organizational success (Sudiardhita et al. 2018).

The text aligns well with the principles of transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of leaders inspiring and motivating their followers to achieve higher performance and organizational success. Transformational leaders are known for articulating a compelling vision for the future and inspiring their followers to work towards it.

**Intervention Strategies to Retain Professional Teachers in Private Schools**

The high turnover makes it difficult for schools to remain stable, wastes resources, and impedes long-term development. In line with this concern, administrators shared intervention strategies to retain professional teachers in private schools, which include providing a supportive environment, innovative problem-solving, empowering the teachers, and promoting professional and spiritual growth.

**Providing a Supportive Environment.** It means ensuring everyone feels cared for, encouraged, and able to do their best. It is like creating a warm, friendly atmosphere where teachers feel comfortable and motivated to work or learn. The participants stated:

“It is best that while they are still here with us, we provide them with proper training in preparation for a better challenge outside our school. It is one of the many things that they look up to. We help them. We do not keep that kind of motivating factor from them but rather empower them to be prepared for another journey because we have accepted that we are just a training ground.” -P3

The scholarship we provide. For those teachers who have been with us for quite some time, we provide scholarships to their children from kindergarten to Grade 6. They only pay for books. This form of privilege is one factor that retains the teachers. -P4

I think one way to retain teachers is to offer them educational growth. Empowering them to lead in the different activities in school provides them the confidence and the recognition of their potential. -P10

The school administration places high value on the professional and personal development of its teachers. They provide proper training to prepare teachers for future challenges, even outside the school. Teachers appreciate this empowering approach as a motivating factor and acknowledge the school as a training ground for their journey. In addition to this, the school implements a scholarship grant for teachers who have been with them for an extended period. According to Comighud and Arevalo (2021), it is crucial to recognize that a teacher’s motivation increases when their basic needs, such as food, water, and shelter, are met. Additionally, motivation can rise when teachers feel a sense of usefulness and satisfaction. Determinants affecting teacher motivation encompass factors like teacher status, class size, workload, engagement in professional development, and salary.

Transformational leadership behaviors notably impact teacher job satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness. School leaders who exhibit transformational leadership traits can empower teachers, fostering positive attitudes and behaviors that enhance school effectiveness. Further, empowered school...
leaders offered teachers support, resources, and autonomy to improve their instructional methods. Collaborative decision-making and shared leadership practices contribute to teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and school mission commitment (INNOTECH, 2020). A healthy environment is also essential for teachers to feel they belong to the group. This kind of culture can better be implemented by no other than the transformational leadership of administrators, which sets new directions for an organization's growth and profitability by fostering attachment, passion, and loyalty among teachers and administrators.

**Innovative Problem-Solving.** This theme means giving the teachers the support, resources, and freedom to make decisions and sharing leadership responsibilities that keep them motivated and happy with their jobs. Hence, the theme of innovative problem-solving has revealed the above statements. The following are the support statements:

I usually talk to them and asked them of their plans and lay down the pros and cons of their possible decisions. I let them contemplate or discern their plans. I find this very effective because some teachers would come to me and say, “Ma’am, I have decided to stay”. - P9

I think one way to retain them is to offer them educational grant. Allow them also to explore and lead in school activities to empower. Doing this can make them feel that their potential is being recognize by the administration. This way can motivate them more and can be reason for them to stay. - P10

The responses from administrators indicated that combining personal connections, tangible support, and recognition of teachers' contributions could significantly impact their decisions to remain in a school. Moreover, the administrators' responses and practices revealed the type of leadership they implement in their respective schools. Anderson (2017) explains that transformational leadership principles influence employees' perspectives and behaviors. This leadership style consistently supports teachers, promotes reflective practices, and demonstrates politeness and strong motivation. Teachers are positively impacted when this leadership style includes individualized consideration and fosters a collaborative and trusting relationship between teachers and principals. Transformational leadership is associated with heightened workplace motivation that aligns with a teacher's desire for acknowledgment, accomplishment, responsibility, autonomy, and self-actualization. It is achieved by establishing a framework of positive interpersonal connections and support among all school stakeholders, including the relationship between the principal and teachers and among the teachers themselves (Kouni et al., 2018).

**Empowering the Teachers.** It is about giving them the tools, support, encouragement, and opportunities for growth to be the best educators they can be. The participants said:

“Empowering them to lead in the different activities in school provides them the confidence and the recognition of their potential to let them feel that they belong and trusted by the administration.” - P10

“We train also our teachers leadership skill like for example assigning them a position aside from being a teacher example assigning her as the sports coordinator, school paper adviser, as a class adviser”. - P8

The sharing provided appears to align best with the transformative theory, which focused on empowering individuals to bring about change and challenge existing systems or structures. In this case, the administrators were depicted as actively empowering teachers through various means such as training, assigning additional responsibilities, and creating a supportive environment. These actions aimed to transform the traditional teacher-administrator relationship by recognizing teachers' potential for leadership roles and promoting their autonomy and professional development. The emphasis on trust,
value, and recognition also reflects a transformative approach that seeks to cultivate a culture of respect and appreciation within the educational institution, aligning with broader societal values. Overall, the narrative highlights a shift towards empowering teachers to improve their job satisfaction, effectiveness, and the quality of education they provide.

According to Lee and Nie (2014) empowerment refers to concrete improvements in one’s professional abilities, greater independence, and involvement in decision-making processes. Similarly, Balyer et al. (2017) emphasizes that empowerment entails actively participating in setting educational goals and implementing them within the education realm.

Promoting Professional and Spiritual Growth. The term "professional growth" refers to the continuous improvement of skills, knowledge, and abilities in a teacher's profession to deliver relevant and high-quality education to academic students. On the other hand, "spiritual growth" involves understanding your beliefs and your connection to something beyond yourself. This may be achieved by participating in activities that develop an awareness of meaning and purpose, such as bible study, sharing, or other religious activities like retreats. Administrators have shared their professional and spiritual growth insights as an intervention strategy to retain teachers.

Teachers who excel are provided with certificate of recognition. With that they are empowered to do their best. They are part of the school’s achievement. -P5

We send all teachers to seminars except if the registration is quite high. We allow first the senior teachers. We request them to re-echo the learnings they got to those teachers who are not able to join.] -P6

We see to it that every month we conduct trainings in terms of classroom management, teaching strategies and spiritual development, these counts a lot. -P3

The narratives explored the relationship between professional and spiritual growth in private schools, from both a structural and societal perspective. They presented various viewpoints and experiences of teachers within the private school community, highlighting the positive impact of these elements on teacher retention. The text examines strategies used by administrators to promote professional development, including seminars, master's degrees, and training sessions. It also emphasizes the importance of school retreats, recollections, and regular bible sharing sessions in nurturing spiritual growth and building strong relationships among teachers and administrators.

It has been found that embracing spirituality at work can lead to improved performance, both for individuals and organizations. People who have spirituality in their workplace tend to be happier, more satisfied, engaged, and committed (Enmacino et al., 2023). For teachers, spirituality can help them handle stress and avoid burnout. Moreover, workplace spirituality can lead to a better balance between work and personal life. In the Indian education system, adopting spiritual practices at work can create better work environments, making it easier to attract, keep, and develop talented individuals by providing them with meaningful work, a purposeful life, and a healthy workplace. To mitigate the difficulties of keeping professional teachers on staff, administrators have commonly used intervention strategies. When educators feel supported, they are more likely to pursue their professional and spiritual development, reducing the likelihood of teacher turnover. Positive working relationships, especially with school officials, can also help alleviate issues with low pay rates (Kumar, 2018).

Implication of the Study

Teacher retention in private schools has been a challenge for private school administrators. They have been doing their best to encourage teachers to continue working with them by taking care of their professional development. They also govern well to provide the teachers with a positive working
environment that would encourage teacher retention (Mugizi et al., 2019). The teachers enjoyed it more when their administrators showed transformational leadership that motivated them to stay.

Teachers usually left the private schools for employment in public schools for greener pastures. Most of the time, the salary in the private school is lower than that of the public school. Thus, private schools tried to find ways to promote teacher retention. One of the strategies is providing a supportive environment. This strategy relates to motivational factors that promote teacher retention (Sumipo, 2020). Administrators’ holistic efforts to address teacher retention challenges, such as providing a good working environment, empowering teachers, and caring for their spiritual and professional growth, help them stay in private schools longer (Mondejar & Asio, 2022). Aside from the effort to increase the salary in private schools, administrators can always promote a positive school culture for the teachers (Shrestha, 2022). The study is only limited to the experiences and perspectives of administrators in their efforts to retain qualified teachers in private schools. The study does not include the perspective of the teachers who left the private schools to search for other opportunities. Thus, future research can delve into the experiences of those teachers who left private schools and worked in public schools.

CONCLUSION

Administrators face numerous challenges as they strive to inspire teachers, staff, students, and all stakeholders to sustain their commitment. However, administrators have found that small institutions with lower salaries have been able to retain teachers up to retirement age, indicating that administrators have nurtured healthy relationships in their respective schools. This supportive environment from school administrators helps to retain teachers. School leaders encouraged and supported teachers taking leadership roles by allowing them to take autonomy in specific tasks like programs, empowering them, and providing them with professional growth. The giving of rewards for good performance, such as employee benefits, incentives, and recognition of achievements, clearly manifests the said leadership style. Therefore, creating a supportive and motivating work environment is crucial in retaining teachers in private schools.

The study focuses solely on the perspectives of administrators and their efforts to retain qualified teachers in private schools. It does not include the experiences of teachers who chose to leave private schools and seek opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, future research could explore the experiences of those teachers who left private schools and joined public schools.

REFERENCES


