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PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS' RETENTION RATE: A BASIS FOR DEVELOPING A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY PLAN

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the retention level of teacher stayers among selected private schools in Santiago City, Philippines in order to determine its implications to existing educational policies. A quantitative descriptive design was employed by collecting data from 31 teacher stayers through a structured questionnaire that includes PERMA Profiler and Teacher Retention Survey. Results revealed that teacher stayers are generally in a “normal functioning” level of well-being ($M=3.88$). This indicates that they are adequately functioning but not flourishing. Relationship domain (4.13) ranked highest among PERMA domains while Engagement ($M=3.59$) was ranked the lowest. Negative Emotions ($M=3.01$) were rated at a sub-optimal level because of the presence of anxiety. The study shows interpersonal support as the strongest non-financial factor for teacher retention. However, gaps in engagement, achievement, and emotional well-being need to be addressed. Also, key areas in non-financial factors remain limited in terms of encouragement to pursue graduate studies, confidence to communicate to administrators, work-life balance practices, and stress management programs. Teacher stayers receive constructive feedback ($M=3.29$) and support from the school community ($M=3.10$) but need immediate recognition and enough opportunities to showcase best practices.

Keywords: *Teacher Retention, PERMA Profiler, Work-life Balance, Stress Management*

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the key persons in every education system. Shaping learners holistically through character, faith, service, and excellence. Their role becomes more complicated in a volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous, and disruptive (VUCAD) world. This makes them important actors in implementing quality education.

Constant evaluation of their retention levels is vital in maintaining and innovating quality education. Economic growth, as an extrinsic motivation, poses many challenges among private school administrators. Ever since the Philippine government provided competitive salaries and boost benefits for public school teachers, private schools became training grounds for neophyte teachers. This led to a continuous recruit-train-leave cycle.

As stated in United Nations 17 sustainable development goals, under Sustainable Development Goal 4, retaining skilled and motivated teachers is critical to achieving quality education. Evaluating teacher retention problems contributes to having a stable and quality learning environment for learners. Also, maintaining decent working conditions and productive employment, as stated in Sustainable Development Goal 8, directly aligns with the factors influencing teacher retention. By addressing working conditions among private school teachers, this study underscores the need for sustainable policies that provide dignified work environments for private school educators.

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors of teacher retention among private schools by investigating the multiple dimensions of a private teacher's satisfaction and experiences. It will assess job satisfaction through the lens of Seligman's PERMA Theory focusing on positive emotion, engagement, relationships, and achievement. Also, there is a need to determine their evaluation to the existing non-financial strategies and programs of their respective schools in order. By analyzing their lived experiences, this study seeks to determine the factors that motivated them to stay.

Finally, based on the results of this study, the researcher proposes evidence-based educational policy recommendations aimed at improving teacher retention in private schools in Santiago City. Anchored on an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing private school teachers' intention to stay, the study seeks to inform school-level and institutional policies related to teacher support systems, professional development, workload management, and retention strategies. By translating empirical findings into policy directions, the study contributes to the development of a more supportive, sustainable, and teacher-centered working environment that may help reduce turnover rates in private schools.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to analyze and investigate teacher retention strategies among four private schools in the City of Santiago through an emic and etic view of accounts. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the respondent in terms of:
 - 1.1 Years of Service;
 - 1.2 Employment Status;
 - 1.3 Monthly Income; and
 - 1.4 Non-teaching Loads (administrative tasks and advisorship)?
2. What is the teacher's job satisfaction level based on Seligman's PERMA theory:



- 2.1. Positive emotion;
- 2.2. Engagement;
- 2.3. Relationships;
- 2.4. Meaning; and
- 2.5. Achievement?
3. What is the retention level of the selected teacher stayers based on the non-financial teacher retention program/s as to the following:
 - 3.1. Professional Development Opportunities;
 - 3.2. Recognition and Appreciation;
 - 3.3. Work Environment and Culture; and
 - 3.4. Work-life Balance?
4. Which teacher retention and job satisfaction factors in private schools may be used as bases to formulate Professional Learning Community Plan?

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of quantitative research design through a descriptive method to look into the retention rate of teacher stayers among private schools in Santiago City and the factors influencing their decision to stay in a private school. According to Creswell (2013), quantitative research involves structured hypothesis testing and analyzing statistical data. Also, a descriptive research method is used to describe characteristics of teacher stayers based on their teacher retention attitude and teacher's well-being through PERMA survey. This highlights factors influencing teacher retention and well-being.

The Instrument of the Study

The data gathering tool that is used is adapted from Dr. Martin E.P. Seligman's PERMAH Profiler which measures 5 domains of well-being; positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. An average of 0.81 Cronbach's Alpha in PERMA Profiler demonstrates high internal consistency (Çelik, 2025). As well as satisfactory internal consistency (Positive emotions $\alpha = 0.88$; Engagement $\alpha = 0.72$; Relationships $\alpha = 0.82$; Meaning $\alpha = 0.90$; Achievements $\alpha = 0.79$). Moreover, in order to measure the retention level of the teachers, the researcher used Panorama Teacher Retention Survey to create a statement-based survey form, with unified response options, that focuses on understanding what teachers and staff need to thrive. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: Profile of Respondents, Job Satisfaction Level, and Teacher Retention Level. Section I contains the essential information of the respondents such as years of service, average monthly income, number of teaching and non-teaching loads. Section II contains questions that will measure their job satisfaction based on PERMAH Theory that involves 23 questions. Section II contains statements that measures their retention level based on existing non-financial retention programs in their respective private school. A pilot study of the questionnaire is conducted to 32 respondents. The reliability test shows 0.95 Cronbach's Alpha level which demonstrates excellent high internal consistency with zero (0) excluded items.

Statistical Tools

Using IBM SPSS, three computations of statistical tools are used to interpret the data to become meaningful and reliable: the percent, weighted mean, and description. The data on the profile of the respondents is analyzed using frequency count and percent. The weighted mean will be used to determine the job satisfaction, and retention level of the teachers.



FINDINGS

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Years of Service

Years of Service	Frequency N=31	Percent %=100
5-9 years	19	61.30
10-14 years	9	29.00
15-19 years	1	3.20
20 years and above	2	6.50

Table 1 shows the distribution of teacher stayers according to their years of service in private teaching. The majority of the teacher stayers have been teaching 5-9 years (n=19), followed by nine teachers who served 10-14 years, and a few are teaching 15 years and above.

These results suggest that the teaching force among private schools is composed of younger and less tenured teacher stayers. This may be due to factors such as high turnover rates possibly because of external and internal factors. Also, the researcher is aware that the majority of the respondents may or may not stay in the following school years, depending on the existing financial or non-financial support programs of their respective private school. That is the reason why it is important to study their satisfaction and retention level in order to determine implications to educational policies.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency N=31	Percent %=100
Contractual	5	16.10
Regular	26	83.90

Table 2 shows the distribution of teacher stayers according to their employment status. Majority of the teacher stayers (n=26) are regular employees, and only five teacher stayers are contractual. The high proportion of regular teacher stayers over contractual teacher stayers suggests that these private schools may have provided opportunities for employment stability. The presence of employment security may be associated with stronger job satisfaction and teacher retention. This may strengthen the need to improve professional learning community programs and educational policies that promote employment stability among the private sector.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Monthly Income

Employment Status	Frequency N=31	Percent %=100
P5,000.00 - P10,000.00	3	9.70
P11,000.00 – P15,000.00	9	29.00
P16,000.00 – P20,000.00	2	6.50
P21,000.00 and above	17	54.80

Table 3 presents the distribution of teacher stayers according to their monthly income. Majority



of the teacher stayers (n=17) are earning a monthly salary of P21,000.00 and above. This is followed by teacher stayers (n=9) who earn P11,000 to P15,000 monthly, and a few falls under P5,000 to P10,000 and P16,000 to P20,000.

When analyzed with their employment status, regular teacher stayers receive higher compensation than that of contractual teacher stayers. This suggests that higher employment stability status contributes to improved income levels over time. Based on the Third Tranche of increase as per Executive Order No. 64 s.2024, a Teacher I will receive a monthly salary of P31,705. When compared to a tenured private teacher stayers' salary, a first year Teacher I public school teacher receives more compensation. These results underscore the need to have a more standardized and equitable compensation system across private and public schools.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Teaching Loads

Employment Status	Frequency N=31	Percent %=100
1 -2 teaching loads	7	22.60
3-5 teaching loads	16	51.60
6 and above teaching loads	8	25.80

Table 4 presents the distribution of teacher stayers based on the number of their teaching loads. There are 16 teacher stayers who are handling 3 to 5 teaching loads, eight teacher stayers who are handling 6 or more, and seven teacher stayers are managing 1 to 2 teaching loads.

When these results were analyzed alongside their years of service and employment status, the majority of the regular teacher stayers with 5 to 9 years of service are managing multiple teaching loads as part of their schools' load expectations. This is critical among private school teacher stayers where the balance between instructional responsibilities and additional non-teaching tasks are needed. Although the Department of Education (DepEd) has already introduced initiatives to reduce public school teachers' non-teaching tasks, private school teacher stayers still suffer from excessive workload with multiple teaching preparations.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Non-teaching Loads.

Employment Status	Frequency N=31	Percent %=100
0 teaching load	16	51.60
1 -2 teaching loads	11	35.50
3-5 teaching loads	4	12.90

Table 5 shows the distribution of teacher stayers according to their number of non-teaching loads. Majority of the private school teacher stayers (n=16) have no non-teaching tasks. However, 11 private school teacher stayers are reported having 1 to 2 non-teaching tasks, while four private school teacher stayers are assigned with 3-5 non-teaching tasks.

These results reflect that private school teacher stayers continue to be burdened by administrative tasks. This situation is relevant for regular teacher stayers who often receive promotion based on their performance and longevity of service. Based on reports laid by the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2), having excessive administrative responsibilities while managing teaching tasks



affects teacher-wellbeing and efficiency. This suggests private schools adopt educational policy that will limit non-teaching tasks to manageable levels.

Table 6. Teacher's job satisfaction level based on Seligman's PERMA Theory.

	Mean	Qualitative Description
Positive Emotion		
In general, how often do you feel joyful?	3.97	Normal Functioning
In general, how often do you feel positive?	4.00	High Functioning
In general, to what extent do you feel contented?	4.00	High Functioning
<i>Mean</i>	3.99	Normal Functioning
Engagement		
How often do you become absorbed in what you are doing?	3.77	Normal Functioning
In general, to what extent do you feel excited and interested in things?	3.71	Normal Functioning
How often do you lose track of time while doing something you enjoy?	3.29	Normal Functioning
<i>Mean</i>	3.59	Normal Functioning
Relationships		
To what extent do you receive help and support from others when you need it?	3.84	Normal Functioning
To what extent do you feel loved?	4.23	High Functioning
How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?	4.32	High Functioning
<i>Mean</i>	4.13	High Functioning
Meaning		
In general, to what extent do you lead a purposeful and meaningful life?	4.00	High Functioning
In general, to what extent do you feel that what you do in your life is valuable and worthwhile?	3.87	Normal Functioning
To what extent do you feel you have a sense of direction in your life?	3.87	Normal Functioning
<i>Mean</i>	3.91	Normal Functioning
Achievement		
How much of the time do you feel you are making progress towards accomplishing your goals?	3.71	Normal Functioning



How often do you achieve the important goals you have set for yourself?	3.58	Normal Functioning
How often are you able to handle your responsibilities?	3.97	Normal Functioning
<i>Mean</i>	3.75	Normal Functioning
<i>Happiness</i>		
Taking all together, how happy would you say you are?	4	High Functioning
<i>Overall Well-being</i>	<i>PERMA mean</i>	3.88
		Normal Functioning

Table 6 presents the private school teacher stayers' job satisfaction level based on Seligman's PERMA Model. Based on the overall result, private school teacher stayers' well-being is normally functioning. When ranking the PERMA domains from highest to lowest, Relationship domain yielded the highest overall mean (4.13), followed by Positive Emotion domain (3.99), Meaning domain (3.91), Achievement domain (3.75), and Engagement domain as lowest (3.59).

Relationship domain, being the strongest domain, shows that teacher stayers gain most from their interpersonal support system and social connections. Teacher stayers are satisfied with their personal relationships among their colleagues (M=4.32). Also, they often feel loved (M=4.23). This supports recent research results that show positive relationships significantly predict teachers' satisfaction level and well-being outcomes (Qin, Zhao, Yang, & Li, 2024). Comparably, large-scale studies reveal that when compared to other job aspects, relationships with colleagues are important (Lin, Parker, & Horowitz, 2024). This suggests that, even in the presence of challenges at their workplace, improving interpersonal support systems among private school teacher stayers is a key to increase teacher retention level among private schools.

However, despite strength in the Relationship domain, Engagement (M=3.59) emerged as the weakest domain. Teacher stayers losing track of time while doing something enjoyable (M=3.29), indicates that they need deep professional fulfillment in order to have sustained motivation. This suggests that more programs that engage teacher stayers in professional development opportunities or recreational activities are needed. Research on teachers' well-being reveals that reduced engagement is linked with stress, burnout, and less instructional effectivity (Kurrie & Warwas, 2023).

Comparably, the results indicate that accomplishment, progress, and sense of purpose needs to be maximized as perceived by their work experience. This is aligned with recent study that workload pressures, insufficient recognition, and growth limitations reduces teachers' sense of achievement and long-term satisfaction (Al-Hendawi, Alodat, Al-Zoubi, & Bulut, 2024). Moreover, the lowest domains of Achievement and Engagement highlights that stress and heavy workload-related stress are among the strongest factors of teacher burnout. Based on results, teacher stayers are coping but not thriving with the presence of work demands that affects emotional and cognitive levels.

Table 7. Teacher's job satisfaction level based on Health, Negative Emotions, and Loneliness.

<i>Health</i>		
In general, how would you say your health is?	3.71	Normal Functioning
How satisfied are you with your current physical	3.65	Normal



health?		
Compared to others of your same age and sex, how is your health?	3.55	Functioning Normal
<i>Mean</i>	3.64	Functioning Normal
<i>Negative emotions</i>		
In general, how often do you feel anxious?	3.19	Sub-optimal Functioning
In general, how often do you feel angry?	3.00	Normal Functioning
In general, how often do you feel sad?	2.84	Normal Functioning
<i>Mean</i>	3.01	Sub-optimal Functioning
<i>Loneliness</i>		
How lonely do you feel in your daily life?	2.61	Normal Functioning

Table 7 presents the job satisfaction of teacher stayers based on the domains of health, negative emotions, and loneliness that serves as complementary domains of PERMA Model. Results reveal that in terms of Health (M=3.64) and Loneliness (M=2.61) domains, teacher stayers are functioning normally. However, teacher stayers are at a sub-optimal level in terms of Negative Emotions (M=3.01).

Teacher stayers' perceive their physical condition as adequate but not optimized. Also, based on their Loneliness domain level, it shows that they generally do not feel socially isolated. But having Negative Emotions at a sub-optimal level reveals that they are experiencing emotional strain while controlling anger (M=3.00) and sadness (M=2.84). According to Hascher & Waber 2021, their study shows that teachers may experience strain due to occupational stressors even if their physical well-being are at a moderate level. These results imply that teacher stayers may be coping with at present but are at risk of long-term psychological exhaustion.

Table 8. Retention level of the selected teacher stayers based on the non-financial teacher retention program/s on professional development opportunities.

	Mean	Qualitative Description
Professional Development Opportunities		
I feel that the opportunities provided are relevant to my subject area.	3.29	Strongly Agree
I believe that the training and mentoring sessions implemented enhances my skills and effectiveness as a teacher.	3.26	Strongly Agree
I have access to school resources that support me to create an effective lesson plan.	3.19	Agree
I am encouraged to pursue further professional development outside such as taking my masters, doctorate degree, and/or coaching seminars.	3.03	Agree



I feel that my professional growth is valued by the administration.	3.03	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.16	Agree Staying

Table 8 shows the retention level of selected teacher stayers in terms of their professional development opportunities offered in their school. Teacher stayers are likely agreed to stay in their school (M=3.16). This suggests that professional development programs, although not at a compelling level, positively contribute to teacher retention. Specifically, professional development opportunities that are relevant to their specialization (M=3.29) and training & mentoring programs (M=3.26) strongly support retention level. However, lower means is observed in terms of encouragement to pursue masters, doctorate degree or coaching seminars and valuing professional growth by school administration (M=3.03). This reveals that even if seminars and training are provided, teacher stayers still value professional growth more and aspire to achieve higher degrees in their graduate education.

Moreover, professional development is not strategically maximized to maintain long-term commitment among teacher stayers. This is consistent with EDCOM 2 report which emphasizes that professional development of teachers in the Philippines lacks alignment with career programs and sustainable pathways. Also, Herzberg's Two-factor Theory emphasizes that professional development is a motivator factor that can elevate teachers from "staying" to "extremely staying." But the general meaning suggests that with limited support for professional development advancements may weaken intrinsic motivation to remain.

Table 9. Retention level of the selected teacher stayers based on the non-financial teacher retention program/s on recognition and appreciation.

	Mean	Qualitative Description
Recognition and Appreciation		
I feel I'm appreciated for my contributions and efforts to the school activities.	2.94	Agree
My co-teachers, administrators, students, and parents are supportive of the good results of my teaching practices.	3.10	Agree
After a class observation, I receive constructive feedback from my department or subject coordinators.	3.29	Strongly Agree
Whenever I achieved a recognition, I always received it timely.	2.84	Agree
I believe that the school offers enough chances and opportunities for me to showcase my skills and abilities.	2.97	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.03	Agree Staying

Table 9 presents the teacher stayers' retention level in terms of recognition and appreciation. Based on the general mean of 3.03, this indicates that recognition and appreciation systems among private schools contribute to teacher retention but only at a moderate level. Furthermore, interpreted as a factor of extremely staying, constructive feedback after class observations can reinforce teacher retention and performance. However, lower ratings were observed in terms of timeliness of recognition (M=2.84),



appreciation of teacher efforts or initiatives (2.94), and opportunities for teacher stayers to showcase their potential (2.97).

These results imply that recognition and appreciation systems exist among private schools but it needs immediacy, consistency, and meaningful impact. Over time, teacher stayers may feel undervalued if it stays at a moderate level. According to Voehl (2020), traditional recognition is limited, only focuses on outcome, and infrequent. Hence, organizations should focus on modern approaches that are continuous, multi-directional, and embedded to daily work practices.

Table 10. Retention level of the selected teacher stayers based on the non-financial teacher retention program/s on work environment and culture

	Mean	Qualitative Description
Work Environment and Culture		
I'm encouraged by my co-teachers to continue my teaching efforts.	3.13	Agree
I believe that the school develops a culture of teamwork and collaboration.	3.13	Agree
I'm comfortable sharing my concerns and feedback with my administrators.	3.00	Agree
I believe that our workplace promotes good well-being among the teachers.	3.03	Agree
I feel that I have a strong relationship and good communication with my colleagues.	3.16	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	3.09	Agree Staying

Table 10 shows the retention level of teacher stayers in terms of their work environment and culture. Data reveals that teacher stayers' existing work environment supports teacher retention. Higher ratings are observed for strong relationships and good communication with colleagues (M=3.16) as well as co-teacher support, teamwork, and collaboration (M=3.13). However, promotion of good well-being among teachers (3.03) and openness of administrators to concerns and feedback (3.00) are rated lower than other indicators.

These results reveal the underlying gaps in open communication, and well-being practices. Work environment and culture is functional but not empowering. Lower rating on upward communication indicates that relationship between administrators and teacher stayers remains limited. This may present potential issues in democratic leadership and belongingness. Also, well-being practices remain limited indicating working hours are heavily focused on accomplishment of work.

Table 11. Retention level of the selected teacher stayers based on the non-financial teacher retention program/s on work-life balance

	Mean	Qualitative Description
Work-Life Balance		
I can manage my workload, teaching preparation, and personal time.	2.81	Agree
I believe that the school encourages strategies and policies to maintain work-life balance.	2.81	Agree



I'm not afraid of repercussions whenever I take time off.	2.87	Agree
I believe that the school administrators respect my personal commitments outside the school.	3.00	Agree
The school provides opportunities and resources to help manage my stress.	2.81	Agree
<i>Mean</i>	2.86	Agree Staying

Table 11 presents teacher stayers' retention level based on work-life balance which fall within the "Staying" range ($M=2.86$). Among the non-financial factors, work-life balance is relatively weaker. Among the work-life balance indicators, teacher stayers perceived that respect on personal commitments outside the school ($M=3.00$) is important as well as a day off from school ($M=2.87$). On the other hand, balancing instructional and personal time, school stress management support, and work-life balance policies were rated lower among indicators.

Results underscore that school leave and absence systems exist among private schools but it does not weaken stress level and manage workload demands among teacher stayers. This suggests enforceable work-life balance policies that includes mental health and wellness programs. Also, private schools should revisit workload management and flexible scheduling. Failure to address this area may weaken sustainability of the teaching workforce among private schools.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion was drawn from this study:

1. The majority of teacher stayers are regular employees with mid-level experience (5–14 years), earning relatively stable salaries and handling moderate teaching and non-teaching workloads, indicating a stable but workload-balanced teaching force.
2. Based on the PERMA Model, teachers demonstrate strong well-being in relationships, but engagement, achievement, and emotional well-being (negative emotions) require improvement to achieve optimal functioning.
3. Teachers generally remain in their positions due to non-financial factors such as professional development, recognition, work environment, and work-life balance; however, these areas are only moderately effective and need strengthening to ensure long-term retention.
4. Addressing the identified gaps through a structured intervention plan (PLC) is essential to enhance teacher well-being, strengthen retention factors, and promote sustained commitment in private schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the following were recommended:

1. Private schools may develop and institutionalize frameworks that address balanced supports across PERMA domains.
2. Private schools may introduce flexible scheduling and provide protected time for instructional preparation and teacher-parent conferences.
3. Future researchers may expand the scope and sample size across different regions. Conduct focus group discussions to gain lived experiences of the teacher stayers.
4. A comparative study may be conducted between private and public-school teachers.



5. Test the effectiveness of Professional Learning Community Plan among private schools.

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