Switching School Environment: The Journey of Teachers Moving From Private to Public School

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Abstract

Background and Aim: The Philippine education system comprises public and private institutions pursuing shared national goals. Teacher migration from private to public schools affects quality distribution and workforce equity, yet their transition journey remains underexplored. This study examined their motivations, challenges, support systems, and professional fulfillment. Findings aim to inform strategic teacher career management in education administration.

Materials and Methods: This qualitative study used a single instrumental case study based on Merriam's methodology, focusing on the shared transition experience of 10 teachers. Data were collected through interviews, transcribed, and analyzed using open coding. The design explored lived experiences. Ethical approval and informed consent were secured.

Results: The findings revealed that financial concerns, family influence, and the search for job satisfaction motivated teachers to transfer to public schools. Despite facing challenges such as delayed salaries and difficulties adapting to new environments, support from family and colleagues played a crucial role in easing the transition. Improved compensation contributed significantly to job satisfaction, aligning with Herzberg's idea of hygiene factors, although many teachers struggled to maintain work-life balance.

Conclusion: The transition from private to public schools is more than a career shift. It reflects a personal journey toward stability, growth, and deeper fulfillment. This pursuit, driven by the need for security, belonging, and purpose, demonstrates the importance of intrinsic motivation and teacher well-being in fostering sustainable professional commitment in educational settings.

Keywords: Teacher Migration, Public Education, Private Education, Philippines, Teacher Motivation

Introduction

The Philippines' basic education system comprises a mixture of public and private education institutions intended to work for a common vision and commitment to achieving national educational goals (DepEd Order No. 06, 2024). These educational visions are fulfilled by the unending support from the teachers, who serve as the foundation of the teaching and learning process (Amit, 2018). Despite the collaboration between public and private institutions, which support each other by sharing educational resources and expertise, there is still a large disparity regarding the opportunities and services they provide to teachers (Rabbit, 2022). Private school teachers often have lower salaries and benefits than teachers teaching in public schools (Cardiño & Naparan, 2024). Some also get behind in their professional development path and experience drawbacks in working conditions (Chanco, 2023). These limitations drove many private school teachers to transfer to public schools in pursuit of better career opportunities and professional growth (Hernando-Malipot, 2018).

This movement can be understood better through the lens of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators. The disparity in hygiene factors between private and public-school settings, such as salary and job security, serves as a push factor, while the promise of improved benefits and institutional support in the public sector acts as a pull, consistent with the Push-Pull Theory of Professional Migration. These transitions also reflect deeper needs, as explained by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Teachers seek to fulfill physiological and safety needs through better compensation and job security in the public sector, and then progress toward higher-level needs such as belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization through professional development and meaningful work.

Moreover, the transition entails more than just a change in employment status. It involves immersion into a new organizational culture. As proposed by Schein (1985), Organizational Culture Theory suggests that an institution has unique values, routines, and underlying assumptions that shape its environment. Public schools may differ significantly from private ones in terms of bureaucratic

procedures, workplace norms, expectations, and interpersonal dynamics. Understanding how teachers adapt to these cultural differences is crucial in assessing their job satisfaction and overall well-being after transferring.

Despite the rising number of teachers transferring from private to public schools, there remains a critical gap in understanding their transition journey. While teacher retention and mobility have been extensively studied in various educational contexts, little attention has been given to the experiences of teachers who make this shift. Much of the existing literature has focused on the general themes such as teacher burnout, job dissatisfaction, and attrition within single sectors (Francisco et al., 2024; Noori, 2023; Ching et al., 2023), often overlooking how these issues intersect during career transitions. Studies have highlighted key factors influencing teacher turnover, including low compensation, lack of job security, limited training opportunities, and poor working conditions in private schools (Cruz et al, 2022; Cardino & Naparan, 2024; Subhasree et al., 2023). Moreover, while there is growing interest in the impact of school culture and institutional support on teacher well-being (Madulara et al., 2025), there remains little empirical work on how transitioning teachers explore changes in organizational norms, administrative systems, and classroom expectations. Even international literature on teacher mobility tends to generalize experiences without acknowledging the structural and cultural shifts educators must manage when moving between sectors. To address this underexplored dimension, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of teacher mobility and professional growth, particularly within the layered realities of the Philippine education system.

Objectives

This study aimed to explore the experiences of teachers transitioning from private to public schools. Specifically, this sought to (1) identify the key motivations that influenced teachers' decision to transfer to public schools; (2) examine the challenges they encountered after moving to public schools; (3) analyze the support systems provided by family, colleagues, and institutions that facilitate their adjustment; and (4) assess how the transition affected their job satisfaction and work-life balance.

Literature review

Teaching in Private Schools

A private school is a stand-alone establishment that receives funding from the private sector, frequently through contributions and tuition (Crawford International, 2022). These schools are free to design their curricula, offer specialized programs that align with their educational philosophies, and operate within established frameworks. Private schools in the Philippines are institutions that are owned and managed privately. While these schools are free to craft their curricula, they are still bound by regulatory standards by the government, limiting complete autonomy. Furthermore, these schools operate educational programs that are under the law and prescribed policies and rules of the Department of Education (DepEd Order No. 88, 2010). On the other hand, public schools are public institutions that are under the supervision and control of the Department of Education (DepEd), which undertakes educational operations with specific groups of pupils or students pursuing studies at specific levels (DepEd Order No. 40, 2014).

Compensation and Financial Security. Compensation plays a crucial role in the transition between private and public schools. In private schools, teacher salaries are typically with the institution' revenue, often adhering to minimum wage or standard rates, with variations based on student enrollment and the school's financial standing (Rael, 2024). This dependence on the financial stability of the institution creates significant uncertainty for teachers, influencing their physiological and safety needs in Maslow's hierarchy, which require stable income for basic living and job security. Public school teachers, in contrast, benefit from government funding, which offers more stable income along with comprehensive benefits (Rael, 2024). This financial security not only fulfills teachers' basic needs but also provides them with greater job stability, making public schools an attractive option for teachers in private schools seeking to provide for their families (Cruz et al., 2022).

The economic disparity between private and public institutions often compels private school teachers to transition to public schools. The physiological and safety needs are more effectively met in public institutions, where teachers are more likely to find more predictable income and benefits package. This financial security encourages teachers to seek out public school employment to meet

these basic needs and ensure long-term stability for themselves and their families. In the lens of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, salary and job security are considered hygiene factors, which are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction. The lack of these in private schools may not necessarily lead to dissatisfaction alone, but their absence becomes a strong push factor, prompting teachers to look for alternatives that can ensure their well-being.

Work Environment and School Culture. Beyond financial compensation, the work environment and school culture also significantly influence teacher satisfaction and retention. Many private school teachers report positive work environments, with strong relationships with their co-teachers, administrators, and other staff members (Cheng & Kadir, 2018; Deshar & Maharjan, 2024). These relationships contribute to the fulfillment of belongingness and love needs in Maslow's hierarchy, as teachers feel part of a supportive community that encourages collaboration and emotional connection. Cardiño and Naparan (2024) further emphasized that private schools often provide benefits such as scholarships for teachers' children and experiences like retreats, which reinforce teachers' sense of community and emotional well-being. This aligns with Schein's Organizational Culture Theory, which suggests that a strong organizational culture fosters shared values and beliefs, enhancing a sense of belonging and collective identity within the school community.

Private school teachers often experience more professional autonomy, which allows them to manage their classrooms with more flexibility and tailor their teaching methods to better suit student needs (Crawford International, 2022). This sense of professional freedom supports teachers' esteem and self-actualization needs by fostering a sense of pride in their work and encouraging growth in their teaching practices. For example, in some private schools, teachers are given more freedom to implement their disciplinary policies, which enhances their control over the learning environment and their ability to manage student behavior effectively (Crawford International, 2022). This autonomy reflects Schein's idea that a culture that values trust and empowerment can lead to increased teacher satisfaction and effectiveness. Moreover, from the perspective of Herzberg's theory, factors such as recognition, responsibility, and achievement, are classified as motivators, which are present in such settings, contributing positively to job satisfaction and increasing the likelihood of teacher retention despite lower financial rewards.

In addition, private schools in urban settings often offer a variety of activities, such as recreational events, worship activities, and cultural programs that contribute positively to teachers' emotional and psychological well-being (Viaña, 2021). These activities fulfill belongingness and esteem needs, strengthening teachers' connection to the school and reinforcing their commitment to the institution. For instance, in one Chinese private school in Cebu City, regular cultural events and communal gatherings help foster a supportive and enriching environment that encourages teachers to feel valued and engaged (Pecson et al., 2024). Teachers in these schools are more likely to stay due to the positive work environment and their sense of personal fulfillment (Ching et al., 2023).

Challenges and Professional Dilemmas. Despite the positive work environments, private school teachers also face significant challenges, particularly in terms of job insecurity, interpersonal conflicts, and high expectations from parents. Job insecurity in private schools is a prevalent issue, as teachers' positions are often contingent on the school's financial health (Colak & Altinkurt, 2022). This lack of stability can severely impact teachers' safety needs, as they may constantly worry about losing their jobs due to factors outside their control. Teachers also report experiencing stress from professional expectations (Kwamboka, 2020; Subhasree et al., 2023). These pressures contribute to job dissatisfaction and stress, affecting both esteem and safety needs in Maslow's framework.

Furthermore, private school teachers often feel unsupported by their administration and face pressure from external stakeholders, including parents and school boards (Cardiño & Naparan, 2024). These additional stressors erode teachers' sense of belonging and esteem, leading to burnout and a diminished sense of job satisfaction. In Herzberg's terms, these conditions reflect the absence of hygiene factors, which do not motivate but can cause dissatisfaction when unmet. In contrast, public school teachers benefit from greater job security, government support, and access to more resources for professional development (Noori, 2023). These factors contribute to a more stable and supportive work

environment that helps teachers meet their esteem and self-actualization needs more effectively, making public schools an attractive option for teachers seeking long-term career stability.

Given these challenges, many teachers in private schools consider transitioning to public schools, where they can find better job security, more resources, and a more supportive environment. As teachers seek to fulfill higher-level needs such as esteem and self-actualization, transitioning to a public sector offers a path toward greater professional development and personal growth. Cardiño and Naparan (2024) highlight that staying positive and maintaining a healthy work-life balance are key strategies for managing stress and coping with pressures of teaching, which helps teachers navigate both their personal and professional challenges.

Public School Transition Period

The period of transitioning of private school teachers to public is not an easy journey (Estomo, 2024). The Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented its guidelines for hiring and selecting teachers who wish to serve in public schools. The hiring process is based on an open-ranking system in which the teacher applicants are scored according to their documentary qualifications and teaching performance during the recruitment process (DepEd Order No. 07, 2023). In addition, applicants are required to be present to witness the actual evaluation process and are given chances to ask questions regarding the results of the Comparative Assessment to ensure an effective and fair selection of teachers, which is a cost-effective way of improving the quality of education (Jacob et al., 2018).

Emotional and Psychological Challenges. While the structure of the application process is designed to be fair, the emotional journey for applicants is often strenuous. Pimienta and Romo (2024) observed that applicants endure significant emotional strain, commonly steaming from unmet expectations, financial instability, and personal disappointment, particularly when favoritism is perceived during the ranking and endorsement stages. Estomo (2024) similarly highlighted the psychological toll on teachers, including self-doubt and frustration, which impact their safety needs and esteem needs in Maslow's framework. The anxiety of falling short in a competitive system adds to the emotional burden, especially for teachers who are already financially constrained.

Logistical and Financial Barriers. Beyond the emotional toll, applicant also face numerous logistical and financial challenges in fulfilling the documentary requirements. Murcia (2014) emphasized that processing necessary documents demands time, effort, and money. Essential documents such as medical certification, moral clearances, and credentials related to communication proficiency are crucial to complete applications (Mancao, 2012). These practical barriers impact the fulfillment of physiological and safety needs, as teachers must secure financial resources not only to survive daily living but also to comply with public school entry requirements.

Community-Based Prioritization and Coping Strategies. To ease some of these barriers, Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented guidelines that give preference to residents of the local area in which a public school is located, as stated in DepEd Order No. 03, s. 2013. This residency-based prioritization offers an opportunity for applicants who are part of the local community to gain an edge in the hiring process, aligning with the desire to serve in familiar environments. Such policies provide hope and motivation, helping teachers meet their belongingness and safety needs, particularly when relocating for a job is not an option.

Despite the obstacles, many teachers find ways to stay resilient during the lengthy application process. Estomo (2024) recommended practical strategies such as staying focused, developing a support system, accepting circumstances beyond one's control, and maintaining spiritual faith. These actions help applicants regulate emotional stress, enhance their mental well-being, and build psychological resilience. From Maslow's perspective, these coping mechanism assists teachers in striving esteem and self-actualization, even in the face of setbacks. Trusting in timing, personal effort, and support networks allows applicants to stay motivated despite repeated challenges.

Teaching in Public Schools

Job Satisfaction and Professional Growth. Teachers in public schools often experience better job satisfaction, largely due to enhanced job security, opportunities for advancement, and supportive institutional frameworks. Globally, public school teachers enjoy more stable employment conditions, which contribute significantly to their career contentment (Noori, 2023). They are also exposed to more

professional development opportunities, which strengthen their teaching competence and reinforce their sense of professionalism (Harrisman et al., 2019). These opportunities satisfy Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs, as teachers feel recognized and fulfilled in their professional growth.

In addition, a healthy work environment and administrative support have been shown to positively influence job satisfaction among public educators (Ertürk, 2021). These elements reflect the importance of hygiene factors in Herzberg's theory, like working conditions and relationship with supervisors, which, while not necessarily motivating, can prevent dissatisfaction. Furthermore, such structured support systems reflect Schein's Organizational Culture Theory, where a clearly defined culture promotes stability and shared vision, fostering teacher engagement and belonging.

In the Philippine context, these international trends are echoed by local studies. Teachers who successfully transition to public school settings benefit from training programs that enhances their skills and provide clear paths for career progression (Lacandazo et al., 2022). These structured professional development opportunities satisfy both the esteem and self-actualization in Maslow's hierarchy, as teachers pursue mastery and find purpose in their roles. Moreover, improved compensation and financial incentives in the public sector motivate teachers to remain and grow within the system (Oco, 2022), addressing the physiological and safety needs outlined by Maslow and serving as critical hygiene factors under Herzberg's framework. Support from schools' administrators and institutional processes further contribute to a more nurturing and empowering environment, fostering a culture of trust and collaboration, which are central elements in Schein' s theory of string organizational culture.

Hidden Costs of Public-School Teaching. Despite the advantages cited, working in public school is not without complications. While public school teachers may earn more, their financial habits tend to change in in tandem with their income. Mencias-Tabernilla (2023) emphasized that increased earnings often lead to lifestyle inflation, which in many cases results in debt accumulation. Thus, while public schools address Maslow's lower levels needs like safety and physiological needs, failing to manage these finances may lead to lingering dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, many transitioning teachers encounter a "reality shock" when their experiences in the public sector do not align with expectations. De Vera (2021) described how new teachers often feel overwhelmed by sudden shifts in teaching loads, school dynamics, and systematic demands. These disconnections reflect a breakdown in Herzberg's hygiene factors, where poor organizational policies and supervisory practices can trigger dissatisfaction. For some, the change in geographic location, interactions with colleagues, and engagement with parents, and local stakeholders are far more complex than anticipated (No et al., 2022). The perception of leadership in public schools is often reported as authoritarian, hierarchical, and biased, which significantly contrasting the more collaborative and democratic approaches they experienced in private institutions (De Vera, 2021). This misalignment weakens Schein's cultural integration, as teachers struggle to assimilate into a culture that does not reflect their values or previous work norms. Such shifts contribute to heightened levels of stress and disillusionment (Jumuad et al., 2017), often undermining Maslow's esteem and belongingness needs. If teachers feel undervalued or unsupported, their intrinsic motivation may erode, despite extrinsic benefits like better compensation.

Traditional Practices. Another critical issue raised in the literature involves the traditional practices toward newly hired teachers. Quimque (2020) reported that new teachers are frequently assigned the most difficult students, which places additional pressure on them early in their public-school careers. This of silent hierarchy creates inequity in task distribution and compounds the already difficult transition process. From Herzberg's perspective, such treatment diminishes hygiene factors like fairness and interpersonal relations, which can significantly lower morale and lead to job dissatisfaction. It also affects Maslow's belongingness and esteem levels, where feelings of exclusion and inequity prevent teachers from thriving in their new environment.

Resilience and Coping Mechanisms. Despite these challenges, many teachers demonstrate remarkable resilience. Faisal and Hussien (2023) observed that even when facing demanding instructional and classroom management responsibilities, teachers often rise to the challenge without compromising performance. Their ability to adapt and maintain teaching quality in the face of systemic and emotional barriers speaks to their professional commitment and perseverance. This perseverance

aligns with Maslow's concept of self-actualization, where individuals continue to grow and reach their potential even amid adversity. Additionally, Herzberg's motivator factors, such as a strong sense of achievement and the intrinsic value of the teaching role, help sustain their internal motivation. In schools with strong collegiality and shared norms, Schein's cultural model explains how these values and behaviors are passed on, enabling teachers to adjust and thrive even in difficult circumstances.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, further enriched by Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Edgar Schein's Organizational Culture Theory. These three theories provide a multidimensional understanding of the motivations and workplace experiences that drive teachers to transition from private to public schools.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs explains human motivation through five ascending levels. These are the physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943; Hopper, 2024). These needs ranging from basic survival to personal fulfillment, influence an individual's behavior and decision-making process. In the context of teachers, physiological needs such as adequate compensation, food, and shelter (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019) are foundational. Safety needs encompass job stability, benefits, and protection from financial uncertainty. The need for love and belonging includes forming positive relationships with colleagues, student, and the community. Esteem needs involve professional recognition and respect from peers and superiors (Madeson, 2020). At the peak is self-actualization, where teachers strive to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to education.

While Maslow's theory captures a broad view of motivation, Herzberg's two-factor theory deepens this understanding by categorizing workplace factors into hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors, such as salary, job security, and working conditions, do not necessarily increase job satisfaction but can cause dissatisfaction if absent. Motivators, on the other hand, such as achievement, recognition, and opportunities for growth, directly influence job satisfaction (Nickerson, 2025). This theory is particularly useful in explaining why many teachers leave private schools, not solely due to dissatisfaction, but because public schools often provide both hygiene factors and motivators. Thus, Herzberg's framework complements Maslow by distinguishing between factors that prevent dissatisfaction and those that promote satisfaction.

To further contextualize these transitions, Schein's organizational culture theory provides insight into the school environment's role in shaping teachers' experiences. Schein (1985) emphasized that culture within organizations operates at three levels. These are artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. Teachers transitioning from private to public schools often report differences in these cultural layers, such as more bureaucratic processes, stronger union presence, and varied leadership styles. While private schools may emphasize collaborative leadership, public institutions may be perceived as more authoritarian or hierarchical (De Vera, 2021; No et al., 2022). Schein's theory explains how these cultural dynamics influence not only how teachers adapt but also how they assess their professional alignment with institutional values.

This integrated framework acknowledges that teachers' motivations are not always linear. While Maslow's model suggests a progression from basic to higher level needs, in practice, some teachers may prioritize esteem or self-actualization, such as autonomy or making a difference, over physiological needs. Additionally, cultural or personal values, as highlighted by Schein's theory, may cause teachers to prioritize a nurturing environment over compensation. Therefore, understanding teacher mobility requires a flexible model that recognizes individual differences, institutional context, and the interplay of motivational and cultural forces.

By synthesizing these three theories, this study frames the transition from private to public school not as a mere job change, but as a motivational journey shaped by the pursuit of needs fulfillment, workplace satisfaction, and cultural alignment.

Methodology

Research Design. This study used a qualitative approach through a single-case study design, guided by Merriam's case study model. As the researcher sought an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teachers moving from private to public schools, a single-case approach was the best method. Rather than comparing multiple cases, the single case design emphasized the collective experience of these teachers within a shared context, which allowed for an integrated analysis of their narratives and the patterns that emerged. In this study, the "case" refers to the shared experience of teacher transition from private to public schools within a specific educational context. This includes the institutional and organizational conditions, such as employment policies, work culture, and management practices, which shape teachers' motivations, challenges, and adaptation processes. Framing the case this way align with the study's objectives and highlights how education management factors influence teacher mobility, support systems, workplace perceptions, and overall job satisfaction.

Research Participants. The participants of this study included ten (10) professional teachers who were currently teaching as public-school teachers in the selected districts in the division of Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines, for at least three (3) school years, who shared their personal experiences they encountered during their transition from private to public schools. Additionally, teacher participants should have previously served as private school teachers for at least three (3) school years, with some having longer tenure, as their extended experience provided deeper insights into their transition to public schools and career motivations. To provide varied insights into their transition, participants were selected from Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High teaching levels. They are now working in both barangay and central public schools. These teachers came from sectarian private schools, which differ from public schools in terms of management style, available resources, and institutional culture. This diversity in school types provided valuable perspectives on how varying management structures shaped their experiences and professional adjustments.

Research Instrument. The primary instrument used in this study was the interview guide, which was designed to elicit detailed responses from participants regarding their experiences in moving from private to public schools. The guide covered key areas aligned with the study's objectives, such as motivations for transfer, encountered challenges, support systems, perceived differences in school environments, and the impact on job satisfaction and work-life balance. The researcher facilitated the interviews, serving as the main collector and interpreter of the data.

Data Gathering Procedure. The researcher sought formal approval from the Schools Division Superintendent before conducting the study through a letter. Upon receiving permission, school heads were informed about the purpose of the study and approached the participants to secure their consent. Interviews were scheduled at the participants' convenience, ensuring ethical considerations such as confidentiality and voluntary participation. To maintain accuracy, the researcher obtained permission to audio-record interviews while safeguarding anonymity. Transcriptions were then prepared for data analysis, and member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review and validate their responses to ensure their experiences were accurately represented.

Data Analysis. The qualitative data analysis followed a systematic approach to ensure accuracy and meaningful interpretation. The process began with organizing and transcribing interview data, ensuring fidelity through cross-checking and member checking. Using Merriam's qualitative case study approach, the open coding process was applied during the initial phase of analysis. This involved carefully reading each transcript line by line to identify significant phrases, patterns, and recurring ideas. Codes were assigned to meaningful units of data, which were then compared and grouped based on similarities and shared characteristics. Through constant comparison, these initial codes evolved into broader categories, which were further analyzed and refined to reflect the core themes aligned with the study's research questions. To deepen interpretation, categories were analyzed through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by examining how the transition addressed or hindered teachers' needs for security, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Additionally, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory helped distinguish between hygiene factors and motivators in both private and public-school settings, while Schein's Organizational Culture Theory provided insight into how institutional norms and management practices shaped their adaptation process. These frameworks collectively supported a richer

understanding of how organizational and psychological elements influenced teachers' transition experiences.

Ethical Considerations in Conducting Research. This study adhered to strict ethical standards to protect the rights of all participants. The researcher ensured that there was no coercion involved, that participation was entirely voluntary, and could withdraw at any time without consequences. Informed consent was obtained through signed agreements after addressing all queries. Confidentiality was maintained by securing data and restricting access. One-on-one interviews were conducted to avoid professional or personal risks and disclosure of information. Audio recordings were only done with the consent of the participants.

Results

Teachers' Motivation to Move from Private to Public School

The decision of teachers to move from private to public schools was primarily driven by financial stability, family influence, and job security.

Financial Stability. Financial encouragement refers to the drive to seek better economic opportunities characterized by higher salaries, better benefits, and improved financial security. The need for financial stability and the desire to meet personal needs and family obligations amplify the importance of pursuing greener pastures, as highlighted by many participants. The participants said:

> "The primary purpose is to seek better financial opportunities, as you not only need to support yourself but also provide for your family." – TP02
> "If you have children, affording their education becomes difficult due to the low salary, whereas in the government, financial security is assured." –TP03
> "Finances were a major factor why I chose to transfer to a public school, because as my children grew, their needs also increased." – TP05

The teachers revealed that financial motivation was deeply rooted in their aspirations for financial security and their need to address their growing responsibilities. This motivation reflects Maslow's physiological and safety needs, underscoring that a secure income forms the basis for achieving higher personal and professional goals. Some participants also mentioned how the desire for financial stability heightened their awareness of the instability and limitations in the private sector, which amplified the appeal of public employment.

Family influence. Family encouragement refers to the role of loved ones, including parents, spouses, and in-laws, in pushing or facilitating teachers' transition from private to public schools. This category highlighted how family advice on practical considerations and their emotional support have guided teachers' decisions to make the move. The participants said:

> "My mom and dad advised me to transfer because the public sector offered better benefits for our family's future." – TP05
> "My in-laws wanted me to transfer to the public sector, emphasizing the insurance benefits and retirement compensation." – TP06
> "I transferred because of my family. My children lived far from the private school where I worked, making the commute difficult, so I sought stability in the public sector." – TP09

The teachers revealed how family influence emerged as a motivation for moving from private to public schools. These show how family influence intersects with job security, often reinforcing it. In some cases, family members emphasized long-term financial and retirement benefits, creating a compelling rationale for transfer. Thus, family encouragement not only functions as emotional support but as a guiding force that prioritizes safety and stability, reflecting Maslow's safety needs.

Job Stability. Employment security refers to assuring consistent employment and long-term career growth beyond financial benefits. A stable career encompassed the peace of mind that their role as teachers was dependable, even when student populations were sometimes unpredictable. The participants said:

> "I transferred to a public school for tenure and stability." – TP02
> "I realized that private school enrollment was declining, making job stability uncertain, so I sought a more secure position." – TP07

The teachers revealed the significant role that stability played in their professional careers. The need for tenure and job continuity became crucial, especially for those with growing families. Public school employment, perceived as more stable and permanent, addressed these concerns. According to Herzberg, such job security reflects a hygiene factor; its absence leads to dissatisfaction, and its presence is essential to well-being. Moreover, for teachers who had already experienced financial strain, the pressure for job stability became even more urgent, revealing how these motivations often interplay and compound one another.

Teachers' Challenges After Moving to Public Schools

After transitioning to public schools, teachers faced various challenges that tested their adaptability and resilience. These challenges were categorized into delay in compensation and adjustment to a new workplace, which required them to adapt to overwhelming responsibilities, and their relationship with new colleagues.

Delayed Compensation. Delayed salaries refer to the challenge of working without a salary for an extended period. This resulted in financial strain, leaving teachers to face difficulties in meeting basic needs, such as providing essential classroom materials and supporting their children's needs. The participants said:

"One of the challenges I faced after moving to a public school is delayed compensation. We spend money on supplies, but without our salary, it's hard to manage". – TP04

"I didn't receive a salary directly." – TP07

"We went almost six months without any compensation, and during that time, I had three children to support. It was extremely difficult to meet our needs." – TP10

The teachers revealed their financial struggles during the early months of their careers in public schools. They expressed their frustration with having to teach and spend money without receiving any compensation for the services they provided. This issue caused financial strain to the teachers who had families to support and classroom necessities to fulfill. This finding aligns with the concept of the psychological contract, wherein teachers expect timely remuneration in return for their service, a breach of which leads to dissatisfaction and decreased motivation.

Adjusting to a New Workplace. Adapting to a new work environment involves challenges, adjusting to the larger and more complex systems of public schools compared to the smaller and more familiar setups in private schools. Unlike the more familiar environment of private schools, public institutions presented organizational complexities that required teachers to undergo processes similar to organizational socialization, which includes learning new routines, roles, and norms. The participants said:

"The biggest challenge was transitioning from the small, familiar environment of private schools to the larger, more complex setting of public schools." – TP04

"At first, there was some indifference from my new colleagues, likely due to the unfamiliar atmosphere and the fact that we were new, which made adjusting to the new environment even more challenging." – TP10

"When I transferred to a public school, my responsibilities became much heavier. The adjustment was so difficult that I eventually got sick from stress due to sleepless nights." – TP07

The teachers revealed the emotional, physical, and social adjustments needed in entering public schools. The larger and more demanding environment of public schools often overwhelms teachers accustomed to the relatively smaller private schools. The difference in size and complexity made the transition challenging. The feeling of indifference and occasional challenges from colleagues led to differences in principles. The amount of stress with these adjustments could result in illness and sleepless nights.

Support That Teachers Received When Moving to Public School

The support that teachers received during their transition from private to public schools came in two key forms. These are family assistance and professional guidance from colleagues. These support systems played a crucial role in helping teachers navigate the challenges they faced when they transferred from private to public institutions.

Family Assistance. This category reflects how family members have helped the teachers move from private to public in terms of emotional, financial, and practical assistance. Family support helped in easing the challenges of the process. This highlights how spouses, parents, and other family members were crucial in motivating teachers to pursue better opportunities. The participants said:

"My family provided the emotional assistance I needed throughout the process. They were always there to guide me and fully supported my decision to transfer to a public school." – TP01

"My family was my main support, especially financially, as there were so many hassles, requirements, and expenses involved." – TP06

"My husband has been my biggest source of support, providing both emotional and practical assistance, especially during my application to public school." – TP08

Beyond initial motivation, family support helped the teachers cope with the increased workloads, larger class sizes, and administrative expectations often associated with the public school system. This aligns with literature on teacher well-being and the role of familial support in maintaining work-life balance during career transitions. Teachers were able to manage the stressors more effectively due to the emotional assurance and logistical help provided at home, suggesting that family becomes a stabilizing factor during professional upheaval.

Professional Guidance. Professional mentorship refers to the support, guidance, and acceptance extended by colleagues, mentors, and administrators during career transitions. This guidance played a critical role in their adjustment. Teachers with more experience in the field offered mentorship and practical advice to help newly hired teachers in public schools adjust to the system and challenges. The participants said:

"My new colleagues provided invaluable guidance, especially since there was so much, I had yet to learn". – TP09

"When I entered the public school, my more experienced colleagues guided me, helping me adjust to the new work environment and better understand my responsibilities, especially our school head". – TP04

The transition was made smoother by the professional support teachers received, which can be viewed through the lens of organizational socialization, a process by which new employees internalize the culture and practices of a new institution. The guidance given, ranging from practical advice on daily routines, handling administrative tasks, to managing relationships with colleagues, helped the newly transferred teachers quickly build confidence. This kind of support helped build social capital, fostering a sense of belonging and professional trust within the new public-school environment, which is essential in sustaining teacher morale and performance during the early stages of adjustment.

Teachers' Job Satisfaction After Moving from Private to Public Schools

After moving to public schools, teachers' job satisfaction was significantly affected. Others revealed that their job satisfaction increased due to proper compensation that met their expectation, while others faced a decline due to the excessive burden they faced. These factors influenced their overall experience and perception of their professional fulfillment in the public school system.

Fairly Compensated. Fair compensation reflects teachers' satisfaction with the pay received for their duties. This highlights the sense of stability and fairness they felt due to competitive salaries, benefits, and unexpected income. The efforts of the teachers were rewarded, which contributed to their overall job satisfaction. The participants said:

"We are fairly compensated in public schools, which has positively impacted my job satisfaction. It's reassuring to receive regular and better payments, making me more financially secure and content in my work." – TP01

"Financially, things were stable and manageable, which contributed to my job satisfaction over time." – TP05

"Here in Public school, you'll feel satisfied with your work because you're fairly compensated for your efforts." – TP06

"Job satisfaction is better now, because public schools offer a higher salary, making the work more fulfilling." – TP08

"Now that I'm in the public school, I am more satisfied because we receive numerous benefits along with our salary." – TP09

The teachers revealed that financial stability was crucial to their overall job satisfaction after moving from private to public schools. They expressed appreciation for receiving fair compensation, which gave them a sense of security and motivation in their work. The availability of financial benefits, such as higher salaries and additional incentives, allowed them to meet their personal and professional needs. These insights emphasized how financial support contributes to job satisfaction and teachers' ability to sustain their professional responsibilities and personal well-being. In alignment with literature on extrinsic motivators, financial compensation served as a foundation of professional well-being and retention in the public education system.

Excessively Burdening. Excessive demands capture teachers' overwhelming workload and unreasonable demands in public schools. This highlights the tight deadlines, last-minute notices, excessive paperwork, and being assigned to other responsibilities, such as coaching, without adequate knowledge of the activity. The participants said:

"My job satisfaction has decreased in public school due to the excessive workload. Advisories and memorandums are given on short notice, sometimes requiring completion within the same day, making it overwhelming and exhausting." – TP02

"My satisfaction declined. There were times that we got assigned as coaches without prior experience, making the job even more demanding." – TP04

"Private school was more fulfilling for me. Now, we have the overwhelming responsibilities assigned by the Division Office to me, I am not completely satisfied. However, I understand that this is part of my duties and my mission as a teacher." – TP07

The teachers revealed that moving from private to public schools increased workloads and responsibilities. Teachers expressed concerns over tight deadlines, excessive paperwork, and sudden task assignments, contributing to their stress. Others felt that administrative expectations lacked consideration, making it challenging to balance their responsibilities effectively. Some acknowledged the demands of public-school work but accepted them as part of their duties. Teachers have remained committed to their mission, finding ways to stay motivated and fulfill their roles with dedication. These findings support prior research on teacher stress and burnout, where overwhelming administrative tasks are a critical factor in reducing job satisfaction and retention.

While fair compensation offered a strong foundation for satisfaction, it did not fully offset the emotional and physical toll of excessive workload. For some teachers, the burden of added responsibilities weakened the positive effects of increased pay. Others viewed compensation as a helpful buffer that made the workload more bearable. This interplay between extrinsic rewards and intrinsic job demands highlights the complex nature of job satisfaction, as explained in Herzberg's theory. Understanding this balance is crucial in addressing the professional well-being of teachers transitioning into public school settings.

Teachers' Work-Life Balance After Moving from Private to Public Schools

The transition from private to public schools affected teachers' work-life balance in two ways. These are the inevitabilities to bring work home, as the workload often extended beyond school hours, and the improvement to the time management skills of the teachers, as they developed better strategies to balance their professional and personal responsibilities.

Inevitability of Bringing Work Home. This category explains how professional responsibilities often extend beyond school hours. This has affected personal and family time. The consistent bringing of work home, including grading and paperwork, makes it difficult to separate work and personal life. This category highlights how work demands outweigh time with family, resulting in stress, health issues, and inability to fulfill personal responsibilities. The participants said:

"Bringing work home is inevitable. When there are deadlines for grades, you are responsible for taking your class records home. It's simply not possible to stay at school all the time." – TP03

"When it comes to work and life balance, I still bring work home. My routine as a teacher remained the same. Whatever I do in schools, I inevitably bring it home." – TP08

"The time I spent on work often outweighs the time I spent with my family. Usually, it would take me late at night to finish working on our school paper." – TP02

"Even at home, I kept writing modules. The responsibilities kept piling up, to the point where I couldn't even take care of my husband anymore." – TP07

The teachers revealed that bringing work home is an unavoidable part of their profession, regardless of whether they work in private or public schools. Many emphasized that deadlines for grades, reports, and other administrative tasks often extend beyond school hours, requiring them to continue working at home. This constant workload blurs the boundary between personal and professional life, making it difficult to achieve work-life balance. Some teachers expressed that their responsibilities precede family time, with tasks like paperwork and editing school documents stretching late into the night.

Improved Time Management. This category refers to the teachers' efforts to balance their professional responsibilities with their personal lives after moving from private to public schools. This also includes how teachers were relieved from the burdens they experienced in private schools and how the demands in public schools allowed them to prioritize their families. Furthermore, this involves teachers developing strategies to avoid bringing work home and allocating more time to family and community responsibilities. The participants said:

"When I transferred to the public school, I felt like a burden was lifted off me because it allowed me to manage my time better and spend more time with my family, which was a significant improvement from my previous experience in the private school." – TP01

"I have better time management now. Unlike in private school, where I'd come home and immediately study, the repetitive lessons in public school make it easier to manage my time and spend more time with my family." – TP05

"My work-life balance is better now because I make sure to finish all my tasks at school, so I don't bring them home, especially since I have a young child to take care of." – TP06

The teachers revealed that moving to public schools allowed them to experience relief, as they could manage their time more effectively and spend more quality moments with their families. Unlike in private schools, where they had to prepare for multiple year levels and continuously study after school, their workload in public schools became more structured, making lesson preparation easier. Some teachers ensured that all their tasks were completed within school hours to avoid bringing work home, especially those with young children. These experiences suggest that while teaching remains demanding, improved workload distribution and better time management strategies in public schools have helped some educators regain balance in their personal and professional lives.

While bringing work home remained inevitable for many, some teachers developed time management strategies that helped reduce this burden. This contrast shows a tension between heavy workload and efforts to maintain work-life balance. Teachers used different approaches to finish tasks during school hours, though not all were equally successful. These varied experiences reflect how individual coping strategies and school practices affect teachers' ability to manage both professional and personal responsibilities.

Discussion

Teachers are primarily motivated to move from private to public schools due to financial motivation, family influence, and job stability. These motivations align with the foundational levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the physiological needs and safety needs, which emphasize the importance of stable income and security for individual well-being and motivation. Higher salaries and better benefits, such as government-mandated bonuses, leave privileges, and retirement packages, have consistently been identified as strong incentives for professionals to change their working environment and seek financial stability. Teachers would look for a working environment that provides greener pastures to financially support their needs (Cruz et al., 2022). Families also played a pivotal role in their transition. The role of the family in encouraging and providing practical considerations to the teachers proved how they could significantly impact teachers' successful journey in the teaching profession. Their strong influence empowered employees to pursue career opportunities and achieve their

professional goals for long-term success (Kaur, 2024). Teachers teaching in private schools were paid depending on the income or revenue of the schools (Rael, 2024). The unpredictable number of enrollments every year contributed to the inconsistencies in the institutions' financial returns. This uncertainty of financial security in private institutions contributed to the teachers' decision to leave private schools, as they believe that those in public schools' benefit from greater job security, which leads to a more stable career (Noori, 2023).

Teachers encountered difficulties after transitioning to public schools, particularly delays in compensation and challenges of adjusting to a new work environment. Many experienced financial strains due to months-long salary delays, making it difficult to meet personal and family needs. Teachers' salaries and other benefits not being provided on time significantly impacted the teachers' performance and the delivery of a quality education (Katete & Nyangarika, 2020). Adjusting to a larger and more complex system required them to adapt to new policies, expectations, and work dynamics, which added to their initial struggles. These experiences reflect the encounter stage in Organizational Socialization Theory, where teachers confront the realities of their new roles. Adjusting to a larger and more complex system meant adapting to new policies, expectations, and work dynamics. Public schools' more bureaucratic and formalized structures, compared to private institutions, presented additional adaptation challenges. A good working environment prevents employee stress and positively impacts performance and satisfaction (Shammout, 2021). For teachers, difficulties in workplace adjustment, such as handling larger class sizes, overwhelming workload, and the feeling of indifference from colleagues, delayed their ability to establish confidence in their new roles. Difficulties in handling larger class sizes, overwhelming workloads, and perceived indifference from colleagues delayed teachers' confidence-building in their new roles. Such conditions highlight the need for support, role clarity, and mentorship, which are key elements in effective organizational socialization. A supportive working environment would encourage teachers to perform better and enhance their professional outcomes (Alwerthan, 2024).

Teachers received support through family assistance and professional guidance. Family members offered emotional encouragement, financial support, and practical help to ease the transition. When teachers encounter challenges in their transition process, the best approach is to establish a support system that includes their families (Estomo, 2024). Family members who offered consistent guidance and reassurance helped reduce the stress and uncertainty involved, ultimately strengthening teachers' determination to pursue their goals with confidence. Additionally, support from family is crucial for enhancing employees' productivity (Smith, 2024). This implied that teachers who received more support from their kin had a chance to have a better career and less stress at work. When families positively engage in their employees' lives, it boosts self-confidence and enhances performance. (Musa & Chusairi, 2021). Colleagues and administrators provided mentorship, workplace orientation, and advice, helping teachers adapt to new policies and expectations in the public school system. Teachers were not the pioneers of all knowledge. These support mechanisms reflect social support theory, which emphasizes emotional, informational, and instrumental aid in reducing stress and promoting adjustment. They also need guidance from other professionals who could lend them a helping hand during difficult times. Mentoring programs that connect new teachers with experienced one's support beginner teachers and help them manage and confront their anxieties during their initial years (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Such professional support also reflects the role of organizational culture in fostering collaboration and collective efficacy, which is critical during transitions. Building a strong workplace network can greatly ease career transitions, enhancing employees' well-being, especially during adjustment periods. When teachers work together, they can create a better learning experience, which could impact the students' performances and explore more in the teaching profession (Gates, 2018).

Teachers' job satisfaction improved due to fair compensation, as they received higher salaries, benefits, and financial security, which motivated them to remain in public schools. Providing fair compensation to teachers who work diligently to deliver quality education significantly enhances their job satisfaction and motivation to continue their efforts (Oco, 2022). Teachers who receive fair compensation tend to be more dedicated to their duties and responsibilities (Ahmed, 2024). However, increased workload negatively impacted their satisfaction, as they faced excessive paperwork, tight

deadlines, and additional responsibilities that caused stress. Teachers from private schools often see public schools as opportunities for professional development. While some thrive under these expectations, others find the experience to be unexpectedly challenging, impacting their job satisfaction. The teaching duties can become overwhelming, contributing to their stress levels (De Vera 2021). This increased workload often required teachers to constantly adjust and find ways to manage their responsibilities while maintaining their well-being. This tension aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where compensation serves as a hygiene factor that reduces dissatisfaction but does not necessarily increase motivation, while workload and meaningful recognition influence true job satisfaction. Teachers often found themselves balancing financial stability with rising demands, requiring continuous adjustment to maintain well-being.

In terms of work-life balance, teachers struggled with the inevitability of bringing work home, as grading, paperwork, and administrative tasks extended beyond school hours, reducing personal and family time. Teachers were given an overwhelming amount of work in public schools. Because of this, they have less time for themselves and their families (De Vera, 2021). Despite this, some teachers managed to improve time management by prioritizing school-based tasks, helping maintain a healthier work-life balance (Aquino et al., 2023). This suggests that individual coping strategies, such as task prioritization and setting boundaries, play a key role in managing demands. Failure to maintain this balance can lead to burnout, affecting their well-being and effectiveness in the classroom (Francisco et al., 2024). In certain schools, leadership support and scheduling flexibility have helped reduce excessive after-school duties, allowing teachers to devote more time to personal life (Tarraya, 2023). This indicates that school-level policies and culture can influence how well teachers maintain balance, though outcomes vary depending on context and support systems.

The journey of teachers transitioning from private to public schools can be interpreted through multiple theoretical lenses. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs helps explain how higher salaries and job stability address physiological and safety needs, while support from family, colleagues, and administrators fosters love, belongingness, and esteem, especially as they navigate a new environment. However, the overwhelming workload, including administrative tasks, sometimes hinders their ability to reach self-actualization, despite improved financial conditions. This paradox is better understood through Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where salary serves as a hygiene factor that prevents dissatisfaction, yet true motivation is diminished when intrinsic factors, such as manageable workload, recognition, and growth, are lacking. At the same time, Schein's Organizational Socialization Theory illustrates how teachers' adjustment is shaped by the support and mentorship they receive from peers and administrators, which helps them internalize new norms, reduce anxiety, and gradually feel a sense of inclusion and competence in their roles. By applying these theories together, a more dynamic picture emerges: one that recognizes not just the fulfillment of needs but also the evolving challenges and supports that influence how teachers adapt and thrive in their new professional settings.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the transition of teachers from private to public schools was primarily motivated by the pursuit of better financial security, encouragement from family, and the promise of job stability. These motivations align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where external or hygiene factors such as salary and job security significantly influence job decisions and satisfaction. Support from families and colleagues played a vital role in easing the emotional and logistical difficulties of this transition. While teachers faced challenges like delayed salary release and adjusting to the complexities of a larger institutional system, their overall job satisfaction improved over time, largely due to the improved compensation and benefits offered by public schools. However, the increased workload and bureaucratic demands continued to affect their work-life balance, highlighting an ongoing tension between professional obligations and personal well-being. This is consistent with existing literature on teacher retention, which identifies workload as a key factor influencing burnout and attrition, particularly in public education systems.

Moreover, the study's findings resonate with existing research on teacher migration from private to public institutions, reinforcing the pattern that economic stability and institutional support are critical factors in career decisions. These findings not only support prior studies but also add depth by

emphasizing the role of familial and peer encouragement in navigating this career shift. Ultimately, the transition from private to public school teaching is not merely a career move but a reflection of deeper human needs, such as security, belongingness, and personal growth, which are rooted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. These transitions speak to a broader narrative of teacher well-being and professional fulfillment, where structural improvements in salary and stability meet psychological needs for purpose and balance.

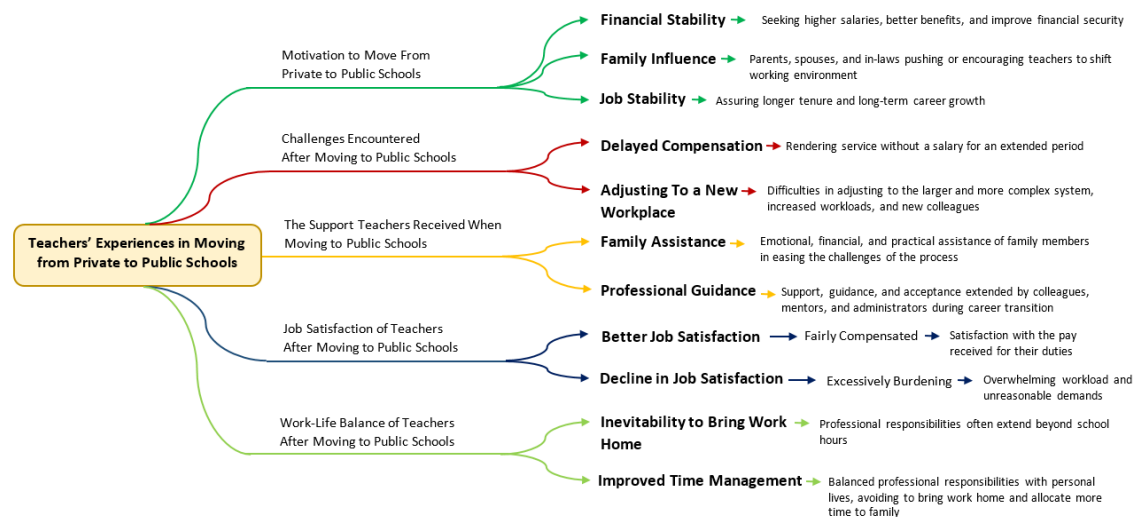**Knowledge Contribution**

Figure 1: *Experience of Teachers Moving from Private to Public School*

Figure 1 illustrates the key findings of teachers' experiences moving from private to public schools, highlighting their motivations driven by financial stability, family influence, and job stability. However, teachers encountered challenges, such as delayed compensation and difficulties adjusting to a larger and more complex system in public schools. Their families played a crucial role during this transition, providing emotional, financial, and practical assistance, while professional guidance from colleagues was essential for adapting to their new roles. While teachers experienced improved job satisfaction due to the better compensation they received, the increased workload and unreasonable demands in public schools affected their overall experience. Additionally, work-life balance emerged as a concern, with many teachers taking work home. In contrast, others noted improvements in time management, which allowed them to spend more time with their families.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Department of Education (DepEd) implement an immediate salary release program for newly hired teachers to ensure they receive their first salary within the first month of service, preventing financial strain and demotivation. Private school administrators may consider offering competitive salaries and benefits packages to retain highly qualified teachers and provide compensation closer to public school standards. Additionally, public schools and policymakers may develop initiatives that promote work-life balance, such as workload distribution reviews and mental health support programs, to alleviate stress and enhance job satisfaction. To better support transitioning teachers, practical strategies such as structured mentorship programs, onboarding orientations, and peer support groups should be established to ease their adjustment into the public-school environment. To further understand the experiences of transferred teachers, future researchers may introduce a longitudinal study on their career growth, providing deeper insights into their professional development

and challenges. Lastly, Policymakers may advocate for policy reforms in teacher compensation and workload distribution to ensure fair salaries and manageable workloads in private and public schools.

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