



PERCEIVED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS, COMPETENCE, AND WORKING CONDITIONS AMONG SECONDARY TEACHERS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: BASIS FOR POLICY FORMULATION

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Abstract: Catholic educational institutions are responsible for serving as exemplars of Jesus Christ's teachings and actions. In this context, teachers in Catholic schools are essential in fostering their own spiritual growth and nurturing their students' comprehensive development. This research focuses on the competence, working conditions, compensation, and benefits among secondary teachers in the Diocese of Iba Educational Foundation, Inc., in Zambales, Philippines. The primary objective of this study is to assess elements such as teacher proficiency, working conditions, and remuneration and incentives in Secondary Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Iba, Zambales. This evaluation seeks to craft policies that ultimately contribute to the holistic development of the faculty in both personal and professional aspects. With a sample population of 221 respondents, this study used the explanatory mixed methods design. In summary, assessments show that teachers excel in education and are committed to ongoing progress. Their skills in various educational aspects and Catholic values are crucial for delivering a well-rounded, values-based education. Satisfaction with their work conditions and pay reflects a positive environment that enhances their professional well-being and effectiveness.

Keywords: Teacher Competence, working conditions, compensation and benefits, explanatory mixed method approach, Diocese of Iba Educational Foundation Inc. Zambales, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

"Catholic schools are expected to become living witnesses of Jesus Christ and His message. They are privileged places for renewed evangelization"(CEAP, 2017). Essentially, the Philippine Catholic Schools Standards (PCSS) emphasizes that Catholic schools should not only be recipients of the Church's evangelical mission but also active contributors(Manalo, 2016). By maintaining their identity as ecclesial institutions, they are expected to serve as "living witnesses of Jesus Christ and His message," playing a critical role in embodying and spreading the Catholic Church's teachings and doctrine through education and community engagement. The standards challenge Catholic schools to uphold and prioritize their spiritual mission alongside their educational objectives Asmarani and colleagues from Asia states that teachers model continuous self-improvement and enhance the quality of learning through relationships within the educational community (Asmarani et al., 2020; Ginting et al., 2019). Teacher competenc, working environments, and remuneration are crucial elements that substantially influence the overall quality of education within a worldwide framework (Bual & Madrigal, 2021). Academic articles have explored these areas, emphasizing the importance of highly skilled educators, positive working environments, and equitable compensation and benefits. The International Journal of Education and Practice study states that teacher competence is crucial for delivering high-quality instruction (Esman et al., 2023; Mulang, 2021). Numerous research efforts have been directed towards understanding how the workplace setting impacts the efficacy of educators (Qobilovna, 2023). Factors like class size, availability of materials, support from administrators, and teacher-student relationships significantly affect teaching quality (Kilag et al., 2023). Furthermore, a work environment that fosters collaboration and peer support has been associated with higher levels of job contentment among teachers, which benefits their ability to teach effectively (Rinny et al., 2022). Globally, tackling the relationship among educator skills, work environment, and remuneration necessitates a holistic and unified strategy to enhance the overall standard of educational excellence (Amit et al., 2023).



Much research has been conducted in the ASEAN region to investigate teacher expertise, employment environment, and remuneration packages. The success of educators in the educational journey hinges on their skillset and the expertise of all parties engaged in managing resources (Annisa et al., 2020; Suharyatia et al., 2019). Research indicated that teachers in the Philippines demonstrated more substantial teaching competencies than those in China. Another study by Budiharso and Tarman (2020), focused on teachers' working conditions in Indonesia (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). The study reveals that improving education quality depends on prioritizing working conditions in academic institutions. Mondejar and Asio (2022) also emphasized that teachers' effectiveness hinges on their ability to employ various instructional techniques and methods to captivate, inspire, and assist a varied student population with distinct learning preferences and capabilities (Mondejar & Asio, 2022; Sudargini, 2020). Farooq et al. (2024) identify disparities in access to technology and inadequate training for educators as significant barriers. Schools with limited resources struggle to provide the necessary infrastructure for effective digital literacy instruction, which may lead to inequities in students' educational opportunities. In addition, Mallillin and Nguyen elucidate that when a company or organization effectively delivers compensation, including both financial and non-financial rewards, it will result in improved employee performance across technical ability, conceptual understanding, accountability, proactiveness, and interpersonal skills (Mallillin 2021 ;Nguyen et al., 2020). Research studies conducted in ASEAN countries have shown variations in teacher competence, working conditions, and compensation and benefits across the region.

However, a gap analysis of the global, ASEAN, and Philippine context reveals disparities in teacher competence, working conditions, and compensation and benefits that hinder the ability of teachers to perform their duties effectively and attract and retain highly qualified individuals in the profession (Sudargini & Purwanto, 2020). According to various studies, including those from the US, Europe, and Africa the competence of teachers significantly impacts student learning outcomes. In the global context, there is a need for comprehensive teacher preparation programs that provide pedagogical training to ensure teacher effectiveness and reduce attrition rates (Gepila, 2020). Within the ASEAN framework, focusing more on ongoing professional growth is essential to improve educators' skills and stay current with evolving educational practices and technological progress (Rinny et al., 2022). In the Philippine context, there is a need for stricter enforcement of teacher certification requirements to ensure that teachers are teaching subjects aligned with their expertise (Esman et al., 2023). Moreover, teachers' working conditions also pose a challenge in all three contexts. Teachers often need more work to handle heavy workloads, large class sizes, and limited resources, which can negatively impact their ability to deliver quality education (Kilag et al., 2023; Second Congressional Commission on Education, 2024). Additionally, adequate infrastructure and facilities in schools can help the overall learning environment and quality of education (Mulang, 2021). Furthermore, the compensation and benefits for teachers in all three contexts are often inadequate compared to the demanding nature of their jobs (Caliba, 2022). In the global context such as Africa and Europe, teachers are not adequately compensated for their work and often face low salaries, limited benefits, and a lack of job security (Podolsky et al., 2019). While there have been efforts to increase teacher salaries and provide benefits in the ASEAN context, there is still a significant disparity in compensation among different countries and regions within ASEAN (Bagapuro & Delos Santos, 2021). In the Philippine context, despite recent salary increases for teachers, the compensation package still needs to meet their needs and expectations (Caliba, 2022). In conclusion, the gap analysis reveals significant disparities in teacher competence, working conditions, and compensation and benefits in the global, ASEAN, and Philippine contexts. These disparities highlight the need for comprehensive teacher preparation programs, continuous professional development opportunities, stricter enforcement of certification requirements,



improvement in working conditions and resources, and increased investment in teacher compensation and benefits.

FRAMEWORK

Teachers are critical drivers of national growth. Through them, the country may produce and nurture learners who can guide the nation toward development and progress (Balik, 2023). The conceptual framework for analyzing teacher work conditions encompasses factors influencing teachers' satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being in their professional roles (Caliba, 2022). These factors include workload, autonomy, teacher-student relationships, professional development opportunities, compensation, and the working environment. Maslow's Theory of Needs offers a valuable framework for understanding the driving forces and necessities of teachers (Fabella, 2023). Maslow's theory posits a sequential organization of human needs, from basic to complex, that drive individuals towards self-actualization and motivation. At the most basic level, teachers have physiological needs such as a fair salary, job security, and a safe and comfortable working environment. This complex interplay is dynamically linked to policy outcomes. When these three elements are recognized and carefully addressed in educational policies, the result can be policies that enhance teacher motivation and retention more effectively. These policies may include incentives for further education, professional development programs, investment in school resources, and competitive pay scales. Policymakers, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between competence, working conditions, and compensation, can create comprehensive strategies designed to bolster teacher effectiveness and stability within the educational system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of this research was to examine the interplay between teacher competence, work environment, and salary and benefits; more precisely, it sought to address the following questions: What is the profile of the target participants in terms of school, age, highest educational attainment, employment status, years in service, and professional qualification; How may the performance be described in terms of Teacher Competence, Working Conditions, and Compensation and Benefits; Is there a significant variation in among teacher competence, working conditions, and salary and compensation when grouped according to their profile? What are the challenges or obstacles teachers face in terms of faculty development programs, working conditions, and compensation and benefits? What training or additional support do teachers need in terms of faculty development programs, working conditions, and salaries and benefits? What policies and guidelines can be made to enhance policies based on the results of the study?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employed an explanatory design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher analyzed the teachers' self-perceived competence assessment, anchored from the Department of Education's Seven Domains of Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, as well as some standards and rubrics anchored from the CEAP's PCSS (Philippine Catholic School Standards for Basic Education) while the statements used in assessing the Working Condition and Compensation and Benefits from existing Association of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Iba (ACSDI) Faculty Manual. The respondents were not forced or influenced by external factors in



participating and answering the prepared questionnaires. The good thing about this research is that it allows researchers to compare various factors. The respondents were selected depending on specific variables of interest.

Research Site

This study encompassed 221 participants drawn from 20 schools within the DIEFI network, from Olongapo City to Sta. Cruz, Zambales representing a collective of Catholic educational institutions in Zambales Province under the Diocese of Iba.

Participants

This study encompassed 221 participants drawn from 20 schools within the DIEFI network, representing a collective of Catholic educational institutions in Zambales Province under the Diocese of Iba. At the helm of this educational consortium is The Most Rev. Bartolome G. Santos, Jr., D.D., serving as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, with Rev. Fr. Raymann G. Catindig, Ed.D as the Superintendent. The researcher determined the necessary sample size to achieve statistical solid results using Raosoft, a dedicated software application. The proponent aimed for a high degree of accuracy, adopting a 95% confidence level and a specific margin of error to guarantee the credibility and dependability of the research findings.

Instrumentation

The researcher employed a self-made questionnaire to compile the required information based on the Philippine Professional Standard for Teachers (PPST) and Philippine Catholic School Standards (PCSS), which are intended to assess the competence and performance of the teachers. The statements regarding the working conditions, compensation, and benefits were based on the ACSDI Faculty Manual. To evaluate the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher undertook content validation. Following their recommendations, questions were amended. The revised questionnaires were then subjected to review and endorsement. Subsequently, they were deemed valid using Cronbach's alpha using SPSS. Teacher Competence-Curriculum Assessment and Professional Development scales show high internal consistency with alpha values of .858 and .832, respectively, rated as 'Good'. The other scales, including Instructional Strategies (.934), Classroom Management (.965), Assessment and Evaluation (.964), Integration of Catholic Values (.920), Working Conditions (.952), and Compensation Benefits (.978), are rated 'Excellent' and exhibit very high to extremely high internal consistency. These results indicate that the assessment tool is effective and reliable in measuring critical aspects of educational environments and teacher performance.

This study strictly adhered to the ethical standards of research to ensure the protection of participants' rights and maintain the integrity of the findings. All 221 participants were fully informed of the study's objectives and procedures, and informed consent was obtained prior to their involvement. Participation was entirely voluntary, with individuals given the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained throughout the data collection and analysis processes. Furthermore, the study was conducted in accordance with institutional and diocesan ethical guidelines, ensuring that no harm, coercion, or undue influence affected the participants or the educational institutions involved. These ethical safeguards reinforce the credibility and validity of the research outcomes.

Data Collection



Authorization and support were secured from the DIEFI Superintendent, Rev. Fr. Raymann G. Catindig, Ed.D., along with the heads of the involved schools, to collect the necessary data. The researcher then went to the schools to float the questionnaires. Afterwards the researcher conducted focus group discussion from each vicariate. The collected data was systematically arranged and evaluated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software. Various statistical methods were applied to address the particular questions posed in the research, which included employing frequency and weighted mean to depict the demographic characteristics of the participants. Frequency distribution, percentage, weighted mean, Pearson R, and Analysis of Variance were employed for the quantitative data meanwhile, coding and thematic analysis were used for the qualitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

In the context of the demographic profile of the respondents, each of the mentioned variables holds particular relevance. The following variables were the respondents' age, highest educational attainment, employment status, years in service, and professional qualifications. The results showed that a majority of 53.39%, 118 out of 221 teachers, are aged 25 or younger, while a mere 0.45%, equivalent to one teacher, falls in the age group of 56 and above. This indicates an issue with faculty retention. The respondents' profiles support this in terms of years in service, wherein only 6 or 2.71% of teachers reach the 26-30 years in service bracket. It can also be observed that the longer the years in service, the fewer the teachers. Furthermore, the respondents' demographic profiles reveal a significant number of teachers with bachelor's degrees as having the highest educational attainment. With this, there is a need for professional development support so that teachers can take post-graduate studies. This statement is similar to the study of Sumipo (2020) that teacher highly value professional development and recognition, acknowledging that continuing education not only propels their career advancement but also enhances their expertise, enabling them to excel in their roles (Sumipo, 2020).

2. Perception of the Teachers

2.1 Teacher Competence

2.1.1. Curriculum

Data highlights teachers' self-assessed competence in managing and aligning lesson objectives with the curriculum. They rate themselves highly, averaging 3.65, suggesting they are confident in ensuring their lessons meet curriculum requirements. Teachers also show strong agreement towards adapting content for diverse learners and being actively involved in developing curriculum standards, as indicated by a mean of 3.58. Moreover, they prioritize the integration of values and proper conduct in their lessons, with a mean of 3.63, and they engage in keeping the curriculum up-to-date, with an active participation mean score of 3.54. These findings imply that the teachers are committed to inclusive, value-driven, and continually evolving teaching practices. In a study conducted by Ismael and colleagues (2024), The teachers' adept curriculum management significantly magnifies their competence, ensuring that educational goals are theoretical targets and tangible outcomes of the teaching and learning process (Ismail et al., 2024).

2.1.2. Instructional Strategies

The study shows teachers' confidence in utilizing diverse instructional strategies with an overall mean of 3.52, signaling a solid collective agreement on their teaching proficiency. With high ratings across categories, they demonstrate an adept application of varied methodologies tailored to



students' needs (3.54 mean), employ evidence-based content delivery (3.53 mean), foster engaging learning environments (3.57 mean), and balance between guided and independent practice (3.49 mean). Teachers' commitment to such dynamic and nuanced instructional practices highlights their dedication to enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Faizah and Kamal (2024) state that pedagogical expertise is critical in enhancing teacher quality. Teachers must consistently refine their pedagogical skills to achieve efficient and outstanding educational outcomes (Faizah & Kamal, 2024).

2.1.3. Classroom Management

The assessments in Table 5 show teachers rating themselves highly in classroom management, with an overall mean of 3.60. They strongly believe in their ability to foster a positive and inclusive learning environment (3.67 means), handle routine tasks effectively (3.64 means), and manage student behavior well (3.63 means). They also prioritize developing students' values and self-concept (3.47 mean) and ensuring a respectful classroom (3.57 mean). These ratings reflect a commitment to organized, supportive, and engaging classroom management. Research reveals that with good classroom management, students know what is expected of them and are more likely to feel secure, contributing to a productive classroom environment conducive to learning. (Franklin & Harrington, 2019).

2.1.4. Assessment and Evaluation

The assessments show teachers rating themselves highly in classroom management, with an overall mean of 3.60. They strongly believe in their ability to foster a positive and inclusive learning environment (3.67 means), handle routine tasks effectively (3.64 means), and manage student behavior well (3.63 means). They also prioritize developing students' values and self-concept (3.47 mean) and ensuring a respectful classroom (3.57 mean). These ratings reflect a commitment to organized, supportive, and engaging classroom management. Shepard (2000) states that more than merely having the ability to choose and create effective assessment techniques is required; educators also need the proficiency to utilize these methods correctly (Shepard, 2000).

2.1.5. Professional Development

The study shows that teachers rate themselves highly in engaging with professional development, with an overall mean of 3.60. They strongly agree on actively participating in ongoing development opportunities (3.71 mean), applying new knowledge from training to their teaching (3.67 means), being involved in collaborative learning within schools (3.62 mean), pursuing higher education and certifications (3.51 mean), and holding memberships in professional organizations (3.48 mean). This collective high rating illustrates the teachers' dedication to continuous improvement, collaboration, and broader community engagement to enhance their educational practice. Bautista and Ruiz's research emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the role of professional development in helping teachers gain and apply these skills (Bautista & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015).

2.1.6. Integration of Catholic Values

The data reveals the details of the teachers' commitment to integrating Catholic values in education, with an overall mean of 3.68. They firmly incorporate Catholic teachings in the curriculum (3.69 means), promote Christian virtues (3.64 means), contribute to students' faith formation (3.70 means), and foster community and service in line with Catholic values (3.74 means). Teachers also work closely with the Campus Ministry to ensure religious values permeate all academic areas (3.61



mean). The consistently high ratings reflect teachers' dedication to a Catholic educational framework that balances academic instruction with spiritual and moral growth. Manning (2014) states that in Catholic schools, incorporating Christian principles is integral to the educational experience (Manning, 2014). Educators find fulfilment in weaving moral values into their instruction, transcending beyond subject matter and extending past the classroom boundaries (Swallow, 2015).

2.2 Working Conditions

Data shows that teachers view their working conditions positively, with an overall mean of 3.48. They perceive their environment as growing and competitive (3.51 mean), feel comfortable with the provided facilities (3.47 mean), and believe they receive adequate recognition and motivation for their work (3.56 mean). Satisfaction with the workplace is high (3.52 mean), and there is an appreciation for policies that promote personal growth and professional advancement (3.51 mean). Teachers also report good work habits (3.46 mean) and a balance with leisure activities (3.45 mean), indicating a healthy work-life balance and positive relationships with colleagues. They consider their work environment to support their development as individuals and professionals. The key factors that encourage teachers to stay in private schools are motivations related to their profession, such as a love for teaching and deriving joy from working (Abdurahman, 2020).

2.3. Compensation and Benefits

The study indicates that teachers view their compensation and benefits positively, with an overall mean of 3.55, showing satisfaction with a comprehensive benefits package (3.61 mean), fair compensation (3.50 mean), and adequate retirement benefits (3.43 mean). They appreciate the support for professional development and the school's transparent communication regarding benefits. The school's package values employees' contributions, provides meaningful recognition and rewards (3.59 mean), and enhances job satisfaction. Private schools might need to match the salaries and additional benefits that public schools offer. However, if other essential aspects are adequately addressed, teachers will prioritize those aspects over monetary gains for more fulfilling reasons. (Sumipo, 2020) In addition to their personal development, educators appreciate various perks such as scholarships for their children and legally mandated benefits. They can also support and meet their family's needs through their service to the school.(Naparan & Cardino, 2024)

3. Analysis of Variance between teachers' competence when grouped according to their profile variables

The result of the study shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine the relationship between teachers' competence in various domains and their profile variables, including age, highest educational attainment, employment status, years in service, and professional qualification. In addition, the researcher also determined the significant variance between the working environment and compensation benefits when grouped according to the demographic profile respectively. The results show that age, highest educational attainment, employment status, and professional development significantly influence teachers' competence in various domains. However, years in service and professional qualification did not significantly affect teacher competence in most areas. These findings suggest the importance of considering specific profile variables when assessing and enhancing teacher competence in different aspects of their profession.



Correlation between compensation and benefits and working conditions.

The correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.860 indicates a strong positive correlation between compensation benefits and working conditions. This value suggests that as compensation and benefits increase, there is a corresponding improvement in working conditions. The strong positive correlation implies that these two variables tend to move in the same direction, supporting each other regarding employee satisfaction and well-being. The significance level (sig) of .001 indicates that the correlation with a two-tailed test is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This level of significance strengthens the validity of the correlation, suggesting that the observed relationship between compensation and benefits and working conditions is unlikely to be due to random chance. It provides confidence in the reliability of the findings. The significant positive correlation between compensation, benefits, and working conditions implies that competitive compensation packages and favorable working conditions are linked to higher employee satisfaction and engagement.

Thematic Analysis

To gain a comprehensive view of the experiences and perceptions of teachers in Catholic schools, the researcher used a qualitative interview guide questionnaire and conducted a focus group discussion with three vicariates. Based on the gathered qualitative data, the researcher identified the following themes.

The thematic analysis revealed the following themes and sub-themes emerged. Under the (A)Teacher Competence Theme, (1) Vocational Aspect Teaching and (2) Formations Formation emerged. This data suggests that educators in Catholic schools are motivated by a mission that goes beyond the traditional objectives of academic teaching, focusing on the holistic development of the individual as well as the embodiment of nurturing the student to be intellectually, ethically, and spiritually well-rounded. Meanwhile, in the (B) Engagement and Teaching Approach Theme, the sub-themes (3) Community and Inclusivity and (4) Integrated Learning Experiences emerged. The identified sub-themes emphasize building community and empathy, reflecting a dedication to establishing a welcoming and nurturing educational setting.

Furthermore, employing collaborative techniques, experiential projects, and embedding Catholic principles indicates an educational philosophy that appreciates cohesive learning opportunities. Lastly, the (C)Professional Growth and Development Theme has two sub-themes as well, namely: (5) Continuous Learning and Adaptation and (6) Collaborative Professionalism. This data underscores Catholic school educators' importance in keeping current with pedagogical advancements and weaving them into their teaching methods. It encompasses collaborative efforts among teachers to improve teaching quality and adjust to evolving educational dynamics.

CONCLUSION

The findings highlight that while age, education, employment status, and professional development notably affect teacher competence, years of service and qualifications have less impact. Teachers in Catholic schools emphasize holistic student development, integrating intellectual, ethical, and spiritual growth, aligning with their vocational role. The themes of teacher competence, engagement, and teaching approach emphasize community, inclusivity, and integrated learning experiences, reflecting a commitment to foster a collaborative and nurturing environment. Professional growth is underlined by continuous learning and adaptation, as well as a collaborative professionalism that helps teachers stay abreast of educational trends and maintain a high standard of teaching.



The positive link between compensation, benefits, and working conditions suggests that adequate pay and good working conditions are essential for employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance. This relationship is critical to creating a supportive organizational culture and maintaining a competitive position in the job market, leading to higher retention and productivity.

In summary, assessments reveal that teachers are adept in their roles, committed to enhancing their skills, and successful in intertwining Catholic values with education. They are generally satisfied with their professional environment, which supports their effectiveness. Despite these positives, the high turnover of teaching staff and the significant number of teachers yet to pass licensure exams remain concerning areas that need attention.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

To convert the findings of the study into practical applications, several media formats can be utilized effectively: (1) Interactive Workshops and Seminars: Organize professional development workshops for teachers, focusing on strategies to improve competence in alignment with Catholic values. These sessions can cover topics like continuous learning, collaborative professionalism, and inclusive teaching approaches. (2) Infographics and Visual Guides: Create infographics summarizing the key findings, such as the impact of compensation and working conditions on teacher retention and satisfaction. Visual guides can also highlight professional development pathways and the importance of holistic student growth, making the information easily accessible and shareable. (3) Video Tutorials and Webinars: Develop a series of short video tutorials or webinars that explain how to apply the findings in daily teaching practices. These could include tips on balancing intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development in the classroom, or strategies for managing work-life balance to reduce turnover. (4) Podcasts and Audio Discussions: Launch a podcast series where experts in education discuss how the study's findings can be implemented in Catholic schools. This format allows for in-depth conversations on topics like teacher competence, licensure exam preparation, and creating a positive work culture. (5) Social Media Campaigns: Use platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to share bite-sized insights from the study. Posts could focus on specific aspects like the link between professional development and teacher competence or the importance of competitive compensation, driving engagement and awareness among educators. (6) Online Learning Modules: Develop an e-learning platform where teachers can access modules related to professional development, Catholic education values, and strategies for personal and institutional growth. This format allows teachers to learn at their own pace while directly applying the study's findings.

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