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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SERVICE LONGEVITY
AT ASIA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

by

Ritha Maidom

Chair: Gustavo Gregorutti

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

College of Education and International Services

**TITLE: AN EXPLORATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SERVICE
LONGEVITY AT ASIA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

Name of researcher: Ritha Maidom

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Date completed: 30 June 2023

Problem

In educational institutions of higher learning, turnover is seen as a double-edged sword that brings both benefits and problems. While turnover allows the opportunity to bring in a new employee who may be able to benefit the institution more than the one being replaced, the process of finding a replacement tends to be costly in terms of time, energy, and financial resources. As a young institution, Asia-Pacific International University (AIU) found turnovers challenging in more than one way because of its lack of stability in areas such as finance and human power. It could benefit from a clearer understanding of what contributes to service longevity among its workers.

Purpose of Study

Since it is essential to study retention in the context of one's institution, this study was conducted to explore the perceived factors that contributed to employees' long-term

service at AIU. In other words, the study sought to understand why employees served for a decade or more at this institution.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study design using narrative inquiry to answer its research question. The participants were carefully selected for several reasons. First, the participants had to be current university employees during the survey. The participants were identified based on the length of their employment at AIU. Semi-structured interview questions were used to collect data. The interviewer prompted responses from participants based on pre-planned questions worded per the research objectives. The participants were involved in lengthy, in-depth conversations regarding their service at AIU. The researcher employed cross-case analysis to understand the experiences that enabled the nine employees to serve beyond a decade.

Results

The answers to the research questions were divided into five categories based on the interview questions. The categories were as follows: (a) reasons for serving at AIU, (b) elements appreciated at AIU, (c) intentions of leaving, and (d) the reasons to remain. In each category, themes or factors were identified. The themes of reasons for serving at AIU included Personal and Organizational Compatibility, Personal and Environmental Fit, Family Influence, and Positive Connection. For elements appreciated, the first two themes were similar to the first two in the reasons for serving. Two other themes under elements appreciated were Gratification and Workplace Relationships. In the area of challenges, the themes were Workplace Spirituality, Support from Others, and Mental Response. All participants had turnover intentions at one point in their long-term

service. Such intentions were caused by Work-related Challenges, Greener Grass Issues, and Family Situations. One of the work-related challenges was the adjustment to new leadership or change in relationship with a colleague who had been put in a leadership position. The last category of reasons for remaining at AIU was the following themes: Affirmation, People Factor, Family Benefit, and Shift in Perspectives.

Conclusions

The factors contributing to the service longevity at AIU were a combination of variables in the forms of personal and organizational compatibility, personal and environmental fit, gratification, and workplace relationship. Long-term employees exercised workplace spirituality in dealing with challenges, received dedicated support from others, and assumed positive mental responses. When they thought of leaving, they prayerfully reflected on the intention and asked for divine guidance in their decision-making. A combination of factors neutralized the turnover intentions—the restoration of courage, a renewed sense of purpose and mission, family benefits, and a shift of perspective that led to the appreciation of blessings associated with serving at the institution.

Andrews University
College of Education and International Services

AN EXPLORATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SERVICE LONGEVITY
AT ASIA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Ritha Maidom
30 June 2023

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Member: Randy Siebold

External: Loren Agrey

Date Approved

Psalm 46:1-3

¹ God *is* our refuge and strength,

A very present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear,

Even though the earth be removed,

And though the mountains be carried into the ^(b)midst of the sea;

³ *Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled,

Though the mountains shake with its swelling.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIU	Asia-Pacific International University
IRB	institutional review board
OCB	organizational citizenship behavior

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The issue of job longevity is an essential concern to organizations that rely on human employees to carry out their operations and achieve their goals. As such, voluntary employee turnover can negatively impact the health of an organization in several ways (Belete, 2018). One of the negative impacts is financial loss. Darling-Hammond (2003) reported in a study of teacher attrition in Texas that turnover cost the state millions of dollars a year. Health care faces a similar challenge. Li and Jones (2013) reported that nurse turnover is costly for healthcare organizations. The issue of retention is a concern in education, healthcare, and other fields such as child welfare (Gonzalez et al., 2009) and hospitality (Self & Dewald, 2011).

Many studies have examined the reasons for turnover based on the assumption that understanding the causes of turnover is essential to curbing the problem (Aghdasi et al., 2011; Dawson et al., 2014). On the other hand, some researchers recognized the need to study the reasons that motivate workers to leave and investigate the factors contributing to employees' decision to remain in their organizations. One such recommendation was made by Fryer et al. (1989), who observed that many "disenfranchised" workers who continued working in child welfare might decide to leave if the opportunity arose. An even earlier study in 1973 by Flowers and Hughes also recognized this. It argued that studying why employees stay is probably more critical concerning recruitment, retention, and turnover costs than examining the reasons for turnover. In the context of higher learning, many studies have been conducted to investigate why employees stayed or left to develop ways to reduce turnover (Ambrose et al., 2005; Figueroa, 2015; Jo, 2008; Salam, 2017).

In higher learning institutions, examining the reasons for turnover needs to consider the context seriously. In their study of faculty members' intention to leave, Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) discovered that "the intent to leave, although certainly an individual choice, does differ by institution" (p. 536). In a different study on faculty satisfaction, Ambrose et al. (2005) argued that:

The specific contexts in which faculty members live and work...matter, and it is to the benefit of colleges and universities to understand how their particular institutional features (e.g., large or small, rural or urban, teaching or research-focused) shape faculty morale and retention. (p. 806)

They further argued that without institution-specific data, the institutions would not be able to fully understand "...where their own experiences intersect or diverge from the experiences of other universities" (p. 806). Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) expressed a similar conviction. They stressed the importance of understanding faculty members' perceptions specific to their campus. This recognition encourages this study to be carried out at Asia-Pacific International University.

Context of the Study

Asia-Pacific International University (AIU) is a faith-based private educational institution of higher learning previously owned and operated by Southeast Asia Union Mission (SAUM). In 2021, SAUM split into two unions and one conference—Southeastern Asia Union Mission (SEUM), Malaysia Union Mission (MAUM), and Singapore Adventist Conference (SAC). AIU is located in Thailand and is the only institution of higher learning offering undergraduate and graduate programs of study operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a territory covering Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

AIU came into being when one college in Singapore, Southeast Asia Union College, and two institutions in Thailand, Bangkok Adventist Hospital School of Nursing and Mission College, decided to merge in the late 1990s. This merger was triggered in 1996 when the Singapore government announced its eventual acquisition of the land where the Southeast Asia Union was located.

In response to this unexpected development, a special committee formed by Southeast Asia Union Mission undertook a nine-month intensive study of relocation options. The committee's recommendation led to a new educational institution based in Thailand. The new educational institution would become a bilingual campus with the continuation of the international programs of Southeast Asia Union College and the retention of the Thai programs operated by Mission College. The development of the new facilities and academic programs began with earnestness in January 1997. By early 1999, the first international degree received government approval. Several other approvals followed this. Within two years, the Ministry of University Affairs approved eight more majors in the International Program. In June 2009, Mission College was granted university status when the Thai Ministry of Education approved the College's proposal to be recognized as a university with the new name Asia-Pacific International University (AIU). AIU began with five faculties in 1999. Twenty years later, it operates the following seven faculties: Arts and Humanities, Business Administration, Education, Information Technology, Nursing, Religious Studies, and Science.

AIU's academic program had also grown from nine programs of study starting in 1999 to thirteen two decades later. Of the twelve, four are in the Thai Program, where Thai is the language for teaching and learning, except for English courses. The rest of the programs of study are in the International Program, where English is used as the medium of instruction. More information regarding the programs of study is given in Table 1.

Table 1*AIU Programs of Study as of 2021*

International Program	Thai Program
Bachelor of Arts in English	Bachelor of Accountancy
Bachelor of Arts in Teaching	Bachelor of Arts in English
Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies	Bachelor of Business Administration
Bachelor of Business Administration	Bachelor of Nursing Science
Bachelor of Nursing Science	
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	
Bachelor of Science in Bioscience	
Master of Business Administration	
Master of Education	

The International Program has attracted students from Southeast Asia and beyond. This has contributed to the international composition of the AIU student population. In the 2019-2020 academic year, its total population of 915 hailed from 35 countries. Of the 915 students, 49% were international students. Due to AIU's endeavor to create an international atmosphere on campus, it maintained a multinational composition of its faculty members. In the academic year of 2019-2020, AIU had 84 faculty members and staff hailing from 20 different countries. The turnover rate for regular employees from 2014 to 2019 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2*AIU Employee Turnover Rates, 2014-2019, as reported by AIU HR Office*

Academic Year	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Total Number Full-time of Faculty	94	97	93	94	94
Number of Full-time Staff	77	78	78	83	79
Number of Full-time Employees*	171	175	171	177	173
Total Number of Faculty Resignations	5	7	4	11	14
International Faculty	1	6	3	5	6
Local Faculty	4	1	1	6	8
Total Number of Staff Resignation	2	11	5	6	12
International Staff	2	8	2	1	4
Thai Staff	0	3	3	5	8
Total Resignations	7	18	9	17	26
Turnover Rate	4.09%	10.29%	5.26%	9.60%	15.03%
Average Turnover Rate		8.86%			

Although these turnover rates are not typically considered worrying, they may still be high enough to hurt the institution in many areas.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of Study

In educational institutions of higher learning, turnover is seen as a double-edged sword that brings both blessings and curses (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002). While turnover creates an opportunity to bring in a new hire who may be able to contribute more benefits to the institutions than the one being replaced, searches for replacement are often costly in terms of time and financial resources. As a young institution starting with international programs in 1999, AIU tended to find most turnovers challenging in more than one way because of its lack of stability in areas such as finance

and human power. Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) proposed that "...institutions would benefit from a clearer understanding of what contributes to faculty decisions to leave" (p. 518). In light of this counsel, this study was conducted in the AIU context to understand turnover issues in its setting.

Although previous studies had revealed factors contributing to the long-term service of employees at other organizations (Bumgardner, 2005; Horton et al., 2008; Ledesma, 2011; Madden et al., 2014), this particular research strongly agreed with Ambrose et al. (2005) that it was essential to study turnover and retention in the context of one's institution. As such, this qualitative study sought to explore the perceived factors that contributed to employees' long-term service at AIU.

Research Question

What factors were perceived by long-term service employees that contributed to their service longevity at Asia-Pacific International University? In other words, the study sought to discover the reasons employees served for a decade or more at this institution.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study design using narrative inquiry in the researcher's attempt to answer the research question. Narrative inquiry is a process of collecting data to answer research questions by examining participants' stories. The main reason for studying people's stories is that "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). On a similar note, Bell (2002) maintained that people make sense of "random experiences by the "imposition of story structures" (p. 207). This "imposition of story structures" takes place when "... we select those elements of experience to which we will attend, and we pattern those chosen elements in ways that reflect the stories available to us" (p. 207). Because stories are the substance of people's lives, researchers are essentially studying "the ways humans experience the world" when they examine the narrative of life stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). In other words, "...narratives are the context for making meaning of ...

situations” (p. 3). This approach allowed the researcher to hear narratives from long-term employees at Asia-Pacific International University regarding their work experience in the institution. These narratives would unveil the perceived elements that contributed to their service longevity at AIU.

Creswell (2007) defined a case study as a thorough exploration of a bounded entity based on extensive data collection. An entity may refer to any of the following: an event, an activity, a series of processes, an individual, or a group of people. In this study, the entity referred to long-term employees at AIU. The term *bounded* refers to separating a case for research in terms of place, time, or physical boundaries (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the participants were selected from the total population of employees at AIU. This selection separated the long-term employees from those who had served less than a decade.

Participants in the study were selected based on two criteria. First, the participants had to be current university employees during the survey. Second, the participants were identified based on the length of their employment at AIU. Participants who had served a decade or more had both experiential and cognitive insight into their long-term service. This made them “information-rich for in-depth study” (Patton, 2015, p. 264). It was essential for the participants to be “information-rich” so that researchers “...can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry...Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding” (Patton, 2015, p. 264).

Semi-structured interview questions were used to collect data. The interviewer prompted responses from participants based on pre-planned questions worded per the research objectives. The participants were involved in lengthy, in-depth conversations regarding their service at AIU.

The Rationale for the Study

In exploring several reasons contributing to employee job longevity at AIU, this study could potentially develop an understanding of the strategies needed to encourage long-term service. Although the researcher had some educated guesses about why some workers worked for years at

AIU, there was no research-based information specific to AIU's context on this issue. Those who had worked for ten or more years at AIU were assumed to be in the best position to inform the study of specific factors that encouraged them to remain in this institution.

Conceptual Framework

In qualitative studies, the conceptual framework serves as a guide or lens to help the researcher interpret the results of the data analysis. This study saw job longevity as a result of the interaction of several interrelated elements. Decades of studies on this subject have given birth to four theoretical perspectives: organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness. These served as theoretical lenses for interpreting findings in this research. Each of them will be briefly discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

Organizational Commitment

Several definitions have been offered for organizational commitment. One of the earliest definitions was suggested by Becker (1960), who described commitment as "consistent behavior," which he referred to as "engagement in a consistent line of activity"(p. 33). In an article published eight years later, Kanter (1968) defined commitment by distinguishing three types of it—continuance, cohesion, and control (pp. 500-501). The first type of commitment, continuance commitment, refers to people's commitment to "participating in the system" (p. 500). People tend to remain in the system when the "cost of leaving the system would be greater than the cost of remaining" (p. 500). The second type, cohesion commitment, refers to people's loyalty to "group solidarity, to a set of solid relationships" (p. 500). In other words, people "stick together" (p. 501). The third type, control commitment, refers to people's determination to "uphold norms and obey the authority of the group" (p. 501).

In response to a "need for a more coherent, comprehensive, and systematic conceptualization" of commitment, Wiener (1982) proposed a "comprehensive attitudinal-

motivational system within which commitment is defined” (p. 419). He defined commitment as “the totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way that meets organizational goal and interest” (p. 421). Wiener argued that people are committed not because of personal benefit but because of their conviction that “it is the right and moral thing to do” (p. 421).

Elizur and Koslowsky (2001) used the term to refer to the emotional and functional attachment one has toward one’s employing organization, while Tsai et al. (2011) defined it as “the extent to which an organizational member is loyal and willing to contribute to the organization” (p. 5322). Meyer and Allen (1991) developed a more elaborate definition using a three-component commitment model that corresponded with three psychological states. These three “mindsets” are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

Affective commitment, or the “desire” component of organizational commitment, refers to employees’ positive sense of belonging or attachment to the organization. According to this model, a worker who is affectively committed to the organization strongly desires to continue working in his/her current job. The second component of organizational commitment is the continuance commitment or “need” component, which refers to what an employee gains from working in an organization. Conversely, these gains may be lost if the employee leaves.

Normative commitment, which forms the third component of organizational commitment, is a concept developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) based on the theoretical work of Wiener (1982) on normative commitment instead of empirical evidence. This is the obligation component. This sense of obligation could be created by a sense of indebtedness to the organization, or caused by employees’ positive perception of the organization, especially in its treatment of individual employees.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The fourth theory was organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), a term first coined by Organ and his colleagues (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983). Organ (1988) defined OCB

as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (p. 4). He eventually revised his original definition of OCB to read “performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place” (Organ, 1997, p. 95).

All of the above were not theories to be tested but rather theoretical lenses through which this study approached the data and made sense of the result of the study. While they helped make sense of the data in the analysis stage, the researcher bore in mind the need to allow the data to speak to her. The researcher, however, needed to be cautious not to allow the theoretical lenses to limit the interpretation of the data.

Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction has been described in various ways since its first definition was penned by Locke (1976) as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience” (p. 1304). Elizur and Koslowsky (2001) defined it as the extent to which people are satisfied or dissatisfied with their work or several aspects of their job. A more recent definition of the concept was developed by Hulin and Judge (2003), who proposed that job satisfaction involves multidimensional psychological responses to one’s job. Some components that make up these responses are affective (emotional), cognitive (evaluative), and behavioral.

Affective job satisfaction refers to one’s feelings regarding the job (Spector, 1997), while cognitive job satisfaction is one’s evaluation of the job independent of one’s feelings about the work. This primarily intellectual appraisal process involves assessing how satisfactory a job is in light of one’s expectations (Hulin & Judge, 2003). The third component of job satisfaction concerns the broad overview of one’s working experience. This refers to one’s general well-being in relation to working experience (Tomazevic et al., 2014).

Job Embeddedness

The third theory was job embeddedness, introduced by Mitchell et al. (2001) to explain why workers remain in their work. This theory proposes that workers stay in their jobs and their employment communities because of several ties that bind them to entities such as people, groups, organizations, places, and even things. These ties, however, are not equal. They differ in terms of strength and size. However, the combined effects of all these ties create the “totality of embedding forces” (p. 1109).

Mitchell et al. (2001) suggested that this theory consists of three key components: fit, links, and sacrifice. “Fit” (p. 1104) refers to one’s compatibility with the employing organization and one’s surrounding environment, namely the community. Job embeddedness suggests that the higher the degree of compatibility or fit an employee has with the organization and community, the more embedded the employee is in the job. “Links” (p. 1104) are the number of one’s connections with other entities both at work and in the community. The more links a worker has with the organization and the community, the more embedded the employee is. “Sacrifice” (p. 1105) refers to the perceived potential material and psychological loss of leaving one’s job or community. That is why Mitchell et al. (2001) conceptualized job embeddedness as six dimensions: links, fit, and sacrifice between a worker and the organization; and links, fit, and sacrifice between the employee and the community (Lee et al., 2004, p. 712).

Rather than being tested for their abilities to accurately describe the factors contributing to service longevity at AIU, these theories were consulted to help the researcher make sense of the findings. The researcher strove to discover new explanations or look for variations of the existing theories.

Significance of the Study

The data collected in this study provided information that yielded insights into the experience of those who had worked for ten years or more at AIU. The study hoped to discover those factors

that encouraged them to work at this institution for a decade or more. Such findings could potentially guide AIU administrators in formulating policies and strategies to promote employee job longevity.

Limitations of the Study

As a qualitative study, this research had several major limitations. First, participants may be limited by their ability to reflect deeply on their work experience during the interview sessions. Second, the participants may not be willing to talk about their experiences or share certain parts of their experiences. Third, the participants may not be aware of their deep-seated beliefs and philosophical values that may have contributed to their service longevity. In other words, participants may not always be conscious of the factors that contributed to their long-term service. Finally, the result of the study cannot be generalized to other higher education contexts.

Delimitations

Since this study was interested in exploring the perceived factors contributing to service longevity among employees at a specific institution, two delimitations were imposed on it. First, the study covered only one institution, Asia-Pacific International University (AIU), an institution of higher learning in Thailand. Second, it focused only on long-term employees who had served at this university for ten or more years.

Definitions of terms

Employee: A person who works for the institution and receives a monthly salary or wages.

Job satisfaction: A “positive emotional state” one has for one’s job or job experience (Locke, 1976, p. 1304).

Job embeddedness: A combination of forces that retain employees in the workplace (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Length of employment: The total number of days a person has worked with an institution (Madden et al., 2014).

Long-term service or employment: There seems to be no standardized definition of long-term service. In one study, long-term employment referred to those who had worked for six years (Wu et al., 2008); in another, ten consecutive years were considered a mark of longevity (Ledesma, 2011). In this study, long-term service refers to a minimum of ten years of employment. The term of ten years is based on a study on Adventist school principals by Ledesma (2011). The one-decade period was chosen because of Asia-Pacific International University's relatively immature age, which began as an international institution of higher learning in 1999.

Organizational commitment: The emotional and functional attachment one has toward the employing organization (Elizur & Koslowsky, 2001). This attachment is demonstrated in the “extent to which an employee is loyal and willing to contribute to the organization” (Tsai et al., 2011, p. 5322).

Organizational citizenship behavior: Individual behavior motivated by personal choice that promotes an organization's efficiency and effectiveness (Organ, 1988).

Summary

This study intended to discover the factors that contributed to service longevity at Asia-Pacific International University. Such discovery can potentially give insights into strategies to reduce costs associated with turnover. While the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts, other institutions may find ideas helpful in empowering them to make changes to increase job longevity and thus reduce their overall employee turnover rate. This investigation was guided by relevant theories and was informed by studies that had been conducted on job longevity. The literature review in the following chapter looked closely at selected theories and previous studies on the topic.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature addressed the issue of job longevity from various perspectives. It was guided by the purpose of discovering forces that may have affected the job longevity of workers at Asia-Pacific International University in Thailand. Intimately connected to job longevity are the issues of retention and turnover. As such, much attention in this literature review was dedicated to discussing forces that influenced these two issues. This literature review began with a discussion on the concept of job longevity, followed by an examination of four theories on job longevity. The theories were organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness. The last section of the review looked at a range of factors that affect these constructs.

Job Longevity

Madden et al. (2014), in their longitudinal study of 9,195 child welfare workers, defined length of employment as “the total number of days a person stayed with the agency” (p. 38). This was the definition adopted in the present study. As for what was considered long-term employment, the general pattern in research studies had not been uniform and may be relative to other employees. For example, in a study on welfare recipients' employment and earnings trajectories, long-term employment referred to those who had worked for six years (Wu et al., 2008). Another study used ten consecutive years as a mark of longevity (Ledesma, 2011).

The issue of job longevity is important considering that the loss of employees through attrition tends to be costly to many organizations (Carter et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2003;

Gonzalez et al., 2009; Li & Jones, 2013; Self & Dewald, 2011). Many studies have examined the reasons for turnover based on the assumption that understanding its causes is essential to curbing the problem (Dawson et al., 2014; Gonzalez et al., 2009). Some researchers, however, recommended that greater emphasis be placed on studying why workers remain in their organization (Flowers & Hughes, 1973; Fryer et al., 1989) instead of studying why employees leave.

As such, the approach taken in this literature review was to examine studies conducted on both retention and turnover issues. Even though this study focused on retention, the literature review covered turnover as it addressed the related concerns. Discovering the antecedents of turnover helped the researcher to understand what contributed to retention. In short, this review looked at the pushing and pulling factors that influenced the leavers and those forces that kept employees working where they were, whether happily or grudgingly.

Organizational Commitment

Experts have provided different definitions for organizational commitment. Elizur and Koslowsky (2001) used the term to refer to the emotional and functional attachment one has toward one's employing organization, while Tsai et al. (2011) defined it as the "extent to which an organizational member is loyal and willing to contribute to the organization (p. 5322). Meyer and Allen (1991) developed a more elaborate definition by proposing a three-component commitment model that corresponded with three psychological states. These three "mindsets" are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Each of these commitments was covered in the ensuing paragraphs.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment, or the "desire" component of organizational commitment, refers to an employee's positive sense of belonging or attachment to the organization. This concept was developed based on the work by Mowday et al. (1982), whose concept of commitment was based on

an earlier concept by Kanter (1968). According to this model, a worker who is affectively committed to the organization strongly desires to continue working in the current job. It is the “I want to stay in this organization” kind of commitment. It is the employee’s emotional tie with the employer. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), the desire to remain in the present employment is influenced by several demographic factors such as “age, tenure, sex, and education,” albeit weak and inconsistent (p. 69). A study by Acikgoz et al. (2016) of 721 employees from varying occupations and different sectors observed that workers who saw themselves with high employability demonstrated a greater tendency to develop a desire to leave when “affective commitment was low” (p. 678). Based on their findings, Acikgoz et al. (2016) advised institutions to “design human resource policies” that “provide their employees with organizational support, treat their employees with justice, and decrease role ambiguity and role conflict” (p. 678).

Continuance Commitment

The second component of organizational commitment is the continuance commitment or “need” component, which refers to what an employee gains from working in an organization. Conversely, these gains turn into losses if the employee leaves. This continuance commitment explains why an employee remains in an organization in light of what is obtained by staying and what is lost by terminating the employment. This is comparable to the “side-bet theory” by Becker (1960), who proposed that an employee may not leave due to the perceived high cost of leaving. It is the “I need to stay because I can’t afford the losses caused by leaving” kind of commitment.

Normative Commitment

The third component of organizational commitment is normative commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) developed this concept based on the theoretical work of Wiener (1982) on normative commitment instead of empirical evidence. This is the “ought to” or obligation component. A sense of indebtedness could create this sense of obligation to the organization due to the investment the organization had made in the employee. Normative commitment is also developed when an

employee has nurtured a positive perception of the organization, especially in its treatment of the employee. This is the “I ought to stay in this organization because it has done much for me” kind of commitment.

A recent study on the role of organizational commitment in career growth and turnover intention in the public sector in Oman collected feedback from 351 respondents. In this study, Al Balushi et al. (2022) observed that the potential for career growth was motivating for Oman’s public sector employees. It was influential in encouraging retention and minimizing the desire to leave. In addition, the researchers also observed that “...affective and continuance... commitment significantly mediates the relationship between career growth and employee turnover intention” (p. 28), but “...normative commitment does not mediate the relationship career growth and turnover intention...” (p. 27). In other words, employees’ perception of career opportunities in the workplace influences their mindset of desire to serve in their institutions and their need to work, reducing their intention to leave. A possible reason normative commitment did not mediate the relationship between career growth and turnover intention was the nature of normative commitment, which did not deal with the mindset of desire but with the mindset of obligation.

However, the organizational commitment model has been conceptually criticized by other researchers who argued that the three-component model is more for predicting turnover than measuring organizational commitment. Solinger et al. (2008) maintained that any study on organizational commitment should view it as an attitude toward the organization and measure it as such.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was first coined by Organ and his colleagues (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983). Organ (1988) defined OCB as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (p. 4). There are three essential aspects to this original definition. The first one is *discretionary behavior* which refers to behavior

that is not enforceable by work requirements or job descriptions. In other words, the behavior is a personal choice, not a behavior regulated by existing workplace policies. The second one is the lack of reward for the behavior. This means a worker's organizational citizenship behavior is not motivated by the expectation of a reward. The third one refers to the positive effect of such behavior on the organization in promoting effective functioning. This definition was eventually revised to read "performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place" (Organ, p. 95).

Organ (1988) proposed that OCB consists of five conceptual dimensions. These conceptual dimensions are as follows:

1. Altruism refers to behaviors that express concern for others and selflessness, for instance, helping a co-worker who has been sick to catch up with work. This behavior targets a person (Organ et al., 2006). Similar behavior aimed at the organization is labeled Compliance behaviors (Smith et al., 1983).
2. Conscientiousness refers to behaviors that occur because of one's sense of responsibility, for instance, careful use of office resources to minimize unnecessary waste.
3. Sportsmanship refers to a positive attitude often exhibited by a worker's focus on the positive
4. Courtesy refers to actions that intend to prevent problems from occurring, for instance, giving others advance notice of impending inconvenience in the workplace.
5. Civic virtue refers to one's interest in the organization, for instance, attending a non-mandatory meeting.

Researchers have identified three additional conceptual dimensions of OCB. The first one is loyalty. A worker who provides a positive description of the organization demonstrates loyalty to the organization (George & Brief, 1992). The second dimension is self-development. OCB is displayed when employees engage in activities that nurture their professional development. They are interested in improving themselves to contribute more to the organization (Katz, 1964). The third

dimension is displayed in employees' behavior intended to minimize harm to the organization. In other words, the worker is protective of the organization (Katz, 1964).

Previous studies have identified several antecedents and consequences of OCB. Among the antecedents are organizational commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Taghinezhad et al., 2015; Williams & Anderson, 1991) and job satisfaction (Smith et al., 1983). One of the consequences associated with OCB is turnover. The analysis of data collected from 205 supervisor-subordinate dyads from eleven companies suggests that employees' OCB level is a good predictor of their turnover (Chen et al., 1998). The researchers found that subordinates rated by their supervisors as displaying low levels of OCB exhibited a higher likelihood of leaving the company than those rated with high levels of OCB. Coyne and Ong (2007) carried out a similar investigation on the link between turnover intention and OCB. Their study involved 162 employees of a large surgical instrument production organization from three branches, two of which were in Europe (England and Germany) and one in Malaysia (p. 1088). The results suggest that OCB is an influential factor in turnover intention.

Ma et al. (2016) made a similar discovery in their study of hotel staff in China and the United States. They observed that "continuance commitment" and "social inclusion" were "all supported as consequences of OCB at the individual employee level" (p. 422). The results also suggest that "continuance commitment and social inclusion are important predictors of employees' intention to stay" (p. 422).

Job Satisfaction

Rusu (2013) proposed that while organizational commitment and work satisfaction are two correlated concepts, they are distinct constructs. This literature review, therefore, dedicated a section to the discussion of job satisfaction. The concept of job satisfaction has been developed in various ways since the first definition was penned by Locke (1976), who described it as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience" (p. 1304). Elizur and Koslowsky (2001) defined it as the extent to which people are satisfied or dissatisfied with their

work or different aspect of it. A more recent definition of the concept was developed by Hulin and Judge (2003), who proposed that job satisfaction involves multidimensional psychological responses to one's job. The dimensions are affective, cognitive, and behavioral.

The affective dimension refers to a worker's feelings regarding the job (Spector, 1997). It answers questions like "How do you feel about your job?" "Do you like it?" "Are you happy with your job?" "Are you satisfied with your work?" This is similar to one of the affective components of organizational commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991). Both refer to the feelings and emotions of the employee. The difference is this: in organizational commitment, the feeling is directed toward the organization, while in job satisfaction, the feeling is about the job.

The cognitive dimension is an employee's evaluation of the job independent of the employee's feelings about the work. In other words, the cognitive response is the worker's opinion of the job. This process involves assessing how satisfactory a job is in light of one's expectations (Hulin & Judge, 2003). A job that fulfills one's expectations will elicit a favorable cognitive response to one's job.

The behavioral dimension refers to an employee's observable job behavior in the workplace. Two examples of job behavior are job attendance and turnover decision. An environment that nurtures trust promotes a sense of belonging, communicates concern for workers' well-being, and encourages favorable job behavior (Tomazevic et al., 2014).

The traditional approach in previous studies on voluntary worker turnover has examined the variables connecting job satisfaction and employee turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). A conceptual model of employee turnover developed by Mobley et al. (1979) proposed several variables or intermediate linkages between an employee's level of satisfaction and a decision to quit. Some of these mediating variables are the availability of alternative employment, the attractiveness of the alternative job, the benefit of leaving, and the intention to terminate current employment.

Much of the literature on the relationship between commitment and job satisfaction reports that high job satisfaction leads to greater commitment to work. Dirani and Kuchinke (2011) conducted a study in Lebanon among bank workers. They found a strong correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results also indicated that the level of job satisfaction could reliably predict commitment.

Another recent study conducted among 500 nurses from five comprehensive tertiary hospitals in Beijing, China, examined the impact of career identity and hope, a kind of psychological capital, on job satisfaction (Hu et al., 2022). They were all registered nurses who worked in comprehensive tertiary hospitals in Beijing. This kind of hospital had massive flows of patients with complicated health conditions. In addition, the registered nurses had to carry out teaching responsibilities in addition to their regular nursing duties, making work heavy for them. This explains why the result indicated that the nurses had a high intention to leave and low job satisfaction. In recognition of this problem, Hu et al. (2022) reported that the nurses' level of job satisfaction can be raised by enhancing their career identity and psychological capital in the form of hope.

However, in a review of earlier works on employee turnover in connection to overall job satisfaction, Mobley et al. (1979) observed that the relationship between turnover and level of satisfaction "...usually accounts for less than 16% of the variance in turnover" (p. 495). In response to this observation, they proposed that any model of voluntary employee turnover should seriously consider other variables besides job satisfaction.

Job Embeddedness

Mitchell et al. (2001) introduced job embeddedness theory to explain why workers remain in their work. This theory proposes that workers stay in their jobs and communities because of several ties that bind them to entities such as people, groups, organizations, places, and even things. These ties, however, are not equal. They differ in terms of strength and size. Nevertheless, the combined effects of all these ties contribute to the sum or totality of the embedded forces.

At the beginning of the formation of job embeddedness theory, Mitchell et al. (2001) suggested that it consisted of three key components: fit, links, and sacrifice. Each component is seen as essential both on and off the job. The first component, “fit” (p. 1104), refers to one’s sense of compatibility with the employing organization and surrounding environment, namely the community. In terms of compatibility with the organization, the employee’s career goals, individual values, and other job-specific elements such as abilities, skills, and knowledge fit well with the need and culture of the company. In terms of the worker’s surrounding environment, this fit refers to the employee’s compatibility with community-specific factors such as societal atmosphere, weather, specifics of location, and political climate. Job embeddedness suggests that the higher the degree of compatibility or fit an employee has with the organization and community, the more embedded the employee is in the job.

The second component of embeddedness theory is “links” (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 1104). As the name suggests, links are the number of one’s formal or informal connections with other entities at work and in the community. The most common forms are connections with other people, groups, places, things, and activities. More links suggest greater embeddedness.

“Sacrifice” (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 1105), the third component of the embeddedness theory, refers to the perceived potential material and psychological loss of leaving one’s job or community. Changing jobs will incur an organizational loss for the employee. This loss may include the loss of valuable colleagues, a support system at the workplace, a decent office, and special benefits. When a job change involves relocation, the employee will have to seriously consider whether the loss from leaving the community is bearable. On the other hand, if more benefits are perceived from a change in the environment, the job change will be easier psychologically for the worker.

The three dimensions of link, fit, and sacrifice demonstrate that “both on- and off-the-job factors are important antecedents of employee turnover” (Lee et al., 2004, p. 712). Stated differently, workplace and non-workplace factors influence employee retention and turnover.

Job embeddedness was developed due to dissatisfaction with the traditional employee turnover models, which proposed that employees' intent to quit and eventual departure from the workplace could be predicted based on job satisfaction factors (Mobley, 1977, p. 237). Mitchell et al. (2001) suggested that the traditional models could only make a modest turnover prediction. They proposed job embeddedness as an alternative model recognizing "off-the-job" forces and other organizational factors affecting employee retention.

Some researchers maintained that recognizing these off-the-job dynamics distinguishes job embeddedness from organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Crossley et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2012). Yao et al. (2004) pointed out that some may argue that the links connecting an employee to the employing organization as similar to organizational identification because both concepts refer to compatibility with the organization. They insisted, nevertheless, that they were not similar. Organizational identification concerns more with significance for self, while the links to the organization include a broader perception of one's tie to the various aspects of the organization. In reviewing job embeddedness, Zhang et al. (2012) focused on only two components: *fit* and *sacrifice*. They pointed out that several studies supported the notion that *fit* and *sacrifice* are closely connected. In their conclusion, they suggested that more research was needed to examine the dimensions of job embeddedness.

In constructing the job embeddedness theory, Mitchell et al. (2001) drew on a research study on the unfolding turnover model conducted by Lee and Mitchell (1994) a few years earlier. The study findings suggested the following observations regarding many who leave their jobs. First, many job leavers reported being mostly satisfied with their jobs. Second, many did not search for another job before deciding to leave. Third, many chose to leave because of other issues unrelated to their jobs and workplace (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee et al., 1999). The results of the initial study seem to suggest the following: 1) Job embeddedness was able to predict employees' intention to leave and actual departure, and 2) Job embeddedness was better at predicting voluntary turnover

among employees in comparison to job search alternative, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

Since the inception of job embeddedness, several studies have reported that job embeddedness could predict turnover and employees' desire to leave (Crossley et al., 2007; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). It has also been found that job embeddedness predicted retention (Cunningham et al., 2005; Liang & Liao, 2005; Mallol et al., 2007). Clinton et al. (2012), in their study of three military samples and one nonmilitary sample of high-skill information technology workers in the United Kingdom, made a similar finding. Another survey of job embeddedness by Mallol et al. (2007) assessed whether there were significant differences between Hispanics and Caucasians in the United States regarding job embeddedness and voluntary turnover. The study results "highlighted the importance of job embeddedness, not only as a predictor of turnover but also as a guide to managers on retention policies" (pp. 41-42).

Antecedents of Job Longevity

While different theories have been developed to explain job longevity, all the studies agree that there is no single antecedent to long-term service. A literature review from 2001 to 2011 shows a high degree of similarity among factors contributing to organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness (Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015). These antecedents are a mixture of personal and organizational factors (Madden et al., 2014).

Organizational Factors

Organizational factors refer to external forces or elements in the work environment that are outside a worker's physical being but are highly influential on the worker's work performance. To a considerable extent, external forces were generally outside the control and manipulation of the worker. Examples of external forces are salary, benefits, organizational culture, and systems.

Salary

Salary is often cited as contributing to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Alameddine et al. (2012) studied 755 healthcare providers, such as nurses, generalists, and medical specialists, to investigate their quitting likelihood and identify elements that influenced staff retention at primary healthcare centers in Lebanon. They discovered that 2 out of 5 respondents indicated that it was very likely for them to leave their job within the next 1-3 years (p. 7). The results also suggest that poor salary was one of the top three reasons which increased the likelihood of leaving (p. 8). Greenlee and Brown (2009) made a similar discovery. In investigating how to retain good teachers in challenging schools, they surveyed 97 teachers. They found that 57% of the respondents indicated that salary enhancement was critical in retaining good teachers. In addition, 34% indicated that a 5-10% salary bonus is influential. In another study, Green and Heywood (2008) found that profit sharing/bonuses tend to increase overall job satisfaction in their examination of the determinants of job satisfaction of 11,849 individuals in England. A study involving 120 respondents from the private sector in Malaysia yielded a similar result—a salary raise could improve employees' level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Yin-Fah et al., 2010). Kearney et al. (2012), however, admitted that "...increased pay is certainly one tool they can use to hold on high performing principals, but it's not the only one" (p. 30). In other words, as powerful as salary can be, it is only one of several aspects of influential factors in employee retention.

Administration and Leadership

The administration is influential in employees' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. In their study of how to keep good teachers in challenging schools, Greenlee and Brown (2009) found that of the 97 teachers surveyed, 22% indicated that working conditions were an influential factor. In this study, working conditions referred to the following conditions: 1) greater autonomy and more resources to develop curricular innovations, 2) opportunities for meaningful professional growth, and 3) a higher degree of authority in decision-making regarding schools (p.100). A study by Horton et al. (2008) yielded a similar result. Wanting to find out what kept

some anesthesia program directors in light of a worrying turnover rate, they conducted a qualitative study in which they interviewed 25 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist program directors. One of the top three reasons for program directors' long-term service was a sound support system from the administration and employers.

A study conducted in Iran echoed the same result. Alameddine et al. (2012) examined the work characteristics of care providers, burnout level, and the likelihood of leaving a job (p. 3). They also identified factors that could lead to worker retention. Lack of administrative support was cited by 31.2% of the 755 respondents as one of the reasons for quitting (p. 4). The phenomenon is true in health care and education, as shown by two studies. The first one zeroed in on the administration's impact on teacher turnover. Cancio et al. (2013) wanted to develop a definition for the term administrative support based on the perception of teachers who taught students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). In addition, they wanted to examine how administrative support affected teachers' long-term employment in that field. In this quantitative study, they surveyed 391 teachers of EBD students. They found that "certain characteristics of administrative support significantly correlated with intent to stay in the field" (p. 85). The results indicated that specific administrative behaviors affected the decision of these teachers to stay or leave (p. 89). The second study in education by Greenlee and Brown (2009) also supports the same idea. Their findings suggest that "leadership behavior and organizational structures that improve working conditions are elements that seem to have the most impact on teacher retention" (p. 107). A study on Asians who worked as faculty members at universities in the United States made the same observation—"the strongest predictors of intention to leave are overall satisfaction with workplace conditions and institutional control" (Lawrence et al., 2014, p. 513).

In studying why public child welfare caseworkers remained in the field, Rycraft (1994) interviewed 23 caseworkers. In her analysis of the interview data, she discovered that supervision was one of the four factors of worker retention. Throughout the interviews, participants consistently pointed to the importance of supervision in making their work "bearable and manageable" (p. 78).

Caseworkers saw supervisors as a vital position because they were influential to caseworkers' experience in the workplace. Rycraft (1994) concluded that supervisor strongly impacts caseworkers' decisions to remain in public child welfare. Similarly, in the area of education, Darling-Hammond (2003) argued that teachers' perception of administrative support, resources for teaching, and their part in the decision-making process strongly influence their intent to stay or leave.

While administration and leadership are closely linked, leadership in this literature refers to a specific leader instead of the overall administrative team. Studies show that certain leadership behaviors tend to promote satisfaction and encourage motivation. In a study that examined the leadership behavior of presidents of Christian educational institutions in North America, Webb (2008) observed that followers reported experiencing a greater level of satisfaction and motivation by "...leaders who possess energy, high levels of self-confidence, strong beliefs, and ideals, are assertive, can make followers feel more confident" and affirm desired behavior with a positive reward system (p. 28). A recent study on the impact of transformational leadership on employee retention by Tian et al. (2020) revealed that "...transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee retention through the mediation of Organizational Citizenship Behavior" (p. 7). Other studies observe a negative relationship between leadership style, specifically transformational leadership, and turnover intention (Alatawi, 2017; Siew, 2017). However, not all report a significant association between the two. A study of academic staff in a community college in Malaysia observed an absence of a significant correlation between leadership style and turnover intention (Long et al., 2012). This observation was attributed to the nature of the responsibilities of the academic staff in higher education, whose work allowed them high autonomy in executing their tasks (pp. 579-580).

A different study on employees in three difficult work environments—outdoor work, manufacturing, and restaurants—by Tolliver (2018) observed the strong impact of leadership on employees. She noted:

...working for a good manager to whom participants could connect was a predictor of remaining in the difficult environment. In some cases, the manager was the cause of the difficult

environment....Considering people and not conditions, supervisors or managers were stated as the cause of a difficult workplace over coworkers in all industries” (p. 82).

In other words, leaders can make the work easier or more difficult for their subordinates. Brown and Sargeant (2007) recognized the administration’s influence on employees. Their study of university workers observed that those aged 46 years and older indicated “...higher levels of overall...job satisfaction than their colleagues between age 26 to 35 years....” (p. 230). Believing in the administration’s influence, they proposed an administrative step to address the satisfaction gap by involving the younger workers in the decision-making process. They maintained that such an “approach would make these workers feel valued and respected and could translate into satisfied workers who would be committed to the organization....” (p. 231).

Similarly, Covella et al. (2017) observed that “...healthy exchange between leaders and followers stimulate an engaged workforce, thus minimizing the likelihood that the employees would seek opportunity elsewhere” (p. 11). In other words, open communication between the supervisors and the subordinates could lead to a higher level of engagement among the workers. Engaged workers are less likely to be interested in finding employment somewhere else.

An investigation of the effect of despotic leadership on employee turnover intention was conducted based on the data collected from 240 faculty members from four universities in China. In this study, Iqbal et al. (2022) reported that “...despotic leadership is an antecedent of employee turnover intention at higher education institutions in China” (p. 18). Considering the results of studies on other types of leadership styles conducted elsewhere (Alatawi, 2017; Long et al., 2012; Tian et al., 2020), it is reasonable to conclude that despotic leadership leads to high turnover intention in many workplaces.

Tenure

In many institutions, especially in the United States of America, tenure impacts service longevity. Tenure, lifelong job security awarded to university professors (Earle & Kulow, 2015, p. 372), is a system that encourages job longevity. Initially, tenure was intended “...to guarantee a professor’s freedom of expression within the context of a teaching discipline” (Premeaux & Mondy,

2002, p. 154). With time, it eventually became apparent that tenure has become a double-edged sword. While it protects university professors from losing their job because of controversial expressions of ideas and positions, many professors have turned tenure into a mechanism that guarantees lifelong employment. In fact, the tenured professors are so protected that higher educational institutions have difficulty "...removing tenured professors for poor performance" (Earle & Kulow, 2015, p. 372). In the context of this study, tenure is an effective tool to keep professors at their universities, giving them "...a strong shield of lifetime faculty protection" (Premeaux & Mondy, 2002, p. 154), but sorely ineffective at ensuring high-quality performance and excellent scholarship (Earle & Kulow, 2015, pp. 372-373). Earle and Kulow also pointed to the dark side of service longevity caused by tenure—the creation of "stagnant departments" because "...no new faculty may be hired because there are no vacancies" (p. 373). In other words, faculty members in their tenure years hardly leave compared to those in the pre-tenure stage, "... a phase in academic careers when the rate of departure is high" (Lawrence et al., 2014, p. 521).

Colleagues

Besides monetary matters, working conditions, and administrative issues, co-workers are often cited as an essential reason. In their study of long-staying anesthesia program directors, Horton et al. (2008) found that colleagues were influential in that longevity. A similar phenomenon was observed in a study of stayers in public child welfare. Rycraft (1994) noted that stayers had a solid relationship with their colleagues, who were viewed as "...a vital source of support, and the lifeline holding the caseworkers to their job..." (p. 78). This is also echoed by Tolliver (2018), who observed that workplace relationships in a challenging environment "...strengthened the bonds that kept participants in the workplace" (p. 87). This is not surprising. Social relationships make life meaningful (L. A. King et al., 2016).

Personal Factors

Personal factors refer to those elements within the self of the employee. These internal factors were within the control and manipulation of the employee. Because they were within the self, they were not easily visible except through the manifestation of behavior. Examples of personal factors are attitudes, values, and emotions.

Positive Mind Set and Attitude

Dweck (2017) maintained that "...the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life" (p. 6). She differentiated between the fixed mindset and the growth mindset. The fixed mindset believes that "...your qualities are carved in stones..." (p. 6), while the growth mindset believes that "...your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts, your strategies, and help from others" (p. 7).

Mindset and attitude are essential in organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Matos et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study to examine the connection between job satisfaction and resilience. Their sample consisted of 32 psychiatric nurses who worked in inpatient units (p. 308). In this quantitative study, the researchers discovered that nurses who were optimistic about their professional status were more satisfied with their professional work.

In another study on attitude, Srimarut and Mekhum (2020) looked closely at the impact of attitude toward job satisfaction from a different angle. Instead of examining the effect of workers' attitudes toward their work on satisfaction, the researchers studied the impact of co-workers' attitudes on job satisfaction among 360 employees of a Thai pharmaceutical company (p. 606). Srimarut and Mekhum (2020) noted that the attitude of co-workers "positively influences job satisfaction" (p. 609). They explained that workers perceived their co-worker's positive attitude as a demonstration of "good support" from their colleagues and that "good support" was important because it "...makes the employee feel less exhausted and depersonalized and feel confidence and psychologically safe at work" (p. 609).

Psychological Capital

Closely linked to a positive mind and attitude is psychological capital. Salam (2017) defined it “as personal characteristics contributing to individual efficiency” (p. 206). Four human traits are the foundations of psychological capital. They are self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2008). Still, the researchers did acknowledge that “other positive psychological constructs could and likely will be included in the future” (p. 221). A study on a large group of employees from different industries by Avey et al. (2009) found that psychological capital “has a significant negative relationship with both their intentions to quit and job search behavior, both indicators of voluntary turnover”(p. 686). The result of a recent study on 104 faculty members from three private higher educational institutions in Thailand echoed a similar finding (Salam, 2017).

A more recent study of employees in challenging workplaces also testified to the power of individuals’ ability to develop a coping mechanism in hostile environments (Tolliver, 2018). Tolliver observed that “the personal ability to remove self or induct some personal coping mechanism helped those who acknowledged the environment as difficult. Participants believed that things would get better, or that they could be worse” (p. 83). Stated differently, employees in difficult workplaces could endure work challenges because of their hope (things could improve) or their gratitude (things could be worse).

Gratification

Gratification seems to be influential in retaining workers. Bakker et al. (2010) wanted to find workplace strategies that would strengthen oncology practice, specifically practice that promotes both quality and retention of the workforce. This qualitative study interviewed 91 registered nurses from all over Canada. The results revealed four themes that reflected the values and beliefs of the oncology nurses regarding the elements that attracted them to their profession and retained them there. One of the four themes was gratification. The nurses experienced this gratification by being valued and appreciated for their continued contributions.

Horton et al. (2008) made the same discovery in their qualitative study of anesthetist program directors. One of the top reasons for program directors staying long in their positions was gratification. Participants viewed their work as personally rewarding because of the opportunity of seeing students acquire new knowledge and develop into competent anesthetists. Bakker et al. (2010) also noted that apart from experiencing gratification, nurses who participated in the study indicated that one of the elements that encouraged them to remain in the nursing profession was the personal strength they received from patients' courage, humor, and outlook on humanity.

What is true in health care is also true in other fields. In a qualitative study, Bumgardner (2005) examined the work experiences of 11 Adventist female pastors who served in the United States in search of factors that contributed to their long-term service in that field (p. 111). Data analysis from face-to-face, semi-structured interviews revealed that the gratification from seeing changed lives solidified the female pastors' decision to remain in the challenging ministry.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence seems to be linked to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The result of a study conducted on 196 teachers from varying teaching backgrounds in Romania from December 2010 to February 2011 suggests that "...teachers' emotional intelligence makes a difference regarding the satisfaction with life,... and their general job satisfaction" (Ignat & Clipa, 2012, p. 502). They further observed that teachers with a higher level of emotional intelligence demonstrated "a more positive attitude towards work" ((p. 502).

Two other researchers, Akomolafe and Olatomide (2013), wanted to find out to what extent job satisfaction and emotional intelligence would jointly predict the organizational commitment of secondary school teachers. To answer this question, they conducted a quantitative study involving 220 secondary school teachers in the Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. The findings from this study suggest that the combination of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction "significantly predicted organizational commitment of secondary school teachers" (p. 70).

A similar study was conducted in another country at a higher education level. Shafiq and Rana (2016) studied the relationship of emotional intelligence to the organizational commitment of 494 college teachers teaching government colleges in Punjab Province, Pakistan (p. 8). The findings of the study echoed the same result. The researchers observed "... a significant relationship between college teachers' emotional intelligence and their organizational commitment" (p. 11). Shafiq and Rana (2016) explained that "...teachers who possess a higher degree of emotional intelligence tend to be more committed, develop a good working relationship, are tolerant when facing emotional labor or emotional pressure and can handle the odd feelings and emotions without losing their tempers" (p. 11). In other words, teachers with solid emotional intelligence tend to persevere through difficult challenges. This suggests that such teachers would be less tempted to think of leaving because of their workplace challenges.

However, an earlier study conducted by Aghdasi et al. (2011) contradicted the above studies' findings. The result of this study involving 234 full-time employees of an organization in Iran indicates that "emotional intelligence does not have any direct effects on ... job satisfaction and organizational commitment" (p. 1972). In their discussion of the result, they drew attention to the similarity between the theory of emotional intelligence and Maslow's theory of hierarchical needs, which required fulfilling lower-level needs for an individual to reach self-actualization. The researchers compared the higher level of emotional intelligence to self-actualization and proposed that emotional intelligence would work well when lower-level needs were met. In their study, emotional intelligence did not make any difference in job satisfaction and organizational commitment because lower-level conditions such as salary and job security were not satisfactory (p. 1973).

Commitment and Responsibility

Another critical factor in organizational commitment and job satisfaction is commitment and responsibility. Rusu (2013) analyzed the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a study involving 1500 randomly chosen teachers who taught in higher educational

institutions. Rusu found a strong correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction--the higher the work satisfaction, the higher the organizational commitment.

In a qualitative study to explore why workers remain working in restaurants, Self and Dewald (2011) found that those who did not leave tended to describe themselves as having a sense of responsibility from their upbringing. This sense of responsibility created a greater degree of maturity, enabling them to be patient and persevere even when work was challenging.

A study by Mowday et al. (1982) found that committed workers demonstrated a greater tendency to remain in an organization. This observation is echoed by a study involving 120 respondents who were private-sector employees—employees with a strong level of organizational commitment have a lower turnover intention (Yin-Fah et al., 2010)

This is true for employees in difficult work environments, as Tolliver (2018) shows. She studied 25 participants who had worked more than five years at ten different companies considered difficult. She noted that “participants had a high level of commitment for the workplace where they were employed” (p. 81). She also observed “a level of pride attached to that commitment” (p. 81). In other words, the combination of commitment and pride gave some participants the strength to deal with difficult workplace challenges.

Sense of Mission or Calling

In some work environments, employees’ sense of mission or calling affects their level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Ravari et al. (2012) examined the role of work-related values on job satisfaction among 30 Iranian nursing staff in a qualitative study. The analysis of data collected from in-depth interviews seems to suggest that those who saw nursing as “humane, transcendental, and dignified” found the work “more rewarding...than any worldly rewards” (p. 454). In short, nurses who saw nursing as a divine calling tended to report high job satisfaction.

Bumgardner (2005) made the same discovery in a qualitative study of 11 female Adventist pastors. Deep commitment to pastoral calling and a sense of being called by God helped these

women continue serving in their positions despite many challenges. A qualitative study on long-staying principals by Ledesma (2011) reflects the same finding. She found that those principals who had served for more than ten years in the same school were committed to God's calling for service. In another study of stayers in public child welfare, Rycraft (1994) discovered that one of the four factors of worker retention was the employee's sense of mission. They tended to see their jobs as necessary to make a difference in the communities. Their sense of mission influenced their continued commitment to their work's heavy demands and responsibilities. This sense of mission was often derived from religious faith, which created a strong sense of meaning in life (Hicks & King, 2008).

Spirituality in the Workplace

Closely connected to a sense of mission is spirituality. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) developed a well-known three-component model of workplace spirituality. The first component is "inner life," which refers to a person's feelings about him/herself. It deals with the philosophical question of identity and the purpose of the self (pp. 135-136). The second component is "meaning and purpose in work," which refers to a person's perception of his/her work and whether or not it is worthwhile (p. 136). The third component is "a sense of connection and community," which refers to one's relationship with co-workers (pp. 136-137). Spirituality in the workplace is seen as the expression of one's spirituality in a real-life context as opposed to the life "removed from the material world" or "lived...in contemplation of the inner life, the sacred journey" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 135).

A quantitative study was conducted in a hospital in Indonesia to examine the impact of spirituality in the workplace on 92 nurses, specifically their intention to leave work (Fitriasari, 2020). The hospital's adoption of the concept of spirituality in the workplace was manifested in several ways – through its architectural design, the playing of religious songs in the hearing of not only the hospital employees but also its patients, and the implementation of religious activities such as

congregational prayer (p. 148). Fitriyani concluded that "... spirituality in the workplace influenced turnover intentions. The higher the spirituality in the workplace, the lower the nurse turnover intention..." (p. 151).

Work-life Balance

Kalliath and Brough (2008) defined work-life balance as "... the individual perception that work and nonwork activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities" (p. 326). This definition was endorsed by Gragnano et al. (2020) in their study, which indicated "...health as a fundamental domain in the work-life balance dynamic that is as important as the family domain" (p. 16). In addition, their study also shows that employees understand that good health is a vital component in achieving a good work-life balance. Keene and Handrich (2015) observed that some employees "...value...work-life balance over money and status" (p. 3). One aspect of the work-life balance is the time to rest or a period of respite. Rycraft (1994) discovered that employees needed time to renew their spirit. In other words, regular time for renewal and recharging is an essential factor in career longevity. In studying the after-effects of vacation on the health and well-being of employees, Bloom et al. (2013) observed that "...a holiday serves as a respite which enables employees to recover from work" (p. 627), but "...on the first day of work resumption, positive vacation effects on health and well-being have already entirely faded out" (p. 627). The researchers, however, suggested that they "...might have found positive after-effects if [they] had used a larger sample size" (p. 627). They recommended that "...frequent respites might be more important to preserve well-being than the duration of one recovery episode" (pp. 627-628).

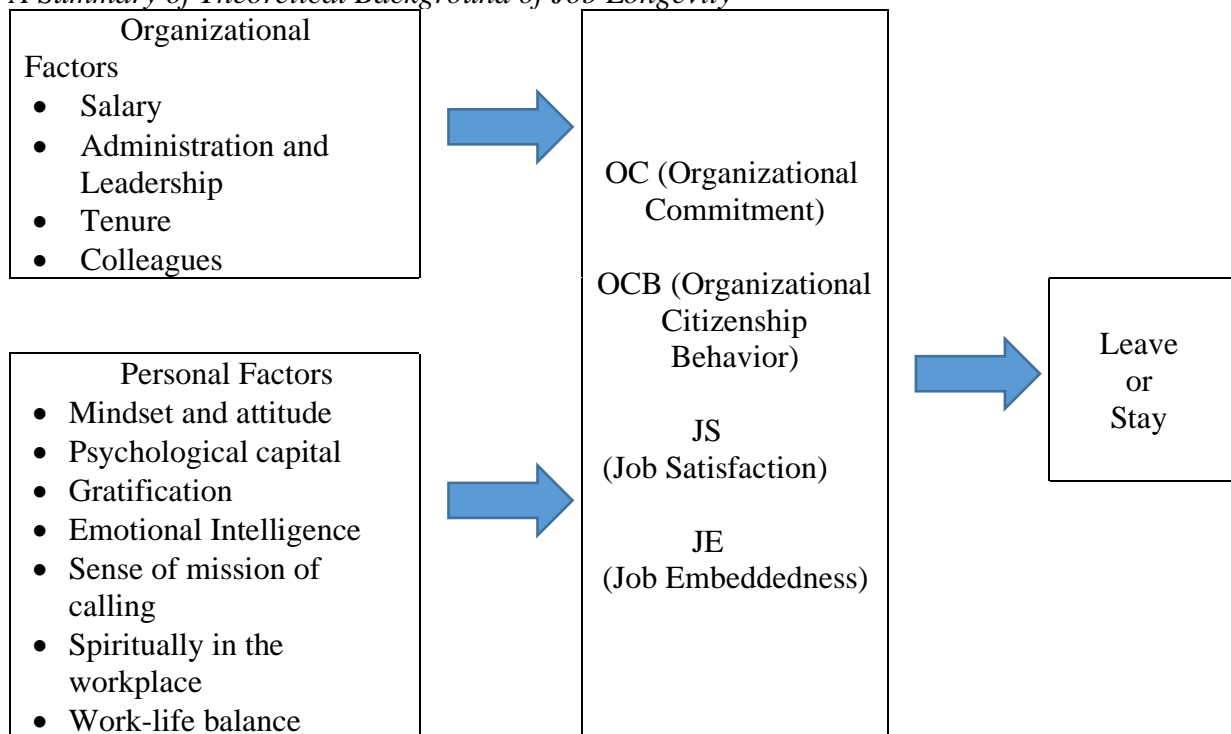
The Overall Theoretical Lens

Based on the literature review on job longevity, any attempts to understand the antecedents contributing to long-term service need to include the following theories: organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness. With a complex issue such as job longevity, it is unsurprising that there are varying perspectives. It is akin

to viewing a mountain. Different points of view allow one to see other scenes and vistas of the mountain. One must consider the various perspectives or theories to have a complete picture. They are more similar than dissimilar from each other. The antecedents for one are also influential factors for the others. For instance, in their review of literature spanning a decade on job embeddedness, Ghosh and Gurunathan (2015) noted that organizational commitment has “... a positive impact on ... workers” job embeddedness (p. 860). Another study that supports the interconnection among the theories is that of Lee et al. (2004). They observed that “... on-the-job embeddedness predicted organizational citizenship” (p. 719). The four theories can be summarized and graphically viewed as follows:

Figure 1

A Summary of Theoretical Background of Job Longevity



Summary

This review of literature addressed the issue of job longevity from multiple perspectives. It served as the basis for the study of job longevity. In the attempt to understand job longevity to find ways to retain needed employees, these perspectives served as theoretical lenses employed in making sense of the results. In other words, this conceptual model guided rather than limited the researcher's interpretation of the data. The following chapter addresses the issue of the methodology employed for data collection in this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Like many other institutions of higher learning, Asia-Pacific struggles with turnover issues. Understanding what factors contributed to the problem could benefit the institution in many ways. This research study addressed this issue at AIU because of its unique blend of organizational climate, social features, and economic structures specific to its context.

Research Design

To understand the experience of AIU employees, this study employed a qualitative research design, specifically case studies. The utilization of this approach allowed the researcher the opportunity to hear narratives from AIU employees regarding their work experience.

Qualitative Research

Creswell (2013) maintains that researchers use qualitative research “because a problem or issue needs to be explored” (p.47). This exploration is done “because of a need to study a group or population” (p.48) in which the researchers attempt to identify variables that are not easily measured in the hope of developing a “complex, detailed understanding of the issue” (p.47). Qualitative researchers act on several philosophical assumptions (Creswell, 2013). In ontology, qualitative researchers embrace “the idea of multiple realities” (p. 20). Creswell (2013) elaborated more fully:

Different researchers embrace different realities, as do the individuals being studied and the readers of a qualitative study. When studying individuals, qualitative researchers conduct a study

with the intent of reporting these multiple realities. Evidence of multiple realities includes the use of multiple forms of evidence in themes using the actual words of different individuals and presenting different perspectives (p. 20).

In epistemology, researchers believe that knowledge can be discovered by delving into people's subjective experiences. This necessitates data collection to be done as close as possible to the source of knowledge and for as long as deemed necessary. In axiology, qualitative researchers consciously try to make their values and biases known. In the area of methodology, qualitative researchers conduct their studies inductively by paying close attention to the data in the field and allowing the data to shape their understanding.

Case Study Method

A case study is "...an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Its main objective is thoroughly understand a case (Smith, 1978). According to Creswell (2007), this thorough understanding is developed through exploring a bounded entity based on extensive data collection. It is common for large data collection to come "from multiple sources" (Martinson & O'Brien, 2010, p. 163). The term "entity" refers to an event, an activity, and a series of processes or individuals. In this study, it means the long-term employees at AIU. The term *bounded* refers to separating a case for research in terms of place, time, or physical boundaries (Creswell, 2012). In this study, only participants who had served beyond a decade at AIU were invited to participate. This placed an imaginary or theoretical divide between those who met the criterion and those who did not.

In deciding what qualitative research method was appropriate to answer the research question, the researcher considered diverse types of research methods. The researcher decided on the case study because of the following reasons:

1. The research question attempted to discover the factors contributing to service longevity. Yin (2018) explained, "The more that your questions seek to *explain* some contemporary

circumstance (e.g., “how” or “why” some social phenomenon works), the more that case study research will be relevant” (p. 4).

2. The research studied a contemporary phenomenon. Yin (2018) defined contemporary as “a fluid rendition of the recent past and the present, not just the present” ((p. 12). This research study examined the service longevity of employees working from the past to the present.
3. The research study required no control over behavioral events (Yin, 2018, p. 9). Participants were asked to think and reflect on their perspectives and behavior, but the researcher did not control the behavior.
4. The research question required an extensive and “in-depth” description of some social phenomenon (Yin, 2018, p. 4). The case study method is used in this study because it offers “...rich perspectives and insights that can lead to an in-depth understanding of variables, issues, and problems” (Marrelli, 2007, p. 39).
5. The case study method allowed the researchers to use “...a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and direct observations...” (Yin, 2018, p. 12). The researcher could use documents, interviews, and direct observations in this study.

In other words, in this study, the research question “What factors are perceived to contribute to longevity among long-term workers at Asia-Pacific International University?” would be best answered by data collected through the case-study method because it would lead the researcher to reasons for service longevity in an extensive and “in-depth” way.

Self as the Research Instrument

Wolcott (2010) maintained that “readers have the right to know” about the researchers (p.36). This means that the researchers need to know their background and how it informs their interpretation of the data in the study. The following few paragraphs attempted to do just that.

Two weeks after the researcher graduated with a master’s degree from Andrews University in 1995, she started working as a teacher at Southeast Asia Union College (SAUC) in Singapore. When

SAUC merged with Mission College and the School of Nursing in Thailand, the researcher and her family relocated to Thailand in 1998. She witnessed tremendous development in many areas, especially infrastructure and human resources. From the beginning, the institution bade farewell to its employees every year. Some left in less than a year. Others left after a year or two. Some left after a few years. The first major farewell impacted her deeply. That particular year, several people were leaving. It appeared to her like a massive exodus. She felt discouraged, wondering how the institution would go with several employees leaving. That feeling reemerged almost every year as she witnessed every farewell in the first decade of the university's existence. Thankfully, she discovered that the institution was resilient enough to cope with all the departures through the years.

The researcher had thought of leaving twice. The first one was motivated by her husband's need to complete his undergraduate studies. That plan did not materialize because the administration decided to assist her husband in completing his undergraduate studies without leaving the University. The second time she thought of quitting was caused by a deep sense of betrayal and discouragement with the way the administration handled specific issues at that time. She had gone for a job interview at an educational institution and was offered employment at another. Throughout this challenging journey, her husband was exceedingly supportive of her. He was willing to relocate for the sake of her well-being. While all this was happening, she decided she did not want to leave with bitterness and resentment. Wishing to go in peace, she decided that she did not want to carry the burden of anger in her heart when she left the University. She prayed earnestly for grace and strength to forgive and make peace. By God's incredible grace, she was no longer angry and bitter at the administration when she received the news that she was accepted to work at the other institution. Her hurt and anger energized her plan to leave and motivated her job search. When they were gone, she found herself no longer wanting to leave. She wondered whether to remain or leave in peace to continue serving God elsewhere. In the end, she decided to stay at AIU.

As the researcher reflected deeply on this journey and her decision to continue serving at AIU, she realized that she was still at the university for several reasons. Foremost among them were her spiritual beliefs and values and the support from those who mattered. As someone in an administrative role at the university, she was deeply interested to understand those factors that contributed to job longevity because she had observed that turnover tended to negatively impact finance and the operations of the “bereaved” departments.

Having intended to leave twice and having conversed with those who decided to leave and those who changed their mind not to leave, the researcher developed opinions on the causes of turnover and the factors that could help prevent the intention to leave from becoming a reality. The researcher was mindful of the necessity to be aware of her bias toward the issue. When doing her data analysis, she noted her own bias. She consciously decided to be open to other reasons that contributed to the development of the intentions of leaving and the factors that removed them.

Population

Both local and international workers staffed AIU. “Local” referred to workers from the Kingdom of Thailand, while “international” referred to workers from other countries. The composition of the human resources is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Composition of Full-Time Employees (as reported by the HR Office in October 2018)

	Local	International	Total
Number of full-time employees	109	63	172

The international employees came from the surrounding countries in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) and beyond. Workers from beyond Southeast Asia came from Bulgaria, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of

Congo, Egypt, India, Malawi, Rwanda, South Korea, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The employees were assigned to different areas, such as academic administration, financial administration, and student administration. Thai labor law, however, limited the positions that could be given to international employees. Table 4 shows the limited positions they could hold.

Table 4

Legal Positions for International Employees in Comparison to Local Employees

Positions for International Employees	Positions for Local Employees
Teaching Academic-related Positions	No Restriction

As shown in Table 4, international workers were either teachers or staff with teaching responsibilities. The law of the land allowed foreigners only teaching responsibilities or certain positions related to academics. When international workers held administrative positions, for instance, they had to carry a teaching load as well. Certain functions such as secretary, network administrator, dormitory dean, accountant, and most office work were assigned to locals only.

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling complements well with the case study approach because of its need to obtain “rich perspectives and insights” that can assist researchers in acquiring “an in-depth understanding” (Marrelli, 2007, p. 39) of the phenomenon being studied. In selecting participants, great care is taken “to obtain the clearest issue under study” (Marrelli, 2007, p. 40). In other words, researchers need to choose information-rich participants to maximize learning (Chein, 1981; Patton, 2015).

Purposeful sampling was used in this study to ensure that the participants would inform the research question. The participants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. The employee had worked at Asia-Pacific International University for a minimum of ten years.
2. The need for representative perspectives by including both males and females, local and international, and service employees and faculty members. The study included workers from Asia and beyond among international employees. The type of purposive sampling this study is interested in is maximal variation sampling which assisted the researcher in obtaining “multiple perspectives of individuals to represent the complexity of the world” (Creswell, 2012, p. 207). Based on the information received from the Human Resources Office at the end of 2018, AIU had 172 regular employees, of whom 80 had served for ten years or more. Of these 80 employees, 65 were locals, and 15 were international. Because of English language limitations, only a few locals could participate in the study. Even among those proficient in English (including the international employees), some were not selected to participate in the study because of the researcher’s working relationship with them as supervisors or subordinates. Only 12 had the right attributes to participate in the study. Out of the 12, only nine were able to participate.

Data Collection

Perceptual, demographic, and contextual data were collected from the participants.

“Perceptual” refers to the participant’s perception of the factors contributing to their long-term service at this university. The bulk of the information collected was perceptual.

Two other kinds of information were collected. They were contextual information that referred to the setting where the participants worked or lived and demographic information which described the participants in the study. This information was obtained from interviews, human resources data at AIU, and researcher observation. Both types of information were necessary because of their potential to influence a person’s perception, and as such, they could contribute to the explanation of shared beliefs and divergent perspectives (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Interview Procedure

Because the interview was the primary method for generating data in this study, perceptual information was critical (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Qualitative researchers can interview to discover abstract and intangible entities such as worldviews, feelings, values, and perceptions. One way to find these intangibles is by engaging people in conversation about them. Researchers depend on their dialogues to understand them. In short, “the purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” However, it must be remembered that perceptions are perceptions and do not necessarily reveal facts. The interviewee’s sustained assumptions and worldview often deeply embedded these perceptions. Even though their perspectives are neither right nor wrong, they tell the story of what participants believe to be true (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As such, they tremendously influence people’s behavior and decision-making.

Before conducting the interview, the researcher obtained permission to collect data from the Institutional Review Board of Andrews University and the administration of Asia-Pacific International University to interview its employees. The researcher contacted pre-identified employees who met the criteria and made an appointment to interview employees who indicated a willingness to participate in the study in their consent forms.

The researcher and participant met at a pre-arranged location on the interview day. The questions were semi-structured interview questions developed based on the reviewed literature. The first question was demographic, aiming at knowing the participant’s demographic background. Subsequent questions encouraged the participants to talk about their work experience. The researcher prompted responses based on pre-planned questions, which were worded per the objectives of the research question. (See Appendix A for the list of questions.) Follow-up questions were asked, especially when the researcher required more explanation. The pre-planned questions involved participants in lengthy, in-depth conversations regarding their service at AIU. The

interview was recorded using a recording function of the researcher's mobile phone. Each file was secured in a password-protected file backed up online in password-protected storage.

Data Analysis

The data analysis took place in four steps. The first step was for the researcher to become familiar with the raw data by transcribing the interviews. The long and tedious process of transcribing the interview allowed the researcher to become familiar with each participant's narratives. This was done using the column strategy recommended by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005), as cited by Saldana (2013). This strategy involved analyzing the data in three stages segregated by three columns. The first column was for the raw data in the first stage.

The researcher coded the data in the second step by identifying critical segments and assigning code labels. A code, according to Saldana (2013), is "... a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). As such, the process of coding "... involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information," then the researcher sought "evidence for the code from different databases being used in the study and then assigning a label to the code" (Creswell, 2013, p. 184). In other words, coding is a process of organizing the data by identifying the primary themes. The researcher coded by highlighting relevant words, phrases, and sentences based on what the researcher thought could potentially answer the research question. While literature helped recognize relevant information, the researcher strove to be open to other information that may not have been discovered before.

In the third step, the researcher created categories by combining several codes. In the last step, categories or themes were labeled. This method was helpful because it encouraged the researcher to do the analysis step by step—first, the raw data, then the preliminary codes, and then the final codes or themes. The step-by-step structure of the process minimized ambiguity.

Trustworthiness

One query that Chapter III needs to be able to answer well is whether or not the research is accurate, believable, and plausible (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Bloomberg and Volpe maintained that the answer to the question requires researchers to be knowledgeable about the trustworthiness criteria. The issue of trustworthiness is a common term that refers to what quantitative researchers call validity and reliability. Over the years, qualitative investigators have coined terms to describe the quantitative concepts of validity and reliability (Rudestam & Newton, 1992). In qualitative inquiry, credibility refers to validity, dependability refers to reliability, and transferability refers to generalizability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Credibility refers to the researcher's degree of accuracy in representing the participants' perception of the study. Did the researcher accurately picture the participants' thoughts, feelings, and actions? (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In other words, credibility in qualitative inquiry refers to the "accuracy of the findings as best described by the researcher and the participants" (Creswell, 2013, pp. 249-250). Bloomberg and Volpe listed several pieces of evidence of credibility in a study. They are as follows: 1. Clarification of researcher bias, 2. Prolonged involvement in the field, 3. Checking the accuracy of interpretation, 4. Use of triangulation, 5. Presentation of both negative and positive findings, 6. Use of member checks, and 7. Use of peer debriefing.

The second criterion of trustworthiness is dependability. The concept of dependability in qualitative inquiry refers to the degree of clarity regarding the processes and procedures used to gather and interpret data. A high level of dependability can be achieved in two ways. The first is done by creating an "audit trail" by providing a detailed and adequate explanation of the data collection process and analysis. An audit trail refers to the transparency of the description of the research process or steps from the beginning of the study to its conclusion. The second one is done by establishing inner-rater reliability through the participation of colleagues in coding some data. This is achieved by asking colleagues to code the interview data and comparing their coding to the

researchers. The similarity in the coding between the colleagues and the researchers contributes to dependability. Creswell (2013) refers to this as an intercoder agreement which is understood as the “stability of responses to multiple coders of data set” (p.253).

The third criterion of trustworthiness is transferability which refers to the effectiveness of the study in helping readers decide if similar processes will work in their contexts as a result of their in-depth understanding of how they happen at the research site (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In other words, transferability refers to the match between the research context and different contexts as evaluated by the reader. Transferability is evident in two ways:

1. the provision of detailed, thick, and realistic description
2. the provision of detailed information regarding the context. Both allow the readers to share the participants’ experiences, albeit vicariously.

To achieve a respectable level of trustworthiness in her research study, the researcher attempted to incorporate credibility, dependability, and transferability based on acceptable practices in academia.

In the area of credibility, the researcher achieved this in three areas: 1. By her prolonged involvement in the field as an employee at AIU allowed her to understand her participants and the organizational culture of the University reasonably well, an advantage that would not be easily accessible to a researcher coming from outside the University; 2. By the researcher’s ability to check for the accuracy of the interpretation of the data through participants’ confirmation of the interpretation; and 3. The researcher provision of the description of herself as a research instrument that has gone through experiences in which she intended to leave the University.

In the area of dependability, the researcher explained the data collection process and analysis, as seen earlier in this chapter. Similarly, in transferability, the researcher provided a detailed description of the participants and the context, also given earlier in this chapter.

Ethical Considerations and Institutional Review Board

Researchers must be highly concerned with ethical issues because of their moral obligation to ensure that their research studies are carried out to protect participants from harm (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Since ethical issues can potentially arise in any research phase, researchers must maintain a high level of ethics. Because ethics is one of the main concerns of any research, any researcher must receive approval from the institutional review board (IRB) before collecting data.

After the Dissertation Committee approved the dissertation proposal, the researcher completed and submitted the Application for Approval of Research Involving Human Subject Form to the Institutional Review Board of Andrews University. The researcher submitted several supporting documents, including a training certificate indicating that the researcher had obtained the required IRB web-based certificate on protecting human research subjects, an institutional approval letter, and informed consent.

Regarding informed consent, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) submit that using informed consent is integral to research ethics. The use of informed consent is motivated by the principle that guarantees that all human participants maintain their autonomy and exercise their rights and ability to evaluate for themselves what risks they are willing to take to contribute to the discovery of new knowledge. In this study, the researcher assured participants in the informed consent of the steps taken to defend their anonymity and safety. The researcher declared that participation in this study would not pose any risk to them. The researcher also ensured that all the sources used in the research were given proper acknowledgment. In other words, all ideas taken from others must be given credit. The researcher was helped to be vigilant in safeguarding this research from plagiarism by Turnitin, an internet-based plagiarism detection service.

Summary

This chapter elaborated on the qualitative methodology used in this study to achieve its purpose, which was to discover the factors that contributed to job longevity among select employees of Asia-Pacific International University. The research question was best answered using a case study

research design using a narrative approach. Through the detailed descriptions of the participants' lived experiences, they shared what contributed to their long-term stay at AIU.

CHAPTER IV

STORIES AND VOICES

Introduction

This chapter shares the narratives of nine employees who had served at Asia-Pacific International University for a minimum of ten years. In the stories, participants reflected on their work experiences. Each narrative consists of the following components: introduction of the employee (family background, educational achievement, and previous work experience), description of the reasons for working at AIU, what the employee appreciated about their work, the challenges in the workplace, and whether or not the employee had any previous intention of leaving AIU. Each narrative concluded with why they were still at AIU after over a decade of service. To conceal the participants' identities, the researcher assigned fictitious names to each and all named entities mentioned in the narratives.

Lara

Lara grew up in a solid Adventist home. Her parents were faithful mission workers who served in various places every four or five years. As a result, moving to a new place and adjusting to a new environment was a regular part of Lara's and her siblings' childhood days. Even though her parents accepted the nomadic life, they were concerned about the impact of the constant moving on their children's education. Believing in the importance of Adventist education for their children, Lara's parents enrolled them in Adventist boarding schools as soon as they were old enough to leave home. She reminisced:

Actually, I was so excited to leave home. My mother was crying because ...I was the youngest in the family.... I saw all my older brother and sisters go to college, and when they would come home for a holiday, it was usually summer holiday,...they would bring the yearbook, you know. We would look at the yearbook and all the activities, and it sounded so exciting, so much fun. So, I was waiting for when it will be my turn that I can also go ...with them. It all sounded so interesting.

As Lara explained, exciting stories of life in the boarding school she heard from her older siblings created a sense of anticipation when she could leave home.

Lara started attending a boarding school when she was 13 years old. The commitment to Adventist education was evident from their willingness to travel long distances to the school. Sometimes they had to travel to the boarding school for three days and two nights from where her parents worked. Their willingness to travel long to go to their boarding school raised questions among observers who wondered why they did not go to a nearby government school.

After completing high school, Lara studied at Sonsomido Adventist College. She had intended to return home after she completed her studies. However, there was a need for a teacher that matched her qualification. She was offered a teaching job. The job offer was attractive because of the opportunity for her to continue studying at a graduate level at a nearby “....well-known, prestigious university....” at no cost to herself while working at Sonsomido Adventist College. Lara accepted the offer. She worked and studied until she completed a master’s degree.

After earning her master’s degree, Lara got married. Lara and her husband served at Sonsomido Adventist College for almost a decade before they received a call to work in another country. They accepted the call and relocated to a new culture and country.

Despite the natural beauty of the campus and the student body that was generally “respectful,” Lara and her husband realized almost immediately that safety was a top concern at the college.

Political instability and tensions among religious groups created a volatile environment that affected the country and the college where Lara and her husband worked. Lara described:

The political situation was very volatile. Anytime things can go wrong. There were many strikes. It's difficult to go out if there is a strike. Everything is closed. The transportation is closed. Nothing is running in the whole country...The political situation was very volatile. Also, there were many conflicts between Muslim students and Christian students. There were a lot of conflicts within the university itself.

The ongoing conflicts and tension worried Lara and her husband, especially regarding the safety of their children.

Why AIU?

After working at Lomiding Adventist College for a few years, Lara applied for a teaching job at AIU in response to an invitation to apply. AIU called her for an interview and offered a position to both Lara and her husband. The invitation to apply came after Lara and her husband had started thinking about the education of their young children. They were both quite concerned with the political unrest, regular strikes, and ongoing conflicts among different religious groups in the country. They wanted their children to study in a peaceful and safe environment. Lara explained:

We were looking for good Adventist education for our children and also a good environment in a campus setting that we had experienced as children growing up and also what we had experienced in our early education in a campus environment. That was the strong reason to come here.

They accepted the job offer because of the peaceful atmosphere of the country and the safe environment at AIU created by political stability and harmonious relations among religious groups. Above all, there was a school their children could attend on the campus of AIU.

Elements Appreciated

Lara valued several things about AIU. She described the environment as "...very good..." for work and was thankful for a "...very peaceful..." situation. She reflected on how she rose from a teaching position to an administrative role and expressed appreciation for the "...great opportunities for improving academically, spiritually and socially..." She especially prized the annual professional development allowance allocated to each employee. She was encouraged by

the emphasis on regular professional development, which other institutions where she had served earlier did not strongly emphasize.

She provided more details in her description below:

... the one thing that we really appreciated about AIU is the opportunity for professional development. In other universities, we were not given so much...Maybe it was not emphasized so much or stressed so much.... I think there was some amount that was given to us....I feel it is very important for us to grow professionally, attend conferences, and learn through seminars and conferences, and opportunity to travel to different places to attend seminars. It opens your eyes. It helps you to learn and grow professionally and also learn about the importance of improving.

She enjoyed the mix of an international group of people living and working together. She was thankful for having supportive colleagues and supervisors. She said, “I felt I was blessed to have a set of colleagues, and even the dean, who was very appreciative and supportive.” She acknowledged that little disagreements here and there were part of life. In her opinion, disagreements could not be avoided as long as people did not have the same mind. Fortunately, in Lara’s case, the little disagreements remained negligible. None had escalated into a major conflict. In other words, Lara had not experienced severe friction or difficulties that made her think of quitting work. She explained:

I have never had experiences of serious conflicts or difficulties that you do not want to work on or something like that.... Sometimes you have conflict, and you are not happy, and you want to leave. You are not satisfied; you are not happy, so you want to leave. Of course, there has been little disagreement....a little conflict here and there, but on the whole, nothing major.

While conflict in the workplace is common, Lara did not experience intense conflict to make her consider leaving.

Challenges

One of the challenges Lara faced “...is the pressure of the government requirements that leave very little time for creativity...” and even for “...planning and teaching....” She was referring to the quality assurance requirements. In Thailand, higher educational institutions were required to write a self-assessment report annually at three levels—program level (a program of study), faculty level, and institutional level. The preparation for this annual round of report writing was heavy. She

described it as "...demanding and exhausting". She shared, "I remember some years back you are spending so much time just preparing the documents that you have no time to prepare for your classes, preparing well and being creative in your lessons and giving timely feedback."

Another challenge is the lack of opportunity to upgrade beyond the master's level. She elaborated, "When you reach the master's level, there is no university nearby. Once you are married, I feel it is difficult to leave everything and go for further studies." Part of the lack of the opportunity for further studies was created by the fact that "the university focuses on Southeast Asia." As someone from outside the Southeast Asia region, Lara had little opportunity to go for further studies beyond the master's level.

Dealing with Difficult Times

Lara would "...take it to God in prayer..." when dealing with tough times. For non-confidential matters, she would talk to her husband. If the problem involved a colleague and talking to the colleague was going to be helpful, she would speak or "...mainly communicate..." She believed that, at times, that silence was better than talking at times because "...maybe saying things may make it worse." Depending on the situation, she may wait before deciding what to do next.

Lara found encouragement in the companionship and friendship of others when she faced difficult times. She appreciated the supportive network in the workplace. She said, "I felt it is very nice in our faculty when you have to go for a conference or something, or you urgently need to go somewhere, people are willing to teach your classes.... That's very helpful."

Respite in nature helped Lara when she was going through a difficult time, as did going out with family and friends. She said, "What helped many times is taking a little outing with your friends or with your faculty. You go out somewhere, and you just spend some time in nature." She would come back feeling "refreshed" and "revived."

In addition, Lara also found peace and encouragement from the word of God and songs of faith. She explained: “Thanks to God for His word that encourages us. Many times, we will listen to songs that will encourage us.”

Thoughts of Leaving

Lara and her husband considered the possibility of leaving when he was invited to serve in another institution. The invitation was attractive because of the possibility of doing their doctoral degree there. However, things did not work out, and Lara and her husband were at peace with the outcome because both believed that God was directing their steps. Lara declared, “If it is time to leave, God would indicate it.” Lara and her husband never actively looked for a job, from their first job to their current positions. They had always been invited to apply, and it did not bother them when things did not work out because they believed that God was guiding their steps.

Lara also mentioned that, once or twice, severe discouragement hit her husband, and he thought of leaving. The discouragement came from feeling misunderstood or not being appreciated. “We were discouraged.... [My husband] felt it was better to go. You are giving your entire life, your energy to serve in a place; you feel people not appreciating it, not understanding, or doubting what you are doing....” When discouraged, she did not give in to discouragement or try to justify herself but kept her connection with God strong. From her own experience, Lara said, “God will give you grace. God gives you the energy to carry on.”

Still at AIU

Lara attributed her long-term service at AIU to God’s leading and the encouragement she and her husband had received when they were discouraged. Both of them have discovered the power of encouragement. Lara explained:

[My husband] was ready to go back, but many people encouraged him, many individuals who showed their love and support, I believe contribute to [our] desire to stay....It doesn’t have to be much. It could just be a statement, a word of encouragement that tells you that you are appreciated, and that God appreciates what you are doing gives you, when you are discouraged, courage to persevere.

Lara and her husband received encouragement in different forms – from God’s word, friends, and colleagues. As their courage gradually returned, so was their commitment to God’s work and sense of mission. Eventually, the desire to leave lost its grip. Once again, they were back to whole-hearted service. They decided it was not the right time to leave.

A sense of purpose to serve God gave meaning to her ministry, and this sense of purpose intensified through the years. She stated, “...we believe that it is good to be where God wants us to be....And if the time is right for us to go, we will go, and we believe God will guide us. He will lead to the next phase of our life, the next place of service.” In Lara’s case, they will decide to leave when it is clear that God wants them to serve Him at a different vineyard. When the time comes, it will be clear.

Natasha

Natasha and her two siblings were born to service-minded parents. Her father was a church pastor, and her mother was a self-taught nurse who earned the respect of the community members and medical personnel. Natasha explained:

She received some basic training for about six months....But she picked up the skills ... to help in childbirth....Even the doctors would be afraid of doing certain things, but she was not. They would call her. How shall we do, and she will guide them.

As a church pastor, Natasha’s father strongly believed in Adventist education. As a result, all his children studied at Adventist boarding schools from elementary to college. Because of this experience, Natasha grew up appreciating living on the campus of Adventist institutions. She reminisced:

I started studying in a boarding school in Grade 2. We knew some family friends. Their daughters were in the 9th and 10th Grades. They washed her clothes and made sure I was ready for school. They came and made my bed... My mother paid them to take care of me....I was the only second grader in the dorm...The other second graders stayed with their families.

While in boarding school, Natasha saw her parents only “twice a year, summer and Christmas.” Returning home and then going back to school tended to be painful. She shared:

Even now, I don't like the sunset. I get very depressed. I was wondering why. Because that was the time we would board the train, and we used to go, and it would just be three or four hours by train, and I would see the sun setting behind the hills. That depresses me if I am not with [my husband]. I being with [him], I am okay. It's beautiful. If I am alone, then I am very depressed.

Because her siblings and Natasha usually board the train back to school just before sunset, Natasha has associated sunset with the sadness of separation from her parents. To the day she narrated this story, she would be sad if she was alone when noticing the sunset, but not when she had company.

After Natasha married, she and her husband moved to another country to work. While there, the family grew with the birth of two children. After a decade, they needed to return to their home country to process their papers to stay longer in the country where they worked. However, things did not turn out as planned. “[My husband’s] document was not strong enough.... He was not a skilled laborer.” Natasha and her husband did not give up easily, though. They “...went through two different lawyers” but were unsuccessful. Consequently, they were not able to return to their workplace. Both Natasha and her husband were sorely disappointed. Fortunately for them, their children were able to return to the country and were cared for by her sister-in-law, who did not want the children to study in Natasha’s home country, and “...she was expecting them to return...” After two years of trying and failing, Natasha and her husband reluctantly resigned to their new situation, which her husband took “badly.” Adjustment to life in their own country was challenging. They “... had to start from scratch.... Everything, even basic things like pots and pans.” Natasha remembered her mother “...sent us pots and pans and plates from another province.” In retrospect, however, Natasha was thankful for the unexpected change because, in the end, things worked out for the better. She said, “Let me finish my studies...”; so she “got back into college and finished” her undergraduate studies. After a while, Natasha and her husband were called to serve in a college. They worked there for several years, and Natasha noticed more things than she wished to see. “After six years, we realized I didn’t like it.” She specifically “didn’t like the politic.” There came a time when Natasha decided she had had enough. She was discouraged by some of the things

happening in the college. “There was no transparency. No accountability.... I didn’t like the system. There was no fairness.... If I am still there, I would not have been a Christian, or I would have been ashamed to be a Christian.” Natasha wanted a change in her work environment. Still, the only way to have a change was to move somewhere else. She eventually decided to move. Her husband “was supportive” of her decision and “helped her...” with the process of moving. She decided to look for a job in Thailand. Her husband, however, needed to “stay back because by then [their] son...” who needed to complete his high school. Natasha would go home twice a year to be with them. Eventually, her husband joined her in Thailand.

Why AIU?

When Natasha first came to Thailand, she worked in a government school, “a boys’ school.” Natasha taught English. She did not have a pleasant experience teaching there because of the challenges of dealing with teenagers who could not speak much English. She narrated:

For the English classes, they would come up to the third floor. When a foreign teacher taught, the students would scream and shout as they came up to the class. When it was a Thai teacher teaching on our floor, you didn’t even know when they came. You would be surprised that they were all seated and quiet in the classroom.

Realizing that Natasha was having difficulty with students’ behavior, the English Program Director advised her to control the class using physical force. The Director said she “can hit” and “kick” them. She was uncomfortable with that kind of management even though her Thai colleagues urged her to do so. In addition, Natasha knew that “if [she] hit and kicked, [she] would get into a big problem” because “as a foreigner, we were not supposed to do that.”

After a year in this work setting, Natasha decided she had had enough. She moved to an elementary school. She was assigned to Grade 2. She enjoyed teaching there because “the kids were so sweet.” However, she found the expectation on how classes should be taught rather repressive. There was not much freedom to be creative. She detailed the experience:

When the children came running to us, the teachers would say something in Thai, and immediately they would freeze and go back. I think they didn’t like that. Them being so attached

to us. Or we're playing games with them. They didn't like that. For the demo, they would make us do that, but when we taught, they wanted order in the class. Everyone sits in their place and learns like that. So, we couldn't really play games and all or if we played games and kids were running up and down and writing the answers on the board, they would say something because they would always sit at the back. They would have their desk for them. So, from there, they would control the students. Say something and the kids would sit back.

Then she moved to a private school. She was teaching there when a friend told her there was a job opening at AIU and strongly encouraged her to apply. The news came to her when she was struggling with loneliness. She described her experience at this private school as being the "loneliest time" of her life. She did not have any "friends." While she had colleagues to talk to at the workplace, she was all by herself after office hours. Natasha recounted the experience:

I was on my own. I was very lonely there. I was on my own. I was very lonely there. I didn't like it.... There is a church. I went there once in a while. I would go to church, sit, and then exit.... You didn't know who your neighbors are, and when you go out, you don't know anyone.

In addition to her loneliness, or because of her loneliness, Natasha missed living on a school campus. She stated: "Since Grade 2, I have been in a boarding school. I've lived on campus. When we started working, we lived on campus.... So, I have always been on a campus.... So really, I have been spoiled by living on campus." Having lived on the campuses of Adventist institutions, Natasha longed to work in a Christian environment. Therefore, as soon as she learned about a teaching vacancy at AIU, she submitted her resume. Much to her joy, she was accepted to work in one of the departments.

Elements Appreciated

Having taught in a school where teaching methodology was controlled, Natasha valued the freedom of teaching as teachers saw fit within the context of the curriculum and the mission of the AIU. Natasha explained, "What I like is no one comes and... tells me what to do... you are supposed to do this, this, this. I am at my liberty of teaching." She was free to decide on the methodology if she taught based on the course description and course objectives. How she taught was "up to her." In other words, Natasha was grateful that no one was dictating how things must be done.

She enjoyed teaching even though she taught similar courses. While the content or the skill may be the same, there was always something unique about a class or a group of students. She explained:

Somebody asked me, “How can you like teaching the same thing? Aren’t you bored? Yes, I said, I teach the same thing. But I realize it is never the same.... Even if you don’t make changes, it just comes because of the different students you have, the way they ask you questions, or the way they react to a lesson; you know, it is still not the same. So, I said, yes, the lesson is the same but the way you do things in the class has changed. That’s why I said I am not bored.

Relationships in the workplace were essential to Natasha because she saw her colleagues almost daily. When asked about her environment in her workplace, this is how Natasha described it:

I like our working environment. Yes, we do have our ups and downs.... but then I see the same people when I need them. They are the first ones to come and help.... So, I like that.... I can count on them if I need something else not related to my work. Other times I can come to them. So, when somebody needs help or somebody is going through something, they are there to support. I like that.

Natasha was thankful for the positive work environment in her department. Her colleagues were supportive and helpful. “I can count on them,” she said. When she needed help, they were more than willing to offer assistance. This created closeness among the colleagues.

Challenges

Natasha struggled with the expectation to engage in research and publishing. She blamed her struggle on her multitasking tendency and inability to focus on one thing.

I find [research] challenging. Challenging because I multitask a lot. Being a woman, I cannot just focus on one thing. Then I know everything is going to fall apart. I cannot switch immediately to academic writing. You know, that’s difficult for me.

Her husband advised her to focus. He said, “Don’t cook. Don’t do this. Don’t do that.” But Natasha found it challenging to ignore things that needed to be done. She explained, “When I go into the house, and I see something fallen, I need to straighten it.” She admitted that she did not like research writing and research reading. “I realize that I don’t like writing.... I don’t even like research reading.... [But] I force myself... and it’s a big burden.” However, because research is required, she managed to fulfill the requirement with the help of self-discipline and by collaborating

with more experienced researchers. At the time of the interview, Natasha was working on two research projects with people she was collaborating with. One of them collaborated with a colleague and was going to "...have a presentation" at an international conference organized by one of the local universities. Natasha received all the help she could get, including assistance from her husband. "[My husband] is helping me." She also got support from the "Research Director" of a sister institution.

Dealing with Difficult Times

When difficult times came to Natasha, "The first few days are usually very tough.... I can't sleep." She said she would engage in self-beating and agonize over the details.

Maybe if I have not said it or maybe if I have not done it.... Why was I so stupid, or why did I put myself in that situation? Why did I get involved? Why did I, you know, speak whatever I have to speak?

Praying was also a meaningful way to deal with difficult situations. She said, "I will keep on praying...." She talked to her husband, who usually helped her see things from different perspectives. Usually, after a tough time, she reflected on it and realized that she overreacted to the problems.

But then, when I think of it now, I don't remember the heavy times. I remember crying and praying and things like that, but I don't remember why I am feeling so lost. I shouldn't have felt that bad. It wasn't that bad. That's how I felt.

When facing tough times, Natasha learned to reach out to others to ask for help. She would talk to others if she thought they could help, but only to "someone you can really trust." The relationship among her colleagues in her department made her feel safe to ask for help, opinion, and advice.

In my workplace, I can go to a few people and ask them. Is this correct? This is what happened. Was I wrong to speak up, or was I wrong to express my view? What do you think? Sometimes they say yes. What you are saying is okay, but maybe not the way you spoke. Or they will say no. What you said was okay. I am glad you feel brave enough to speak... Or they will say, if I were in your place, I would not say that. Sometimes they say, maybe you can handle it this way...."

There was no fear of asking because of the security in the relationship. Her colleagues did not judge her and did not make her feel bad. When unsure of something, she would not hesitate to ask. She said, “If I don’t know if I don’t understand any question, grammar, or something, I can go and ask them. How do I do this?... How do I fix this?” Natasha felt comfortable asking because they would not say, “How can you be so stupid?” or “You have been working here so long; how come you don’t know?” The environment encourages them to be open with each other.

Thoughts of Leaving

Natasha said the thought of leaving never crossed her mind for the first decade of her work experience. But she admitted that the requirements for quality assurance had made teaching less enjoyable. “Every day, the requirements from Quality Assurance for this document and that, how do say it? It’s less enjoyable teaching because of the requirements or demands....But in the end, it wasn’t so bad. Why was I complaining?”

But when a leadership change took place in her department, she struggled to adjust to the changes. Natasha described the first year of the new leadership:

[The first year] was quite challenging. Every meeting I used to dread. I used to dread what the [Chair] would say. I dread how I would react.... I would pray before going. I knew I needed to pray before going. Shut your mouth. Pretend is not personal.... I prayed a lot.

The transition affected the work environment, and tasks seemed heavier than before. For the first time in more than a decade, she thought of the possibility of leaving AIU. She recounted the difficult time:

I said I cannot take this because it was terrible. We can start looking.... You know our office here is very open. We just shout and talk to anybody.... And you bumped into each other every time you open the door. Suddenly, that was gone.... It was not a good thing.... Everyone started feeling that.” Fortunately, though, the tension did not last long. “Later on, it all started improving...a lot. Big difference. That’s why everyone is okay now.”

Natasha’s sense of job security was shaken when the employment of a high-ranking employee who still had a few more years of employment contract was ended. Fear surged in the hearts of some. Natasha admitted:

...this year, with all the changes shook us. If they can do that with the administrators, they have a contract of two years, three years, but you need to step down now. So, I was telling [her husband] what happened to us. They just gave us a contract for four years. Suddenly they said, okay, you need to go because the government requires this, this, this, this.

The incident made Natasha feel insecure, but she did not think of leaving because of temporary fear.

Still at AIU

Natasha thought that her spiritual journey contributed to her serving at AIU for more than ten years. She had discovered a sense of purpose that made her happy to serve at AIU. It gave her happiness knowing that God wanted her to serve at this University. She said that if she were miserable here, she would have left.

I think for me, it will be my spiritual experience. We had family worship and things like that, but I am closer to God now. I feel....I keep feeling that God still wants me here. That's why, maybe. I feel happier here. And every morning when we walk around, I am happy. I am happy to be in this place. You know. I appreciate. Look at this. Whatever. I am happy.... But I just feel happy here.

In addition to the maturity developed in her spiritual journey, Natasha appreciated the work environment at AIU. First, she valued transparency in the workplace. She said committee action was always explained. For instance, when a co-worker was given research time, it was explained why it was given to the specific person. She elaborated:

This semester many people do research. And they tell you, next semester, you all will do. But okay, I didn't get a chance to do it, but we were told why we didn't get the chance. See. It doesn't mean everyone will get equal benefits or whatever, but we also realize why. So, it is clear.

Transparency was also seen in the information shared with employees. They were informed of their benefits. For instance, when Natasha told her supervisor that she would present her paper, she was told about the presentation allowance. She appreciated that because that kind of transparency did not happen in her previous workplace. From her work experience elsewhere, she said that employees were not given adequate information.

...In [my home country], they will not tell you. If you found out, they will ask. Why do you want to go? How do you know? Who told you? How come? And even they will say, please wait. It is very difficult to get anything.... It's not transparent at all. People did not know what

their rights were. “Even if they know, they cannot get it. You might go and ask. They will listen to you, okay, oh okay, and then finish. That’s the end of it.... We don’t have the money.

Natasha also appreciated the safety of the campus and the country. She explained, “Every time we pray, we thank God we have this safe place and safe country.” There was hardly any riot or strike. No tension among different groups of people. No fear in traveling around Thailand.

Ponnela

Ponnela and her two younger brothers were born into a business family. Her father ran a drug store, and her mother was a seamstress from whom Ponnela learned how to make her clothes. Ponnela grew up seeing her parents doing business. In fact, she learned how to perform simple mathematical operations very early in life. At a very young age, she started learning about numbers and letters. She attributed this to having a babysitter who was studying, and “every day they read,” Ponnela was taught “how to pronounce” the Roman alphabet and the Thai letters. As a result, Ponnela could calculate “plus and minus” when she was only “four years old.” All these helped Ponnela enroll in Grade 1 at four years old. Being “big” for her age also helped her enroll earlier.

After completing high school, she came to Mission College (one of the three institutions that merged to be eventually known as Asia-Pacific International University) to take nursing. Unfortunately, it was too late for her to join the nursing program when she came. She decided to wait for the following year by taking some business courses. At the end of the year, she earned a CPGA of 4.00 and learned to enjoy business courses. She decided to continue studying business.

Ponnela stayed in the residence hall for three semesters. She was rooming with a friend from the same hometown. The roommates became good friends. Unfortunately, her roommate had to drop from college due to a “personal problem” after three semesters. After her roommate left, Ponnela felt “lonely.” Even though Ponnela had other friends, none of them were close friends. Ponnela did not feel happy staying in the residence hall anymore. “I talked to my mom....and talked to the dormitory dean. I am not happy to stay. I need to go home.” The Dormitory Dean allowed

her to move out of the residence hall. For the rest of her studies at Mission College, Ponnela “woke up at 5 o’clock and went to the bus station at 6 o’clock and... reached [Mission College] around 8 o’clock” every weekday. Two and a half years later, she graduated with first honor when she was “only 20 years old.” The first thing she did upon graduation was take care of a loved one. She “stayed” at a government hospital for “six months” to care for her grandmother.

Why AIU?

After six months of caring for her grandmother in the hospital, Ponnela received a call from one of the administrators at Mission College. The College had just lost a cashier and was checking if Ponnela was interested in applying for the opening. Ponnela was asked, “Are you interested in working with us?” She responded, “Yes, I am interested.” She came for an interview the very next day. The cashier position was offered to her. Ponnela said, “I accept. I want to work.” She started working immediately. Six months later, her grandmother passed away.

Deciding to return to her alma mater was easy for Ponnela because she considered Mission College her home. She said it is like “coming back home. Even though I didn’t stay in the dorm, I feel like this is my home because, for four years, we stayed together with friends.”

While staying in the dormitory, she worked as a “student worker for the Academic Office.... a resident advisor in the dormitory, a phone operator... and a student worker in the library.” She explained: “I knew all the people in the office. All the teachers. We were close, like a family. I said it looks like I am going back home.”

Elements Appreciated

Ponnela liked her current role because “it is important.” Its importance comes from the fact that “it is one way to show to the outside people that you have the quality to accept students and produce graduates.” Whenever she went out to attend meetings, she felt that she needed to do her best. She explained: “Every time I go out, I am not going out to present my name, but I am presenting the name of the University. That’s why when I attend a seminar or anything, I need to come with the name of the University.”

She also valued the challenges she faced because they encouraged her to use her brain. She was not challenged to think in her previous position because she performed “routine work.” She said, “You worked, finished, one by one, but not challenging her to think.” Her present position encouraged her to think outside the box. She enjoyed the challenge “to create” and “to use her brain all the time.” She had to find ways to improve how things were done as expected by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation.

In addition, she enjoyed networking with other universities. Her work required her to meet with many people from other universities. Ponnela “...always likes to talk to them.” She said: “I don’t know them, but I go talk to them. Sometimes I ask them questions... I learn from them, and it opens my mind to improve.” In other words, she relished the opportunity to exchange ideas with others and to learn from their experience. She found satisfaction in her work.

Challenges

Ponnela’s main challenge was “how to make people understand” government expectations. She was responsible for helping programs of study/departments and faculties to understand the expectations of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation. She believed that when people understood the expectations, they would be able to meet them. She said:

If you don’t understand or have a question, feel free to call me. I can go to your office to explain because I believe that when you understand everything, you will not have any questions. And you can explain it to others also.

That was why Ponnela worked hard to help faculty members and administrators understand. She organized seminars/workshops, and presentations to help achieve that goal. She also provided guidance and advice. Despite what she had done, many faculty members and staff did not view government requirements as helpful. Many saw such requirements as burdensome.

Ponnela worked efficiently. She could focus well on her tasks and complete them in a short time. As someone who was self-directed, she struggled to be patient with others who took a lot of time to complete their tasks. She confessed: "I get angry easily." She set a high standard for work performance and became annoyed with those who did not meet her standard. This, at times, affected her work relationship with others who did not understand her.

Dealing with Difficult Times

Ponnela responded to difficult times with tears. She cried when she was upset. She admitted: "Many times I cry. Cry with myself. Sometimes I cannot find the way to go; I cry." She cried when she did not know what to do. She cried alone. When Ponnela was upset or stuck, she would cry and talk to her husband, her biggest supporter. He listened. Generally, after about ten minutes of talking and crying, Ponnela calmed down, and her mind became clear. She would be able to think again. She explained, "I always talk to my husband. Whether it is about my job or a personal issue, I always sit and cry with him. Sometimes I don't talk to anyone else. I talk only to my husband." Even though his education was limited, "he possesses better life skills than me," Ponnela confessed.

He advises me on many issues.... Sometimes he does not give advice. Sometimes he asks me to sit with myself and think. He said I believe you can find a way. Believe in God and pray. If you cannot find a way, sit with yourself, and pray. Because you said you believe in God, you pray. Many times, I pray by myself when I sit quietly. After ten minutes, I know what I should do."

He also told her that she was a genius but could not think because of stress. After spending time alone and praying, Ponnela usually found a way to do what she could not do earlier. She would call her husband and tell him what she planned to do, and he always supported her.

Thoughts of Leaving

Ponnela admitted that she had thought of leaving after her daughter completed her studies. Her professional network had expanded because her work required her to meet with university employees from other universities. Others noticed her talents, skills, and work ethic. She described some attractive job offers:

For the last two years, three universities contacted me to [work for them]. They give me a very high salary, and for my son and my daughter study free of charge because all of them have nursing faculty. I have my house. For me, I can take my doctoral degree.

The job offers with a very high salary, free education for her children, and the opportunity to get her doctoral degree were quite tempting. She did consider the possibility of taking one of the offers.

When there was a shift in leadership involving people to whom Ponnela had been loyal, she seriously considered whether she wanted to remain at the University. She talked to one of them to whom she had been loyal. When she saw a possible change, Ponnela responded: “Okay, if it is that way, I need to think for myself because I stay here because of you. Now, you are not my boss anymore; I don’t want to stay.”

Ponnela also confessed to being “impatient,” which led to her struggle with burnout. She explained her frustration.

I am a very active person. When I need to do [a project], I need everyone to follow and quickly work with me. Not waiting and waiting. I feel bored in my heart because my personality is very active and very fast. I need the people around me to be [active] because sometimes I suggest something, and no one agrees with me. Okay, I accept that but don’t say you agree, but you don’t follow. [This makes me] very upset... This is the first reason I want to resign. I am burned out.

As a Type A personality, Ponnela was highly driven to complete projects and could complete tasks before the deadlines. Because of her ability to focus and complete projects in a short time, she found it frustrating to be working with others who needed more time to complete tasks.

Still at AIU

When Ponnella talked to her husband about her intention to leave, he asked her to think carefully. “You have every day like this because God called you. Do you need to leave Him?” That question encouraged Ponnella to count her blessings. She said, “My son graduated because of the University and because God called me.” In addition, she spoke to her long-time colleague, who eventually became her supervisor. Ponnella detailed the conversation:

He asked, Will you leave me? We have been working together to support the University, and now that I have been given more responsibility, you will leave me. And I said, okay, I will stay. I will stay to support you.

Ponnella confessed that she had been working at the university because of her respect for someone who loved God. In addition, Ponnella attributed his son’s completion of undergraduate studies to the University and “...because God called” her. She stayed because of the people who believed in her and supported her while growing professionally. One of them encouraged her to serve the University not because of people but because of God. This person said, “You need to stay even if I am not here. Work for God, for the University, not for any person.” Persuaded, she changed her mind and remained.

Whitmon

Whitmon came from a family of five children. He grew up in an Adventist family, “...but when he was still young, [his] dad... changed his belief into another denomination, but he kept the Sabbath.” The rest of the family remained Adventist. Whitmon earliest education was “in public school until he was in Grade 2.” At a time when his mother was concerned about the influence of non-Christian education, his mother was called to serve in a school by a missionary who wanted “to open an Adventist school in that area.” This school was established in a “refugee camp.” The missionary wanted his mother “to be a teacher.” Whitmon’s mother accepted the call to teach at Forest Hill School, where Whitmon “studied from Grade 3 until he graduated from high school.” From Grade 3 onwards, he studied in Adventist institutions.

Because the local government did not accredit Forest Hill School, it would not be possible for Whitmon to go for higher education after high school. To solve this problem, he enrolled at another Adventist school, Green Field Academy, which the government recognized. This school offered an adult program that allowed older students to enroll. Whitmon studied again “from Grade 1 to Grade 12, but it went faster. In one year, [he] could finish three grades.” Because of his maturity, he was “...employed as a teacher assistant” at the high school in the second year he was at Green Field Academy. After “...working at the high school for a year,” the school “...needed an elementary teacher.” The school asked Whitmon to be a full-time elementary teacher while he continued his studies. It took him “...six years to finish [his] studies there.” With that completion, he received a high school certificate that the local government recognized. After Whitmon completed high school the second time, he worked for one year for an organization. Then he came to AIU as a self-sponsored mature student. After studying for about one and a half years, he was “...offered a full-time position” because of his maturity. It took him a few years longer to complete his undergraduate degree because of the full-time job.

Why AIU?

One of the reasons Whitmon accepted the job offer at the University after he completed his undergraduate studies was his desire to live in an Adventist environment. He “used to stay in an Adventist environment. [He] also [has] experienced other places as well, and [he] can see the difference.” The conflicts and jealousy he observed among employees while working outside the Adventist environment helped him appreciate living on an Adventist campus. He learned from his prior work experience that people of similar faith understood him better.

When Whitmon was offered a job, his mother advised him to take the offer. She “encouraged” Whitmon to work for the church because “none of [his] siblings were working in an Adventist setting.” Whitmon explained:

For my mom, in her life, most of her siblings are in the SDA environment or setting. They are working for SDA. She also wants to see her children like that, but I am the only one who has the

opportunity like this. So, she encouraged me to stay, plus I was also offered a job here. And that's why I stay here.

In addition, Whitmon's positive experience working at the university as a student made it easy for him to accept the job offer. Even though he never planned to work with students, once he was "given the opportunity to work with students in the dormitory, [he] found it interesting to get involved with people." He "enjoyed" his work. Whitmon explained further:

Another factor also was at that time, my supervisor...was kind and understanding. So, I thought, well, I have been one year outside there, and some of the supervisors were very demanding and selfish. Working here, I have a good environment. You don't have stress, and you enjoy life.

Because of his work experience outside the Church system, Whitmon knew how different work environments could be outside. In his case, his short experience with "demanding" and "selfish" supervisors compared poorly with his experience of working with "kind" and "understanding" supervisors.

Elements Appreciated

Apart from liking the Adventist environment and appreciating his supervisors, Whitmon enjoyed his work because it required him to find ways to deal with different groups of people constantly. He "[likes]... dealing with young people" despite the challenges. He explained, "Even though the problem may be the same thing... such as students like to sneak out at night, coming back late, smoking and things like that," he had to deal with them differently because each new group of students had "...new ways to do things." Whitmon discovered that he had to learn new ways of doing things because "... the next group that is coming has the same problem but a different way to do things. So, you must also change and think of the way to approach." He found it satisfying to "grow and catch up with the young people." It made his work fascinating because it "keeps [him] active and alert all the time, to think ahead of the time and to learn to approach different people." In short, he had never been bored with his work because of the constant need to learn how to deal with people who differed from each other individually and collectively.

Challenges

One of the challenges Whitmon faced in the workplace was helping students make sense of rules and regulations. He elaborated:

The most common problem we face here is attending the programs that we have prepared for students. And the other one is smoking, especially for boys.... Of course, we have many students who are not from a Christian background. Some are strong. Some are not. For example, some of the students come from a Cha Christian back but different denominations around. But they are very strong in their beliefs. So, when they come here, they feel offended if they attend this kind of program. Another group of students is Buddhist students. Some are from Thailand. They are not that strong. They are flexible. But some of the students from Myanmar are strong in their faith. So, they are offended because they have to attend this kind of program. So, it is very challenging to help them understand that it is not about religion but more about character development. We talk about values.... we don't force them to become Christian SDA.... It's a challenge. They don't get it. Some do understand. Some don't.

As shown in his explanation, Whitmon regularly faced challenges in helping students understand the purpose of policies. For instance, some students came from backgrounds where smoking was acceptable in the community and drinking was considered a norm. However, AIU is a zero-smoking and zero-drinking campus. Even more challenging was explaining the worship attendance requirement. Whitmon saw cooperation but also faced non-compliance. He elaborated more about his work:

What we do here is that we have a mission. It is our mission. Whether the students do or not, they have to make their own decision. We have to pray for them.... We always foresee that when students come here, it is not they want to come here. But that God brings them here for us to save them. I mean like the lost sheep. If all the sheep are here, why worry about them? You have to look for the lost sheep. But of course, if the lost sheep don't want to come back, it's up to them. We cannot force. That's our principle. We do our part. We will do our best, but the decision whatsoever is up to the students. But if the students ask, cooperate, and they are trying, we also support them. But the group of students who doesn't take the opportunity at all, taking this support to help them, we have to ask them to leave. That's kind of challenging.

He admitted that his work was not easy but saw himself on a mission that presented many challenges. He saw each student as being sent by God, and he saw himself as part of a team working toward their salvation.

Dealing with Difficult Times

The first thing Whitmon did when dealing with difficult times was “to pray.” Depending on the nature of the problem, he had several people he could talk to. If the issue was “confidential, [he] will go directly to his [supervisor]. He asked for suggestions and advice.

Sometimes I talk to my colleagues, not all my colleagues. I talk to some people I am close with who know the problem. I also sometimes talk to my friends in my department, the ones that I am close to. Sometimes we visit. We share. Things like that.

When going through a stressful situation, Whitmon and his close friends took their minds away from the problem by doing things together. “Most of the time, we go to relax. Go out and eat. After that, when you look at the problem, it’s not as bad after all as I think. Sometimes it happens like that.” Putting a space between him and the stressors allowed him to look at the problem more objectively and gave him time to calm down. After he had calmed down and rethought his situation, Whitmon usually found that the problem was “not that bad after all.”

Thoughts of Leaving

When asked if Whitmon had thought of leaving, he talked about his expectations when he worked on a project. “Sometimes in work... you expect something, to achieve something... We all have expectations.” When those expectations were not met, discouragement came. Discouragement sometimes made Whitmon think of leaving. When he “[works] very hard” and puts a lot of effort into working on a project, but his expectation regarding the project is not fulfilled, he feels that he “didn’t do well.” For instance, when he worked with a student who had a problem, he felt like a failure if the problem was not solved. Whitmon said, “Sometimes you feel like you didn’t do well, or you fail to do that, like helping the students smoking... the problem is still there. Sometimes I feel like I did not do anything. It cannot improve anything.” In times like these, Whitmon felt that he would contribute better elsewhere. He also thought that someone else would do a better job than he did.

Still at AIU

Whitmon shared his sense of failure with his supervisor, who listened and comforted him. He also confided in his trusted friends. They went out on the weekend and relaxed. After coming back, he could see things from a different perspective. He expressed:

Even though we cannot achieve what we expect, maybe later, we hope that the seed that we plant will grow. It will help them in the future. We may not see it now. But we can see it in the future. But that makes me look at things ... how we are blessed by staying here, with friends, a supportive environment....I have to say that it is because of the environment, the Christian environment. So, people are supportive. That's why you come back to your sense, look at things, okay, it's not as bad as I think, rather than keep thinking about leaving.

Whitmon confessed that he did not like working with young people earlier because of his impatience. When he worked as a teacher before, he was impatient with those who were slow to learn. But now, despite the challenges in the workplace, Whitmon found it interesting to work with people, not with machines. He had also learned not to be too rigid because situations were not always wrong or right. He described the transformation in the following way:

When I first worked with students, ... I would be like right or wrong.... You did right, okay. You are doing wrong, okay. I report straight away to the Dean. There is no negotiation. Later on, I found out that people are not that bad. Sometimes they don't know, so then, of course, I also learned from my supervisor. I looked at the way they treat the students and the way they talked to students. When I first go with them, I might disagree with them. No, you should do this, but when I looked at them and also because of age, they are older and more mature, we have to think twice, helping save people rather than judging people. And then I find that it is more interesting, more rewarding, saving people rather than judging. It's not just about work. Also, about the value of the students, to know salvation. So, I developed a lot. That's why I want to work more for young people and students, to help them. I think also that it's God's will because I do pray actually that I want to do this do that. Of course, we have goals, right? I don't like this. I don't like that. Suddenly I received the job to help myself. Praise God. He tried to transform me.

Whitmon was mindful of his purpose. He firmly believed that he was in AIU because it was God's will for him to be here. He had been called for a purpose.

Sometimes when we look back, we can see that we contribute a lot to the students. Maybe we didn't see things the way we expected. But we hope that the seed planted in their hearts will one day grow to help them. It may not be, you know.

In addition, Whitmon appreciated the Adventist atmosphere and the supportive people. The campus was good. He admitted that at times he was tempted to think of better jobs and money but

reminded himself that those were not the primary purpose of life. He explained, “The main purpose is that if you are happy with your life, you will enjoy it, and the most important thing is that if you can help other people. That is more rewarding even though you don’t have much.” In other words, the quality of life in terms of being able to enjoy it and help others is rewarding despite having a relatively lower income. Whitmon shared an observation of the life of a sibling:

I always compare myself with my brother. He is working for a big company. He has good earnings. But talking about do you enjoy your work, he doesn’t really. He has a lot of stress. The pay is good, very big, but the satisfaction is not there.... The supervisor is very demanding.... [once] he was very sick mentally. He started distancing himself from the church. So, my mom always prays for him and tries to remind him, to visit him. Now he is getting better because of the treatment. So, I talk to myself. What is it in life? So, it keeps me here.

Whitmon expressed his faith in God’s leading: “The life before us is up to God’s will. If He wants me to continue, I will stay here. If He wants me to serve in a different place, yes, because He has His plan.”

Reeya

Reeya, her three younger sisters, and two younger brothers were born to parents who escaped the war between their homeland and neighboring country. Her parents were in a refugee camp waiting to resettle in another country. Reeya’s aunts and uncles had all moved and resettled in a third country except for her parents, who decided to remain in the host country. Reeya was born after their parents moved out of their homeland. Her parents started a farm to grow food for the family once they resettled. Life was not easy on the farm. They planted rice, corn, and beans for food. Everyone had to work hard to support the family. Very early on, Reeya learned what it meant to work hard from her parents, specifically her mother. Her father was battling health issues. His fragile health did not allow him to work much on the farm. Consequently, it was Reeya’s mother who did most of the work on the farm. Reeya and her siblings all helped with farming as soon as they were old enough to help. Working hard came to Reeya naturally.

Reeya studied at an Adventist academy. She stopped for a year and then completed it at an adult school later. Then she went to college. As a college student, she worked very hard. Reeya reminisced:

While studying..., I worked very hard. I worked like 40 hours per week.... I worked more than I studied. At that time, there were no full-time workers to cook, only students. I was the cook in the morning. I worked from my first year until my fourth year. I cooked breakfast every day. I had to wake up at 3 something. At 4 am, I was already in the cafeteria. I had to work like that until I graduated. I also worked not only in the cafeteria. During the day, whenever I have time, I worked....

In her final year, she also worked at a nearby institution that needed a cashier. Reeya worked there after 5 pm and would work until ten at night.

Why AIU?

The administrators of the College noticed Reeya's diligence. Impressed by her work ethic, she was invited to apply for a position near graduation. She responded to the invitation by submitting a job application. But that was not the only job application she submitted. She also submitted one to another Adventist institution. She would take whichever accepted her job application first. AIU was the first, so Reeya came to work at her alma mater.

When asked why she decided to work at AIU, Reeya responded: "I like this place just like my home. I don't want to go away from this place... I feel at home in AIU." As someone who worked and studied at AIU, Reeya considered the University her home. It was not hard to decide because AIU was a home for her. Reeya believed God's blessing made her study and work at Mission College possible. She said, "[the University] is the right place for me." About three years later, she was promoted to a higher position in her department, where she served for over a decade before receiving another promotion.

Elements Appreciated

Reeya appreciated the sense of family in the workplace. They shared not only joy but also problems. Reeya felt "close to" the people she worked with. Reeya also felt fortunate to be able to

talk not only to her co-workers but also to her supervisors about problems. She valued open and candid communication. She explained: “I like them to be open. When there is a problem, just talk direct. When we talk directly, people are always encouraging us. Don’t worry. People pray, and God will provide.” Reeya was also grateful for the support that she received from her supervisor and the administrators. When she felt weak or discouraged, she would talk to her supervisor and receive the needed encouragement. She felt appreciated whenever her supervisor asked how she was doing.

She was incredibly thankful for the opportunity to help students with their needs. Her experience of working and studying in college made her heart tender toward students who struggled financially and worked hard to pay for their education. While in college, she never went home for the first three years. She narrated:

I faced this problem before. I know it is very difficult. During my studies, I never went home. I studied for years here.... For the first three years, I never went home. I was working during the break. It was a good time for me to work, more time to work.

She worked every school break because it was an excellent time to get more work hours. She recounted her life as a working student: and how it had helped her understand students’ struggles:

I worked very hard to help myself. I did not borrow a government loan. I had sponsors to support my studies. I felt like God blessed me. That’s why I had the opportunity to study and work. So, it is the right place for me. I helped many students. I just feel I love these students who are working hard. And I tried to find sponsors to help them. Every semester, students who struggle always come to my office. We pray, and they cry, you know. I also cry. I just felt like a mother.

Her experience as a working student helped her understand the challenging life of working students at the University. She identified with them and had a special place in her heart for them.

As a result, she tried her best to find assistance for those students with financial needs.

Challenges

When asked about challenges in the workplace, Reeya pointed to unhappy people who did not understand why they could not get the money they needed based on their budget. She said, “People are not happy. Some people don’t understand when told to wait until the situation

improves.” Her biggest challenge was helping people understand the need to manage resources carefully. She dealt with individuals who did not get what they wanted. She detailed the situation: “Sometimes people talk loud, so I would be angry also. Loud. So, I talk louder, and they become quiet. Listening. Later on, they understand. They come back and say sorry.” Being someone soft-spoken, people were taken aback when Reeya raised her voice, and they usually responded by becoming quiet and listening to her. They usually would come back later to apologize.

Reeya confessed that she tended to worry. She worried when the enrollment dropped. She had been reminded: “You are not the owner of the university. Why worry too much? The owner is God.” But Reeya confessed: “But I still worry. I feel stressed out. Too stressed out.... In the past, I couldn’t sleep.... If I am stressed out like this, I will get sick.”

Being a hard-working person, Reeya found it hard to see others not working as much. She elaborated:

Something that discourages me is when people come to work at 8 am and leave at 5 pm without worrying about anything they leave behind. For me, if I leave something behind, I cannot sleep. I have to do it until the work is done. So, I want people to do the same. If everyone works hard, I think our work will be better and not willing to go the extra mile to help with the need of the institution.

It discouraged her when she saw employees who worked by the clock alone. She believed that if everyone worked hard, the University would be in a better state.

Dealing with Difficult Times

Reeya would speak to her supervisor and colleagues when dealing with difficult workplace situations. She always received encouraging words and support. As someone who had to deal with financial issues, she often faced people who were unhappy with financial decisions. To a certain extent, Reeya had accepted that part of her job. She said, “Some people are not happy. But it is fine because it is my job. We talk, and they try to understand. Then, just pray. Pray to God to make me cool down.”

Reeya tended to respond to difficulty with worries. Fortunately, she recognized that her vulnerability to stress threatened her well-being. Concerned that her stress level would put her health at risk, she accepted that she could not change others; she could only change herself. When asked how she responded to what she saw as substandard performance or half-hearted service, she said, “Just pray for them. Give the problem to God. Don’t keep too much in our hearts because it will destroy our health.”

Thoughts of Leaving

Reeya’s sense of responsibility led to stress when things were not going well. In the past, her anxiety robbed her of sleep. Worried about her tendency to feel stressed out, she considered quitting her job and finding less stressful employment so that she could enjoy her work more. She described her struggle:

Someone just told me. You are not the owner of this university. Why do you worry too much? The owner is God. But I still worry. I am stressed out. Too stressed out. In the past, I couldn’t sleep. Maybe [the University] has to find someone who can face their problem. When a problem comes, they are not stressed out like me. If I am stressed out like this, I will get sick, and my life will be short. So, I just find something to do to make me happy so that I won’t worry. So, I can live for a long. I thought of finding another work... and doing many things.

Even when Reeya knew mentally that she was working for God’s institution, she could not help worrying about its financial state. Not wanting to succumb to illness because of the stress she experienced regularly, she started thinking of leaving.

Still at AIU

While Reeya was thinking about leaving AIU, she had the opportunity to visit her auntie, who was living in Europe. She “worked day and night to clear [her] work, clear everything before [she] went.” In the process, she decided: “If I go there, and I am not thinking about AIU, I don’t miss AIU. That means I can leave the place. But if I miss the place, God still wants me to work there.”

While staying with her auntie, not a single day passed without her thinking about AIU. She detailed her experience:

I went there, and every day I prayed to God. God, please open the way for me. How is my life? How is the future? So, I was always thinking about AIU. Thinking about my workplace. The church. The people here. I missed it so much. Before I came back here, about three weeks, my heart cooled down. All the worries were gone. So, I came back happily.... I have the energy to work again. Thank you, God. You want me to work in this place.

While in Europe, Reeya received a clear direction that she should continue serving at AIU. The time for reflection and prayer renewed her energy and enthusiasm for service. She acknowledged that “AIU has a lot of problems. A lot of challenges. A lot of financial issues. But I am here.... I love AIU. I want to help AIU. I want to try my best to keep AIU going.” She confessed, “It feels like this place is my first home. Not even a second home. When I go to my hometown.... I miss AIU. But if I stay here, I don’t miss my hometown there. My heart is here.”

Reeya had seen how God faithfully provided for her and the University. He had provided for the University at the right time for so many years and so often—never too early, never too late. Having seen how God had been meeting the University’s needs, Reeya believed that being financially needy was good for AIU because the needs led to dependence on God. Prosperity can be dangerous spiritually. Reeya said, “...if we are rich, we will forget God.... Now we depend on God, and we are close to Him. God has been providing so far. It happened like this for many years.... [It’s] a miracle story.”

Sanny

Sanny, and his siblings of one older brother and one older sister, were born into a strong Hindu family. He remembered going to the temples with his parents. His father worked as a “veterinary doctor,” and his mother was a homemaker. Sanny remembered his father as “an academic” and “very devoted” to his religion. Sanny’s grandmother, however, was led into a special experience that contributed to her acceptance of Christianity. She shared Christianity with her daughter, who was Sanny’s mother. Both secretly read the Bible. One day, Sanny’s father discovered a Bible his mother-in-law and wife hid in the kitchen. He erupted in rage and burnt the Bible, forbidding them to continue in Christianity. The ladies, however, continue practicing their

Christianity. In a strange way that only the Holy Spirit could do, his father started “softening up.” When the ladies asked for permission to attend church, he would allow them but wanted nothing to do with it. Seeing that Sanny’s father was “softening up,” the ladies started inviting people “...to come home, just like saying hi and hello and praying. He was watching all this but kept quiet. Everything went like that. And slowly, they said, ‘Can we give you any Bible study?’” Sanny’s father agreed to a Bible study “out of respect and courtesy.” The man giving the Bible study came faithfully every day. Sanny detailed what happened:

One day it rained so bad. It was really, really bad. Floods were rising. It was dangerous. So [Sanny’s father] said, for sure he won’t come.... It’s okay.... He was very confident that he won’t come. It was getting dark. 7:30. 8 p.m. It’s okay. Today’s off for sure. As he was about to go up, he heard a noise. It was dark. No electricity. When he opened the door, he was so stunned to see the man drenched.... They had a Bible study.

Throughout the Bible study, Sanny’s father kept thinking. “What is this? Why would the man come? Doesn’t he know it’s late and it’s raining? Doesn’t he know it is dangerous to even walk in this weather? I don’t understand this.” Deeply “touched” by the man’s gesture of faithfulness and willingness to risk his life to give a Bible study during a severe and dangerous storm, Sanny’s father decided that he needed “to understand it. He had to listen to this God.” That moment marked the beginning of sincere “interest” in the message of the Bible and led to his acceptance of Christ as his savior. While taking the Bible study, he struggled with the idea of keeping the Sabbath. He asked his brother-in-law, “Can I do everything else except that?” The brother-in-law said, “No, no. It doesn’t work like that. You make a decision. All or nothing. It is not like you bargain with God. But you take your time, and you make your decision.” Once he decided to “take baptism,” he resolved to follow God wholeheartedly. As a civil servant, though, Sabbath-keeping presented a serious problem. Unable to get permission not to work on Saturdays, Sanny’s father used his annual leave to have a day off every Saturday until he had no more leave. He gathered his family and told them that he would resign from work. Sanny reminisced:

He called all of us and said, okay, I am going to resign. Thursday night, he said, I will resign.... I was still in school. All of us were still in school. The other one was in college. We were young, and my mother was not working. He said, anyway, God will lead us. He was about to

give the resignation letter on Friday morning. We prayed. We got up, and the television said the whole state has changed the workweek from six days to five days effective immediately.

Sanny's father did not have to resign after all. The government's new working policy from six days to five days miraculously took place after Sanny's father had exhausted his annual leave, so he did not need to go to work on Saturday.

Sanny attended prestigious private Christian (non-Adventist) schools from Grade 1 to Grade 12. For the first five years, he studied up to Grade 5 in an only-girls school. From Grade 6 onwards, he studied at an only-boys school. After high school, he studied at Sonsomido Adventist College, a place he remembered for the friendships he made and the positive influence on his life. That was his first time studying at an Adventist institution. His alma mater employed him right after graduation because of his work ethic and a strong sense of responsibility. The college became his home for more than a decade and a half. While working there, he established a family and earned two master's degrees from two different institutions. The many years he served there saw him in different positions. He began by working in one of the offices and then became a full-time lecturer. Eventually, he was given an administrative role.

Why AIU?

While in college, Sanny developed many friendships that remained strong over the years despite great distances. Some of her good friends were working at AIU. One of them became aware of a job opening in one of the faculties. Since Sanny's qualifications matched the needs, and he was available, he recommended Sanny's name to the Faculty Dean, who acted immediately upon the recommendation. He contacted Sanny and invited him to apply for the vacancy. Sanny described the event:

I was invited for an interview, and I was selected here after the interview. It's okay. I will take this option. I have been [at Sonsomido Adventist College] for 17 years, so I thought, let me try a change. That was the basic idea to come.

The change was his biggest motivation. He explained, "...it looked like a nice offer, and so actually I was quite happy there doing many things but of course, I have been there for so many years, so I said, let me have a chance." But it was not just about having a change for the sake of change alone. The vacancy was for teaching. Because he liked teaching, it was easy to accept the teaching position. Having served as an administrator at Sonsomido Adventist College, he concluded, based on his personal experience, that teaching was more enjoyable than administrative work. While Sanny was drawn to the change of working in a new environment and the prospect of full-time teaching instead of teaching and serving as administrative, the compensation was also "better."

Elements Appreciated

Sanny appreciated the Christian atmosphere on campus. He described the Christian atmosphere as "one thing that has truly touched" him. He was convinced that the Christian atmosphere was generated by kindness among the faculty and the administration, resulting in a "nice" work atmosphere. He experienced kindness from the day he started working at AIU. His Faculty Dean and other people "have been very kind to [him], very helpful in whatever ways [he] wanted. Going sometimes beyond their call of duty..." His supervisor and colleagues freely shared information or teaching material with him, guided him regarding things he wanted to know, and helped him "to find [his] feet." That did not end there. He saw that the tradition of kindness continues in action. He can count on his colleagues' help in times of need.

He also believed that the "niceness ... comes from the faith experience" and appreciated that "the administration and the University as a whole have placed quite a bit of emphasis on the faith factor, even among teachers and through them, the students." He was constantly made aware of it, reminded of it, and encouraged about it. In this context, Sanny feels satisfied for being part of something "nice and positive." He said:

You feel a certain kind of satisfaction at the end of the day that you have done something.... The emphasis is that we want to serve God and spread the message." In short, "the faith factor...has helped [him] to like this place.

For Sanny, the “faith factor” at the University was something he truly appreciated. He enjoyed a certain level of satisfaction for being part of something important.

Challenges

While Sanny acknowledged that challenges were part of life, he did not provide specific examples of workplace challenges. In fact, he did not think any issue was big enough to be considered a challenge. During the interview, he explained: “I won’t say that there is something specific that sticks out my mind that I am bothered about.” He said none was worth mentioning. He explained: “I think I forget things that pulled me down.” Fortunately, while he could not provide any specifics, he could explain how he dealt with difficult times, which will be described in the following section. His ability to disengage from uncomfortable events and to move on cleared his mind from remembering any specifics. When asked whether he had thought of leaving, he did share his concern about his family back home. His parents were aging, and his sibling had health issues.

Dealing with Difficult Times

Sanny did not get discouraged easily. While admitting he was not a Superman, he could sleep well at the end of the day even though many things happened during the day. He sometimes had his “downside” but was not easily shaken. He explained: “I do get discouraged..., but ... I can sleep well at the end of the day. Many things can happen, but if you tell me to sleep, I can sleep. It doesn’t bother me that I lose my sleep usually.” When something happens, he took time to think about it before making any conclusion. He listened a lot and tried to understand both sides of the story. He gathered information regarding what happened, why, and how it happened. This process allowed him “to look at a situation more pragmatically.” He thought about it, not rushing to make any conclusion. Even if something angered him, he refrained from reacting because of negative consequences. He explained: “Even though sometimes I can get angry, I don’t get very angry or

hurt. But I still didn't react because I know the consequences of the action." He carefully considers the possible outcomes of any action. Sanny described the process:

...I like to wait and see how things work. Before I make a decision, I see all the options which are there and evaluate those options. If I do this, what can happen? If I do that, what can happen? So basically, I like to be a very pragmatic person, looking at how things will play out in the real world. So obviously, this thing takes a little bit more time for me to take action.

Because Sanny took time to consider and understand, it was not usually easily revised once he concluded.

Thoughts of Leaving

Sanny had served for more than ten years at AIU now. He believed, however, that one should not serve too long in one workplace. He liked changes. If he left, it would be because he wanted to change, not because of unhappiness with AIU. He had thought of leaving because of the family situation at home. His parents were getting old, and his siblings had health issues. He could see the possibility of being needed by his parents and siblings in the future. The third reason is his children's education. There is a possibility that he may want his youngest child to study in his home country, something he did not manage to do for the first two children. Sanny explained:

My last son is going to [Grade] 8. Why am I saying that? These are crucial years for them to change their direction. Because if I have to move, maybe I should move soon. My last son has to be in a school where he is continuing from 8 to 12 at least. I can't put him in a situation where he can go to only 10 or 11, especially in [my country]. The public exams are there, so if I go back to my country, I need to have the time to settle in.

The move needed to be timed right so that it would not disadvantage his son. In other words, any move involving his son needed to be made at the right grade to ensure that he could transition to his country's educational system as smoothly as possible. If the optimal timing is missed, Sanny would stay longer at AIU to allow his son to continue with the educational system there.

Still at AIU

Sanny credited his children when asked about what kept him at AIU for over ten years. If he wanted the children to study in his country, he had to leave when they were in specific grades so they could reasonably continue to the next level. As mentioned earlier, there are crucial years for them to change direction. But because he did not manage to do that for his first two children, he was stuck for a few years for their education. He said, “That’s the main reason why I cannot move; otherwise, I would have moved.” However, he indicated that he follows God’s leading. He emphasized that it will not be because of his unhappiness with AIU whenever he leaves. He explained: “I don’t want to go disgruntled. I want to go out happy. I still go, but when I am still happy.”

He also attributed his long-term service at AIU to his enjoyment of teaching. He linked his academic inclination to his father. He explained: “Basically, I like to teach. I was called to teach here. I think it is the bigger motivation to continue working here.... [If] I was in a different capacity ...I won’t last long.” Sanny found satisfaction in his teaching job. One of the sources of satisfaction was the opportunity to work with young minds. He described that interaction with young people as something that “always brings out positive things.”

Ena

Ena grew up in a solid Catholic home. Her “earliest recollections of her family were going to the cathedral, watching her mother use the holy water, and making the sign of the cross.” Her parents, however, especially her father, had questions about some of the teachings of his church concerning the role of the Virgin Mary. Ena explained: “[My father] said the church that can explain to me why we worship the Virgin Mary may be the true church; I will join the church.” An Adventist college was being established in a nearby location. Those involved in establishing the college did not wait for the completion of the college before they started giving Bible studies to interested individuals from the surrounding community. That was what brought Adventist

missionaries to Ena's home. They asked if her parents were interested in taking Bible studies, and they said yes. Her parents learned a lot from the Bible studies, including discovering the Biblical truth about Mary. That was how Ena's family was converted to Adventism. Ena described how it happened:

Immediately, you know, while they were still pioneering, they were still plowing, they started this missionary thing. They went to the villages and gave Bible studies. They showed slides and asked if [people] were interested.... So when the President of the college came, and they were talking, and so they started a Bible study, and he asked the question. And [the President] said no, we don't worship the Virgin Mary. We are not supposed to. She is only human. So, my father was convinced....my parents were baptized.

Since then, Ena attended Adventist educational institutions. After earning a bachelor's degree from a newly built college, she got married. Soon, she could work and study toward a master's degree. Later, her family accepted a call to serve as a missionary on another continent and served there for more than two decades before returning to their home country. Soon after, she accepted a job offer as a teacher at an international school in Thailand.

Why AIU

While teaching at a school in Thailand, Ena learned that AIU needed a contract teacher for a course. She agreed to help. Eventually, she was offered a full-time teaching position which she declined because she was happily teaching at her school. Ena told the Chair, "I owe a debt of gratitude to the school, and besides, I really have no reason to leave because I like my job." The Chair of the department did not give up easily, though. She asked Ena to think about it now and then. Over time, as Ena got to know the students in the Thai Program better, she began to entertain the idea that she could help with the need at AIU. That set in motion the biggest struggle she had ever been in. She gave the details:

So, I have to decide whether I should stay there or whether I should come here. Staying there or staying here, they were both missionary works. Because there, I was the homeroom teacher. I could worship with my students. I could talk to them. Here, if I taught here, I would be teaching the students to become missionaries for the church. But if I teach there, they will become businesspeople out in the world. It was the biggest struggle I have ever been in.

When she asked her husband about it, he told her that it was a decision she needed to make. He wanted her to decide for herself. She faithfully served wherever her husband was called to work for years. Now that he had retired, he wanted her to decide what she would do and where she would work. He told her, “Don’t make me as the main consideration. It should be for you, not for me.” It was not an easy decision to make. She prayed, “Lord, just say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ even if You don’t give a reason. Shall I go, or shall I not? No response. So completely silent.” This happened when her school finalized the teaching staff for the next school year, so Ena decided to take the first institution that contacted her regarding teaching for the next academic year. That evening, AIU called and asked, “Are you coming? Ena responded, “Yes, I am coming.” That helped Ena to decide whether to come to AIU or stay with the international school. The next day, she notified the administration that she had accepted the call to teach at AIU because it was the first institution that offered her work for the following academic year.

Elements Appreciated

Ena thought she was truly blessed in many ways. She had a long list of people and things she was grateful for. She appreciated her job, the campus where she worked and lived, the AIU family, and the outside community. She shared an observation to make a point.

“One night I thought it was raining, so I looked out the window....and saw the beautiful campus.... I said I got a beautiful campus. When I leave this campus, I am really going to miss it. I thought of all the blessings I received here. I live on campus. I don’t need to travel to my workplace. The security of the place, surrounded by friends who are as good as my family.... They pick me up every Friday to go to the market and the driver follows me around, carrying my bags. He won’t let me carry anything heavy. The vendors are so good. They are my friends. On Mother’s Day, they pinned me one of their flowers. When I went back to the market after a long time, where did you go? Where were you? You were not here for a long time. I find everything at the market. What else can you complain about? I go to [the departmental store] once a semester. I want to go to Muak Lek; the van picks me up here.”

Ena valued her “good” colleagues. She felt comfortable going to any of them. They were accommodating. She said the same about her neighbors. “They always offer help.

They offer to help, and I accept when there is a need. [Her] problem is that [she] doesn't have enough problems to bring to them." Ena shared one more thing she appreciated:

I really appreciate the school's effort to pay us on time. They were never late for paying their salary. If they were going to be late, it would only be one day or so, and they always told in advance that they would be late this time. That, to me, is a very big, very good...gesture of the school. I've been to places where it was difficult.... You cannot count on the salary being given on time.

Having worked where employees could not rely on a fixed date to get their salaries, Ena truly appreciates the University's attempt to give salaries on time. Any delay in providing salary was an exception to the rule. It was not that no delay had occurred, but employees would be informed of the delay in advance, and the wait was within 24 hours. She said, "I appreciate the fact that they did all they could to do to provide a timely salary."

Challenges

Ena found the demand of quality assurance work very demanding—the various paperwork that must be done, the projects that must be carried out, and research requirements that must be fulfilled—all this interfered with her love for her teaching. Some of the demands of quality assurance "bothered [her] so much." She explained: "They interfere with my love for work.... QA takes so much from me because I have to do so many things. Many times, I am not ready for the first class because of all the demands." In her observation, the demand for quality assurance had worsened over time. She explained:

Before, we did not have to go over the course report. Now, we have to go over them. It's a waste of time. It is not using my time wisely, and there are all there. Why do we have to listen to the course report of everybody? It is not our business....I feel that I am being choked. Smothered.

Ena enjoyed attending the Faculty and Staff morning worship. Some semesters, her schedule did not allow her to attend when she had an 8 o'clock every morning. When this happened, she longed to be able to participate in the morning worship.

Some semesters, Ena found herself doing more than usual. In addition to teaching, some projects needed to be carried out. Reflecting on her experience when she was overwhelmed, she said, “I am not doing a good job. I am very ineffective. I should not be teaching anymore.” All this led to discouragement.

Dealing with Difficult Times

When dealing with difficult times, Ena reminded herself that this, too, shall pass away. It is a philosophy that helped her survive challenging times. She explained:

This has always been my philosophy. Sometimes I don't like my schedule, like last semester. I had an 8 o'clock class every day. I was missing morning worship, but this, too, shall pass. And the Lord compensated. Today, I can go to every worship.

Ena found energy in God. When her husband was hospitalized in Bangkok (about 150 km from AIU), she found the strength to attend teaching appointments and care for her husband. She narrated:

My most difficult time was when my husband was sick. My husband died 18 years after his first stroke. That was some time. He could manage. He could walk around. I could leave him at home. You know, all the time that he was sick, and even when he died, I didn't miss one day of school except maybe one class when he died.... Everything was timed perfectly. I mean I am just amazed at how things happened. Really, I cannot complain. When my husband was in the hospital, I would leave Michael with him. I would come to my class. After class, I went back, sometimes traveling during the night and coming home late at night and all of that, but I was strong. I wasn't afraid. And then his last day, I asked Michael to stay with him, and I would come to my classes and come home as soon as possible. I wasn't afraid. The way [God] prepared me for it. Today, when I think about it, I will cry, but it always ends up with thanksgiving.

Ena's account of her experience in coping with the sickness of her husband and his eventual death showed how she found unusual strength in God in facing very difficult circumstances.

Thoughts of Leaving

Ena believed that God had been leading her life. She had never applied for a job. There was always a job waiting for her. When her husband was working, she served wherever he was called. She described her life this way.

...being married to him, I went whenever he was called. He was the one called. Not me. Wherever he was, there was always a job for me. When he was a treasurer of a school, I had a teaching job. Even when he was not in school for ten years, I worked with the auditing service. I believe that God is the one who brings me to where He wants me to go, and my attitude has always been that I want to be where he wants me to be.

Does this mean that Ena has never thought of leaving? She thought of leaving once because she had a rough semester (after her husband passed away) and felt discouraged. She was overwhelmed with things that needed to be done. In addition, she had not received a renewal of her contract employment for the following year. She told her Faculty Dean that she might not work the following year. Then she received the renewal of the contract. She said she was convicted and asked the Lord for forgiveness. She regretted that because she did not wait on God.

Still at AIU

Ena stated: “So when God wants me out of here, that will be a reason to get out of here. He will show the way. He will make it clear. There is no doubt about that.” She further explained that she was baptized at age 11. She did not receive Bible studies because she came from an Adventist family. Her turning point, however, came one Friday evening when she was in college. The bell had been rung to indicate that sunset was an hour away. The campus was all calm and solemn. Ena was sitting on a grassy slope of a hill overlooking the valley. She could see the rice fields. In that quietness of the moment, Ena felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, who impressed her to surrender her life to God. Ena said “Yes” to surrendering her life to God. Ever since, He has been guiding her life. She said, “We never have to say what’s next. What shall we do? We never have to wonder what to do.” She added: “That is one big blessing working for the church because outside, once you are dismissed, you are done. You have to look for a job. We work for the church all our working lives, and I must emphasize, no regrets.” She concluded:

I believe that God is the one who brings me to where He wants me to go, and my attitude has always been that I want to be where He wants me to be...When God wants me out of here, that will be the reason to get out there.

Tipiana

Tipiana and her two sisters were raised in an Adventist home. Her father was a church pastor, and her mother was a homemaker who supported her husband's work and cared for the family. Firm believers in the importance of Adventist education, Tipiana's parents ensured their children studied at an Adventist school from Grade 1 to Grade 12. After completing high school, Tipiana studied at Mission College, later known as Asia-Pacific International University, where she earned her bachelor's degree. Because of her outstanding academic achievement at Green Field Adventist Academy, she was given a scholarship that covered her tuition fees throughout her undergraduate studies. This was substantial financial assistance to her family since her parents would not have been able to pay for Tipiana's studies in an International Program, which was more expensive than studying in the Thai Program. Hardworking and responsible, Tipiana was consistently performing well in her studies. Even when her mother passed away unexpectedly in an accident, Tipiana could still focus on her studies despite the difficult time she was going through. After graduation, she returned to Green Field Adventist Academy to work for a year. She got married. When her husband received an invitation to serve at their alma mater, they decided to return to Mission College. Tipiana started working at the College, and the same year, she started taking a master's degree.

Why AIU?

When Tipiana and her husband were considering a place where they could serve, they received several invitations for interviews despite not having applied. Someone heard about a recently married couple considering a place to serve God and spread the word. One of the invitations was for Tipiana's husband to serve at Mission College. He came for the job interview just before their wedding. Tipiana and her husband considered each job offer and decided teaching would fit their talents. They accepted the job offer from Mission College.

One of the influential factors for Tipiana's decision to return to AIU was the international environment that would allow Tipiana to grow professionally since she aspired to teach in the international program or to serve as a teacher assistant. Tipiana explained:

The first thing that came to my mind when I was asked to serve here was the international environment that allows us to grow academically since I also had a dream to teach in an international setting or serve as a teacher assistant.

The second reason Tipiana felt "might be funny, but it's very important" to her was the climate which is generally warmer than where she and her husband came from. She is "kind of allergic to cool weather" because her lungs were "not very strong." While studying at Mission College, she discovered that her body responded better to the warm climate than to the cooler weather. She felt healthier and physically stronger than in a cooler environment. Tipiana added: "...my mother used to tell my father, '...if you want me to live longer, let's move to a hotter place.' So, I said the same thing to [my husband]."

AIU was a special place for Tipiana and her husband because they met in Mission College, "spent time dating here, getting to know each other and friends are also here." They had enjoyed being at Mission College before, so it was easy to decide to return to it.

Elements Appreciated

Tipiana thrived on learning. She saw an opportunity to learn in many situations. She saw every position as an opportunity to learn new things. As a teacher, she learned from "teaching different courses," "different groups of students," from a curriculum... and... academic activities that you get involved in," and even from "attending committee meetings."

Tipiana learned that even experiences that were not very positive could contribute to one's growth in one way or another. She said, "...even some new things I have learned through not very positive experience. It does help me to grow in one way or another, either emotionally, socially, or spiritually."

Tipiana admitted that making friends did not come easy to her. She said, “I had very few friends in elementary and high school, you know. I can count them with my fingers.” But being at AIU has allowed her to develop new friendships. She has learned to reach out to people by learning to listen more. She described a meeting with a discouraged colleague: “I listened. I let her talk and talk. I tried to understand, you know.... In the end, I reminded her to give her burden to God. I asked if I could pray with her. She said okay. I also told her that I can visit and pray with her more often.” When situations improved for the colleague, she called to congratulate her, and “she spoke excitedly about how things have improved.”

Tipiana appreciates being at AIU for the learning she experiences in the social and mental areas, especially in the spiritual realm. She said, “I have grown a lot spiritually. You know, there are plenty of opportunities to listen to God’s word here - the sermons, spiritual talks, worship. The vespers and chapels. But not just these. There are many spiritually strong people here. When I interact with them, you know, I see their faith.”

Challenges

Tipiana did not think of herself as a social person. She did not have many friends. She explained: “If I look back at my relationship with other people in my high school and even in my college, I had very few friends.” She also “always refused to take a leadership position, even a small one like leading out in singing. I hardly took that kind of position.” She never thought that one day she would be holding a leadership position that required her to organize activities involving hundreds of students or deal with a group of discouraged colleagues. She finds leadership challenging. “It feels like being a different person.” Any offer for a leadership position would Tipiana consider very carefully and accompanied by prayers.

Tipiana admitted she struggled with certain personalities she perceived as lacking “a heart for service.” She found it “tiring” when someone entrusted with specific responsibilities did not perform as expected. She said, “It is annoying when a task is not done properly. It doesn’t have to be

perfect. But careless mistakes make me feel upset. Mistakes that could easily be corrected if the person rechecks the work.” It bothered her a lot when workers gave less than they should to their work.

She also became discouraged when she did not get the support she needed. She said, “It’s hard to do your work when discouraged.”

Dealing with Difficult Times

Tipiana did a few things to help her deal with difficult times. She took an analytical approach to the situation. She elaborated:

When I face a difficult time, I ask about the advantages and disadvantages. Advantages will be like, for example, leading out a group of students. Advantages will be managing people and also improving my human skills in how to deal with difficult people. My disadvantages probably will be going through emotional struggles like I give up at some point.

She also tried to determine what created the difficulty. This helped her assume the right frame of mind when facing a difficult time.

Tipiana also prayed a lot. She prayed and actively helped herself to find the solution. She often looked for information about any problems for someone who enjoyed learning about new things. “The first thing that came to [her] mind is resources available on the internet.” She can read information for various purposes, from understanding people from different cultural backgrounds to learning how to deal with them.

Another strategy Tipiana used was reflecting on her experience to understand others. She provided an example of a classroom situation when she struggled to understand her students: “I ...relate the struggle I am going through with my experience as a student.” She would reflect on “what [she] enjoyed as a student and what [she] didn’t enjoy.” In other words, she used her experience to understand others.

Tipiana also received “help from [her] workplace like friends and supervisors.” They provided support and help, prayed for and with her, gave encouragement, listened, and provided

advice. The one person Tipiana always talked to was her husband, whom she trusted. She would ask him to listen, not give advice. Tipiana described:

...when I have the time to talk, if I am angry, I express my anger. If I was discouraged, unfairly treated, I would just express and pour my heart. And then at first, I would feel better. And then I would be kind of ready to pray. Not that I forget God, but I feel like talking to a human who I can see. Nodding head, at least responding to my complaint.

But Tipiana acknowledged that sometimes the listener might fail to meet her expectations. Her husband, sometimes, may not just listen but also give his opinion, such as “I feel like you are too fast in judging the other side,” or she “should be more positive.” When this happens, Tipiana felt that “he is not on [her] side.” So, “instead of feeling better, [she] feels angrier.”

Tipiana had other trusted people she could talk to. She also wrote a personal journal. If she wanted to write to express her feelings, she would write and burn it. If she wanted to keep what she had written for the future, she would write in general terms, not giving specifics of the situation.

Thoughts of Leaving

Tipiana considered leaving when a change of leadership occurred in her department. Usually, when a supervisor left a position, AIU would look for a new supervisor from among the current employees. It would only search outside the University if there was none considered able to fill in the vacancy. A new supervisor who did not come from AIU came into the picture. Tipiana, who enjoyed working with her previous supervisor, struggled to adjust to the new leadership and the changes in the department. The supervisor’s way of dealing with her did not communicate support and understanding. Initially, she tolerated it, thinking the situation would improve. After some time, she still struggled. She began thinking of the possibility of quitting her job. She remembered thinking and talking, “If you don’t like it, why don’t you leave?” She elaborated:

It was a very difficult time. Actually, I started talking to my sister about the available position where I can more and be with my two sisters so that we can work in the same place, and I feel like having friends.... At that time, I had only one child, so I thought to myself. If I decide to move, then this will be the best time. If I have another child, there will be more challenges in the future. It might be difficult for me. I started thinking about that. I was already planning.

As someone who prioritized the importance of planning, Tipiana started thinking of where she should go as soon as the first thought of leaving suggested itself to her. Her two sisters were working near each other. If she worked in the same town, she could be closer to her sisters, and they would be able to meet regularly, which she would enjoy because of the close relationship between the siblings.

Still at AIU

The move did not happen. One day, after praying about her situation, a student came to see her about an academic problem. He had been struggling in class and decided to seek help. While Tipiana was familiar with many of the academic problems students faced, she was impressed to listen carefully. She was careful not to make any assumptions about his problem. As she listened, she realized that he was facing a problem she was not familiar with. She decided to research it. She detailed the event:

The student was struggling to understand the lesson, and I was helping him. And I told myself. Instead of assuming the problem the student is facing in the classroom, maybe I should do this. Why don't I research some articles and see what they say about this kind of situation, so I started searching for some articles relating to the situation the student was facing. And then I found the articles that I needed.

Seeing that her research of the student's problem had helped her find the answer to the student's difficulty, Tipiana started thinking to herself. Why don't I research my problem? She started searching for articles. She found some. She said: "That day, I was busy reading. Evening, I went home, and I kept reading about it, and then the next day, a new thought came to mind. Suddenly, I found out the solution to my problem."

A new realization dawned on her. She was not just having a problem with her supervisor. She was also having trouble with herself. She has been doing primarily routine work, teaching the same courses, and going through the same motion of doing the same thing –preparing course outlines, teaching courses, and reporting grades, making the course report, then starting all over again. After Tipiana began reading articles and thought of researching, she found a new thing to

explore, a purpose. She started thinking about applying for a research grant. This realization changed Tipiana's plan to move. She decided to stay and work on what she was interested in. She said, "I learned from the experience that if I feel like leaving work, I should start finding new things that I am interested in so that I have a purpose to live."

Tipiana, however, attributed her stay at AIU to God's leading. She said as long as she felt it was God's plan for her to be at AIU, she would stay no matter what happened. She had experienced the joy of making a difference in people's lives. Hearing people say, "You have a part in bringing me closer to God," gave her a taste of a heavenly feeling. She described that joy as "addictive." She explained:

Year after year, I still have that experience when alumni or students unexpectedly come back to me and say that this is the experience I had with you at that time, and I am here with God's guidance. This part keeps me longer here.

Conrad

Devout Catholic parents raised Conrad. His father was a teacher and the sole breadwinner of the family. He taught in a government school in a remote rural area. He walked several kilometers to work from Monday to Friday every week until he could purchase a motorcycle. Conrad's mother was a homemaker. The basic education she received made it possible for her to assist some of her husband's students who needed additional help. She provided a free tutorial to them. Unfortunately, his death took away the family's only stable income when Conrad was eight years old. His mother, who was seven months pregnant with the third child when her husband passed away, had to find ways to support the family. There was an elementary Catholic boarding school which was located 30 kilometers away. She knew the French priests running the school, and they knew her for her faithful service and devotion to Catholicism. Because of her excellent relationship with the priests, it was not difficult for Conrad to be accepted to study in that Catholic boarding school, a small school attended by children from a similar economic background. They could afford to study there because the education was free. Occasionally, parents would contribute rice to support the school. Even that

was challenging for some families. Fortunately, the school understood the financial struggle of the families, and their children, whether or not they could contribute rice, were welcome to study at the boarding school.

While studying there, Conrad hardly met his mother. Lack of public transportation and financial resources made it difficult for Conrad to go home regularly even though the distance between the school and his home was only 30 kilometers. Once homesick, Conrad and a group of friends decided to hike home. He was about ten years old at that time. He and his friends started walking around 7 in the morning. They took a shortcut across the mountains and reached the village in seven hours. He thought of the trip as an “adventure.”

Conrad studied at the elementary boarding school until he completed Grade 6. Then his uncle invited him to study at a school in his province. His uncle was working as a manager of a Catholic organization, and he put Conrad in a Catholic school so that he could get help from the Catholic Church. After Conrad completed Grade 9, he moved to a seminary to become a Catholic priest. But when he completed Grade 12, he changed his mind about becoming a priest. He did not feel that he was called to serve as a priest. He said, “It was not my calling. Not a vocation. It was not God’s calling. Maybe I should go back and help my mother or do something else.” In addition, studying to be a priest required another “seven years of undergraduate studies” at a Catholic college. He wanted to work and help his mother. He decided to work near his uncle because Conrad’s mother had also moved to the same province and worked for the same school. The Italian priest who had sponsored Conrad’s education to be a priest was “very upset” with his decision.

Meanwhile, having learned of Conrad’s interest in studying English, his uncle, and wife told him about Mission College, which offered an English major. They knew about it because of a family member working at the college. Sometime later, Conrad received a very important visit. The visitors were a husband and wife who were working at Mission College. From them, Conrad learned about Mission College. Hearing about the programs of study offered at the college and the

opportunities to work as a student, Conrad started thinking about the possibility of studying there. His mother was concerned about his going to a non-Catholic school. In fact, “[he was] forbidden [by the priests] to come because of the name “mission.” It’s not a Catholic school.” They insisted that the college was inappropriate for him because of the word “mission” in its name. However, he was determined to go because of his strong interest in studying English. After serious thinking, he finally decided to come to Mission College, prepared to work as hard as possible to support his college education. He worked wherever and whenever he could to pay for his college expenses. Conrad recounted his work experience:

So, I decided to come. I had to work on my own.... I worked when I was studying here. ... I worked in different departments. I started with the grounds, then gardening, and the cafeteria, dormitory, classrooms, and library.

His mother was able to help a little. A family from Europe befriended his mother and learned about Conrad’s situation. They decided to help Conrad financially with his college expenses.

When Conrad first came to Mission College, he “was very devoted to [his] Catholicism....” His mother's advice was firmly implanted in his mind: “...never change your religion, your belief.” Conrad explained, “...I was brought up in a very solid background, Catholic doctrines, even joined the priest, so I thought not for me to change to another religion. But then I learned things from my friends and roommate at that time.”

The first year was challenging for Conrad, however. Not because he had to work hard to pay his tuition fees but because of recurring bad dreams. He said:

I was afraid of this and that. It was because of fear....I could not sleep at night, and I heard a whisper in my ear, saying, you have the disease. You have AIDS. Something like that. Bad dreams after I visited the AIDS Hospice. It was part of the orientation program....When I came back, I had bad dreams. Nightmare.

He shared his problem with a few people whom he trusted. He was advised to pray and study the Bible with them, but he “was not interested.” He prayed to “St. Mary” and the other “saints.” Unfortunately, things did not improve. “Bad dreams” continued to bother his sleep. He said, “I almost quit. I had packed everything.” In retrospect, Conrad thought, “The devil wanted me to

leave.” His roommate, whom he described as “kind” and “supportive,” noticed his struggle and suggested, “Why don’t you study the Bible and take some Bible lessons, and I will pray for you? Maybe, the way you pray is not correct. Do you want to try the Adventist way of praying?” Tired of the struggle with bad dreams, Conrad decided to take his suggestion. His roommate introduced him to a pastor who started giving him Bible study. Over time, Conrad developed an interest in learning more about biblical teachings. He took Bible studies from not one but several individuals. He made several important discoveries.

I discovered that a lot of things in the Bible are different from what I have learned and heard from the Catholic school. We never used the Bible as a principle to guide us, but we used most of the writing of the Church, so then I discovered the truth is actually in the Bible, not from what I have learned in Catholic school....

Conrad’s searching and studying of the Bible and understanding of the teaching of the Bible led to a life-changing decision. He eventually decided to join the Adventist Church by being baptized in his second year at Mission College despite opposition from his family and relatives. Because of the pressure from his relatives and the Catholic priests, his mother tried to change his mind, but Conrad’s decision was firm. Over time, his mother eventually accepted his decision, but he “lost” some relatives and friends who saw him as a “betrayal” and a “black sheep.” Fortunately, some respected his freedom to believe according to his conscience. Despite the severed relationships with some friends and relatives, Conrad recognized the many blessings of his decision to join the Adventist Church. He said, “I have a lot of other good friends, Adventist friends....I have found the truth, and now, I have [my wife]. She is also very supportive and devoted. That’s great.”

After completing his undergraduate studies at Mission College, he worked at a high school. After a year, he learned about a vacancy in one of the departments at AIU and submitted a job application. After working there for three and a half years, he considered returning to school. He stopped working and went for further studies at a local university.

Why AIU?

After earning his master's degree from a local university, Conrad's former Faculty Dean asked him if he was interested in coming back to serve at Mission College. He said, "Yes." He went for an interview. Shortly afterward, he was called to serve in one of the faculties. He accepted the invitation because he wanted to work for the Church. He said, "We want to, you know, serve the Church. We don't want to serve other organizations. As long as they employ us, we will stay as long as needed. As long as they have work for us." Conrad said an organization offered his wife a "big salary" position, but she declined the job offer. Conrad explained:

She said that even if I have a big salary, I won't have peace, you know. She noticed that many family members who served in big companies like the UN, were not happy because they did not keep the Sabbath. I think Sabbath is very important to us. Sabbath and tithing, faithful in giving back to God.

He wanted to work for a Church institution because he did not enjoy his short working experience "outside." He described his experience working at a non-Adventist institution earlier:

Sometimes the organization requires you to do extra work on Saturday, especially on sports day. I told the boss earlier when I started that I am an Adventist and that I rest on Saturday. I do not work on Saturday. If you want me to do anything on Saturday, I cannot do it. But if you need extra help, I can do it on Sunday. But then I observed that a few times sports events or other recreational activities happened on Saturday. I didn't feel comfortable. That's one of the reasons why if you work for an organization that you are committed to and you share the same belief, then it will be easier.

Even though Conrad received permission not to work on Saturday, he realized he could not help with occasional school events held on that day. Not being able to help on Saturday made him feel uncomfortable because he could not show support to his school. This experience made him long to serve in a place where he was free to observe the Sabbath and where people had the same religious values as him. For Conrad, being able to keep the Sabbath freely is a great blessing. He explained: "That's why I decided if I am called to work for the Church, the Adventist Church, then why not." He said, "If I keep the Sabbath holy, I feel like I will receive a lot of blessings."

Elements Appreciated

Some of the elements that Conrad appreciated were the same factors that attracted his interest in working at AIU. In addition to those factors, he enjoyed his work. This enjoyment came from the Christian environment around him. He worked with people who “share common interests and the same faith” and collectively believed that God was a provider who guided His people. Having worked in a secular organization before, he treasured the freedom to observe the Sabbath freely. He believed that “keeping the Sabbath” “gives [him] a lot of blessings.” and working side by side with others who did their best to do the right things according to their religious values. One of the reasons he did not enjoy his short working experience “outside” was the “wrong things” he saw being done.

Conrad valued good working relationships with his colleagues and supervisors. He appreciates harmony in the workplace. He describes his colleagues, boss, and administrators as supportive and understanding. He explained, “They support and understand [me]. They are very caring, actually. That is what I like about working here. We support each other.” All these, he said, contributed to a “happy mood.”

Conrad also liked the environment. He said, “I like the environment. The Christian environment. People support each other. When you feel down or depressed, when you have difficulty, you have some people who are there to support you. The environment here is also safe, and you keep your faith.... You are surrounded by Christian friends.” Conrad appreciated the positive influence of Christianity on people. From his experience, they supported each other, especially in difficult times.

He also appreciated having an Adventist school close by for his children to attend. Because the school was on the campus of the University, it was very convenient to take the children to school in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon.

Challenges

Conrad found cross-cultural communication tricky and difficult. He said: "...because there are many different cultural backgrounds, communication and cultural understanding are sometimes challenging." Cultural values and norms affect not only the way of communicating but the meaning ascribed to words. He found that speaking or writing in the same language with each other did not mean that no misunderstanding could occur. Even though teachers and students interacted in a common language, communicating clearly could still be challenging. As a non-native speaker of the English language, Conrad admitted that, at times, he struggled "to explain clearly" to others what he wanted to convey but expressed that he was "willing to learn and improve every day." The problem with communication is not only in the meaning of the words but also in the way people act. He said, "...the meaning of words...and the way we react to each other..." are all affected by culture.

Conrad also thought that the government was "quite demanding" in its expectations of higher educational institutions. The expectations were quite heavy for small universities like AIU, which has "limited resources or persons to prepare documents and submit to the government." He said, "It is a lot of effort from the teachers." He further said, "I feel bad for the Deans and the Chairs. They have to work very hard.... Those who work with QA dedicate a lot of time." He even had some suggestions on how to ease the work and planned to help when he is "done with [his] studies," not necessarily with Quality Assurance documents but with other expectations. He even said it would help ease the workload if the quality assessment was done "one in three years instead of every year."

Dealing with Difficult Times

When dealing with a difficult situation, Conrad talked to his wife, whom he described as "a very great support" to him. This conversation always led to prayers because Conrad and his wife believed that God was in control of situations and could provide assistance. He believed that God had led his life and personally tasted His goodness. He explained:

We ask for help from God to guide us. We believe that all challenges are under His control. He can help us to overcome things easier if we put our trust in Him. Then we try to stay calm and do our very best. The rest, if we cannot do, we put in God's guidance. That can relieve our burden.

Conrad's good relationship with his colleagues and supervisors created a sense of community in his workplace. This sense of community was more clearly seen when someone was in a difficult situation. Conrad appreciated that he could count on getting help from his colleagues and supervisors when he was in a challenging situation, just like they could rely on his support when they faced challenges.

Thoughts of Leaving

Conrad admitted that the thought of leaving AIU had crossed his mind when he wondered how life would be if he earned more. He had seen how students who "have lower degrees than us... can earn more... become rich." He called this the temptation "to experience the world" and to go out and look for a higher paying job elsewhere, especially seeing how others working outside receive higher income. He knew of people with only an undergraduate degree but received a much higher salary because they were working "outside." With his work experience and credentials, he could make more elsewhere than what he was making at AIU. In fact, he was not the only one who had experienced the temptation of working outside to earn a higher income. Even his wife has considered the possibility.

Still at AIU

Despite the temptation to seek a higher-paying job, Conrad and his wife decided to remain at AIU. Working outside of the church system often entailed difficulty in observing the Sabbath. Reflecting deeply on their thought about leaving helped them to see the materialistic reason behind the desire to leave. They decided that a higher income would not mean much if they did not have real peace in their hearts. Conrad explained:

...sometimes, we want to experience the world. But again, if we leave the university and work in another place, we may have problems with keeping the Sabbaths. I thought about going and finding a job that can earn more, but then I realized that it is not the right choice because it is a materialistic reason. It will not provide me with peace in my heart.

Ultimately, they decided they had enough at AIU to be happy with what they had. They believed that God could provide for their needs.

I noticed some of our students who graduated here are now rich. They can buy big houses. They can buy a big car, a piece of land, ya. Even though they have lower degrees than us, they can earn more than us. But they don't have peace, real happiness. When I realized that, even if I earned a lot of money, if I don't have real peace, and if I don't keep my faith, ... what is the reason for living. It does not mean anything to me.

Conrad decided not to give in to temptation for the sake of his children. He wanted them to grow up in a safe environment that nurtured their faith. He thought that living among the Christian community on campus would encourage his children to keep their faith. He said: "Because they are raised in this church, they should stay in this faith. When they live in this community, they are safe."

Conrad's commitment to the university's ministry also helped him decide to remain. He had witnessed good examples. He explained:

[I] learn from other missionaries. The people around [me], a lot of good examples. They are very devoted. Even though they are talented and can easily work and serve other organizations outside and earn a lot of money, they don't. They prefer staying in the Church. As long as the University has a job and it operates, until they have, maybe, no more job, I will work here."

The AIU workers' dedication strengthened Conrad's dedication to God's work. He said he saw a lot of good examples of commitment to serve God all around him. He was inspired by the faithful service of missionaries who could easily get higher-paying jobs elsewhere but chose to work at AIU.

Summary

This chapter presents the voices of nine participants from different backgrounds. In their interviews, they shared their life stories. Of major interest to this study are their conversations about the factors that led to the birth of an intention to quit working at AIU and why the intention did not become a reality. The following chapter presents the results of an in-depth analysis of the data.

CHAPTER V

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study narrates the experiences of nine long-term employees of Asia-Pacific International University. To answer the research question, the researcher employed cross-case analysis to understand the experiences that enabled the nine employees to serve beyond a decade.

The answers to the research question are divided into five categories based on the interview questions. The categories are as follows: (a) reasons for serving at AIU, (b) elements appreciated at AIU, (c) intentions of leaving, and (d) the reasons to remain. In each category, themes or factors were identified.

The Reasons for Choosing AIU

The interview questions on reasons for serving at AIU examined the factors that influenced the participants' decision to either apply for a job or accept a job offer. This was included in the cross-case analysis because the researcher wanted to see if the reasons to remain after an intention of leaving was born were similar to the initial reasons to accept a job offer at AIU.

Various reasons were cited for coming or accepting the invitation to serve at AIU. Although the reasons would be discussed separately, several factors were linked to the participants' lives or circumstances.

The first theme is Personal and Organizational Compatibility. Personal and organizational compatibility refers to the match between the participants (career goals, values, and job-specific

elements) and the university. The personal and organizational compatibility was reflected in the aspects of AIU that fit well with the participants' values and aspirations. The factors that contributed to the sense of compatibility were varied.

The Adventist environment at AIU was compatible with the value of some of the participants. Conrad accepted the invitation to work at AIU because he wanted to work in an Adventist institution where he could observe the Sabbath freely. He explained the struggle of working "outside":

Sometimes the organization requires you to do extra work on Saturday, especially on sports day. I told the boss earlier when I started that I am an Adventist and that I rest on Saturday. I do not work on Saturday. If you want me to do anything on Saturday, I cannot do it. But if you need extra help, I can do it on Sunday. But then I observed that a few times sports events or other recreational activities happened on Saturday. I didn't feel comfortable. That's one of the reasons why if you work for an organization that you are committed to and you share the same belief, then it will be easier.

As Conrad explained, when working in a non-Adventist company previously, he often had to decline to come for school activities on Sabbath. Even though he could keep the Sabbath, he constantly felt uncomfortable because his colleagues worked on the day he observed holy. He felt uncomfortable because he was unable to support the company fully. This eventually created a longing in his heart for a place where he could keep the Sabbath freely. Conrad said: "That's one of the reasons why if you work for an organization that you are committed to and you share the same belief, then it will be easier."

The Adventist environment is associated with the freedom of keeping the Sabbath. It also means a community of shared values and a common belief system. This was important to Whitmon, whose working experience outside the Adventist system had allowed him to observe the difference between working outside and inside. Whitmon "...used to stay in an Adventist environment. [He] also [has] experienced other places as well, and [he] can see the difference between working inside and working outside." The conflict and jealousy Whitmon observed in a non-Adventist setting caused him to desire to stay on an Adventist campus. He remembered how, in his previous stay, he

observed a lot less conflict and relational issues among the Adventists. In addition, he liked to live among people of the same faith because they understood him better than those of different faiths.

Compatibility was also seen in a participant's desire to contribute at AIU. Ena refused a job offer from AIU several times because she was joyfully working at another sister institution. At that time, she was helping at AIU as a contract teacher who came to teach only on Sundays. Eventually, Ena started thinking of the possibility of working at AIU, not because she was unhappy where she was but because she saw a need that she could help meet. But it was difficult for her to accept the invitation from AIU. Even God did not seem to help with her decision-making. Ena provided the details:

So, I have to decide whether I should stay there or whether I should come here. Staying there or staying here, they were both missionary work. Because there, I was the homeroom teacher. I could worship with my students. I could talk to them. Here, if I taught here, I would be teaching the students to become missionaries for the church. But if I teach there, they will become businesspeople out in the world. It was the biggest struggle I have ever been in.

As Ena pointed out, deciding was difficult because both institutions were engaged in missionary work. Finally, Ena accepted whichever institution would be the first to contact her regarding employment for the following academic year. AIU won!

Tipiana found the prospect of growing professionally at AIU compatible with her value for growth. She explained:

The first thing that came to my mind when I was asked to serve here was the international environment that allows us to grow academically since I also had a dream to teach in an international setting or serve as a teacher assistant.

As Tipiana explained, she had dreamt of teaching in an international school. When an opportunity to work at AIU presented itself to her, the international environment of AIU came to mind. She recognized that being in such a context would enable her to position herself strategically to achieve her dream of teaching in an international educational institution.

A desire for change was why Sanny accepted a job offer from AIU. The change was compatible with his appreciation for changes. He had worked for over a decade and a half in

another Adventist situation. He said he was “happy” where he was, but having been there for years, he thought a change would be good. The change was his biggest motivation. Sanny explained, “... actually I was quite happy there doing many things, but of course, I have been there for so many years, so I said, let me have a chance.” As someone who appreciated changes, he believed that one “...should not be too long in one place.” The change he was referring to, however, was quite specific. It referred to the change in location and context of working—working in a different institution in a different country, not changes in other areas of life. Despite liking changes, Sanny did not want changes in some areas of his life. He wanted stability or a lack of change in other aspects of his work. He was offered a teaching position which was something he had enjoyed doing before coming to AIU. He liked the fact that he was able to continue doing what he had enjoyed doing for years. The biggest reason he attributed to his long-term service was his enjoyment of what he was doing, which was teaching, an aspect of his career that he would not want to change. He said, “...I enjoy teaching. That’s why I can do it for years. If it was something else, I don’t think I would have lasted this long...” In other words, what Sanny was doing at AIU was compatible with his value, which was the main reason he continued serving at AIU for years.

In addition to personal and organizational compatibility, there was also Personal and Environmental Fit. This is the second theme. An example of personal and environmental fit is Tipiana’s preference for warm weather. She grew up in a “cool” place that she did not enjoy. The cool climate, she said, was not good for her health. She said she was “...kind of allergic to cool weather...” because her lungs were “...not very strong.” The warm climate in AIU suited her preference and was kind to her health. Tipiana discovered this when she was studying at AIU. When an opportunity to work at AIU presented itself to her, the warm climate was one of the factors that helped her decide on AIU. The participant added: “...my mother used to tell my father, ‘...if you want me to live longer, let’s move to a hotter place.’ So, I said the same thing to [my husband].”

This statement indicates that Tipiana strongly preferred a warm climate, and she believed that such a climate was better for her physical well-being.

The third theme is Family Influence. Family influence refers to factors within the family that encouraged the participants to seek employment at AIU. For some participants, family influence was instrumental in their decision to come to AIU. Whitmon, who was not married when he was invited to work at AIU, attributed one of the reasons to his mother's encouragement, who wanted her children to serve the church. He explained:

For my mom, in her life, most of her siblings are in the SDA environment or setting. They are working for SDA. She also wants to see her children like that, but I am the only one who has the opportunity like this. So, she encouraged me to stay plus I was also offered a job here. And that's why I stay here.

In Whitmon's case, her mother's encouragement to work in an Adventist institution influenced his decision to accept the job offer from AIU.

Similarly, Lara acknowledged the influence of the family in her decision to come to AIU. She said: "For us, coming here was very important to give stability to our children." This statement shows Lara's main motivation for coming to AIU—to meet the need of her children. She was invited to serve at AIU when she and her husband started thinking about their young children's education. Deeply concerned with the lack of security where they were working, they had begun considering options where their children could attend school in a more stable environment. Foremost in their minds were the academic needs of their children. She explained:

We were looking for good Adventist education for our children and also a good environment in a campus setting that we had experienced as children growing up and also what we had experienced in our early education in a campus environment. That was the strong reason to come here.

As Lara explained, it was very important for her and her husband to find a place where their children could receive good Adventist education and where they could grow up in a safe environment. Their experience growing up in a campus environment convinced them of the benefit

of raising their children in a similar environment. These factors encouraged them to come to AIU because an Adventist school was on the campus, and their family would be residing there.

The fulfillment of children's needs attracted some to AIU and encouraged some to remain. Sunny stated that leaving AIU could seriously interfere with his children's education. He further explained that any plan to leave needs to be made when the children's education would be minimally affected. He detailed:

My last son is going to [Grade] 8. Why am I saying that? These are crucial years for them to change their direction. Because if I have to move, maybe I should move soon. My last son has to be in a school where he is continuing from 8 to 12 at least. I can't put him in a situation where he can go to only 10 or 11, especially in [my country]. The public exams are there, so if I go back to my country, I need to have the time to settle in.

Sunny's statement shows that his children's education was paramount to the family's consideration in any plans. Any move to return to his country must be timed well so that his children would not be disadvantaged.

Conrad indicated that he wanted to remain at AIU because of his desire for his children to grow up in a Christian community so that they would be encouraged to keep their faith. He said, "Because they are raised in this church, they should stay in this faith. When they live in this community, they are safe." Conrad's statement shows great concern for the faith of his children and the belief that living in a Christian community would encourage the faith of his children. In other words, he believed that living in a Christian community like AIU would keep his children spiritually safe.

The last theme in this category is a Positive Connection with AIU. Positive connection refers to the participant's connection with entities both at work and in the community, such as people, groups, places, things, and activities. Three participants decided to accept a job offer from the University because of their warm memories of the University. All three studied and graduated from AIU and had a good experience when they were studying there. During their years of studying and working as student-workers, they developed a strong bond with the institution to the point that they felt at home at AIU. Reeya and Whitmon submitted a job application immediately when invited to

do so. They were hired and started working immediately. Their immediate submission of a job application was heavily influenced by their positive experience at AIU as a student. Ponnella described coming back to AIU as "...coming back home. Even though I didn't stay in the dorm, but I feel like this is my home because for four years, we stayed together with friends." Reeya echoed a similar sentiment: "I like this place just like my home.... I feel at home in AIU." Some did not feel at home when studying there but still had warm memories of special moments. For instance, Tipiana, who graduated from AIU, chose it because it was where she and her husband met and developed a relationship that led to marriage. She said, "...we spent time dating here, getting to know each other, and friends are also here." For Tipiana, the positive connection with AIU came from beautiful memories of dating her boyfriend, whom she eventually married. It was also a place where many friendships were made.

In summary, the factors that attracted the participants to AIU varied, ranging from personal and organizational compatibility, personal and environmental fit, and family influence to positive connections. A summary of themes under the reasons for choosing to work at AIU is reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Reasons for Choosing AIU—Summary of Findings

Themes	Codes	Explanation
Personal and Organizational Compatibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual values • aspiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Adventist atmosphere • freedom to practice one's religious conviction • shared spiritual values and belief systems – making it easy to understand each other • opportunities to grow professionally at AIU • change in a new place • a desire to make a difference • compensation offered
Personal and Environmental Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • political situation of the country • others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peace and stability of the country • preferred weather/climate • positive atmosphere
Family Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's need • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe environment to raise children • educational needs of children • family members want participants to work for the University
Positive Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special meaning • relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presence of friends • having met spouse in AIU • feeling at home at AIU as a student • being part of a big family • good relationship with supervisors and workmates in the past

Elements Appreciated

The second category of questions in the interview was about elements the participants appreciated about AIU. This was included in the cross-case analysis because what participants appreciated about the workplace could potentially strengthen the intention to continue working in the same environment.

One of the themes was **Personal and Organizational Compatibility**. This compatibility was shown very strongly in religious conviction or faith. Sanny said he appreciated the “Christian atmosphere,” which he described as “...one thing that has truly touched him...” He believed that it was generated by “...kindness among the faculty members and administration.” He said, “My Dean

and colleagues have been very kind to me, very helpful in whatever ways I wanted. Going sometimes beyond their call of duty...” Sanny also appreciated the “faith factor” emphasis among administrators, teachers, and students. He indicated that it was satisfying to be part of something “nice and positive.”

Personal and organizational compatibility included elements in the workplace that the participants appreciated. Several of them enjoyed their work for different reasons. Academic freedom was compatible with Natasha’s way of working. She appreciated the freedom to implement her plans instead of being told what to do and what not to do. She said, “What I like is no one comes and... tells me what to do... you are supposed to do this, this, this. I am at my own liberty of teaching.” The opportunity to work with challenges that encouraged creative thinking was compatible with some participants’ enjoyment of overcoming challenges. Ponnella explained why she did not enjoy her previous work: “...you worked, finished, one by one, but not challenging you to think....” In her current position, she enjoyed the challenge “to create” and “to use her brain all the time.” Whitmon enjoyed the challenges of dealing with young people who constantly challenged him to grow. He explained, “... the next group that is coming has the same problem but a different way to do things. So, you must also change and think of the way to approach.” Whitmon found it satisfying to “grow and catch up with the young people.” It made his work fascinating because it “keeps [him] active and alert all the time, to think ahead of the time and to learn to approach different people.” The opportunity to learn and grow was compatible with some participants who enjoyed learning. Tipiana appreciated the opportunity to learn and grow that came with the teaching profession and administrative duties. She explained that as a teacher, she learned from “teaching different courses,... different groups of students,...extra curriculum... and... academic activities that you get involved in,” and even from “attending committee meetings.” Lara especially liked the emphasis on professional development and the resources provided to support growth. She explained:

... the one thing that we really appreciated about AIU is the opportunity for professional development. In other universities, we were not given so much...Maybe it was not emphasized so

much or stressed so much.... I think there was some amount that was given to us.... I feel it is very important for us to grow professionally, attend conferences, and learn through seminars and conferences, and opportunity to travel to different places to attend seminars. It opens your eyes. It helps you to learn and grow professionally and also learn about the importance of improving.

As Lara indicated above, she truly appreciated the professional development allowance because it allowed her to travel to different locations and attend conferences that she found professionally eye-opening.

The second theme is **Personal and Environmental Fit**. One aspect of AIU that fit well with the participants was the physical state of the university, which was described by some as “very good,” “a beautiful campus,” and “very peaceful.” The environment, however, can go beyond the physical part of AIU. Whitmon enjoyed being in an environment where people share common interests and have the same faith. He said:

I like the environment. The Christian environment. People support each other. When you feel down or depressed, when you have difficulty, you have some people who are there to support you. The environment here is also safe, and you keep your faith.... You are surrounded by Christian friends.

As Whitmon explained, he appreciated the Christian environment on campus. He observed that in such an environment, people support each other. He liked the support he received from his colleagues and the presence of Christian friends around him. He believed that being surrounded by Christian friends helped him feel spiritually safe because he was encouraged to keep his faith.

The third theme is **Gratification**. One gratification was manifested in the participants’ sense of their roles at the University. Some felt that they were playing essential functions in the mission of the University. For instance, Whitmon said that he found it satisfying to contribute to young people’s growth. It was satisfying for him to “grow.” He described his growth in the following way:

When I first worked with students, ... I would be like right or wrong.... You did right, okay. You are doing wrong, okay. I report straight away to the Dean. There is no negotiation. Later on, I found out that people are not that bad. Sometimes they don’t know, so then, of course, I also learned from my supervisor. I looked at the way they treated the students and the way they talked to students. When I first go with them, I might disagree with them. No, you should do this, but when I looked at them and also because of age, they are older and more mature, we have to think twice, helping save people rather than judging people. And then I find that is more interesting, more rewarding, saving people rather than judging. It’s not just about work. Also,

about the value of the students, to know salvation. So, I developed a lot. That's why I want to work more for the young people, students, to help them. I think also that it's God's will because I do pray actually that I want to do this do that. Of course, we have goals, right? I don't like this. I don't like that. Suddenly I received the job to help myself. Praise God. He tried to transform me.

As Whitmon pointed out, his way of dealing with young people had changed from being rigid to more understanding due to working with mature supervisors who set a more compassionate model for working with young students. After his transformation from being more concerned with external behavior to being more interested in students' well-being and salvation, he enjoyed the challenges of working with college students.

In the same vein, Reeya also expressed that she felt good about being able to help needy students. She said the following:

I worked very hard to help myself. I did not borrow a government loan. I had sponsors to support my studies. I felt like God bless me. That's why I had the opportunity to study and work. So, it is the right place for me. I helped many students. I just feel I love these students who are working hard. And I tried to find sponsors to help them. Every semester, students who struggle always come to my office. We pray and they cry, you know. I also cry. I just felt like a mother.

As Reeya explained, the experience of working her way through college made her heart soft toward students who worked hard to get a college education. She had a strong desire to help them by finding financial help for them. She also cried and prayed with them.

The fourth theme is Workplace Relationships, not only among colleagues but also between supervisors and subordinates. Many of them treasured the harmonious relationship among fellow workers. Important to them was having supportive colleagues who shared in good times, provided help in times of need, and prayed for each other in difficult times. Natasha said that when she needed assistance, her colleagues were more than willing to provide help. She explained:

I like our working environment. Yes, we do have our ups and downs.... but then I see the same people when I need them. They are the first ones to come and help.... So, I like that.... I can count on them if I need something else not related to my work. Other times I can come to them. So, when somebody needs help, or somebody is going through something, they are there to support. I like that.

As Natasha stated, she liked the working environment because of the strong support the employees provided for each other. They responded to each other's needs with a willingness to assist in any way they could. She could count on her colleagues to help in times of need.

In addition to appreciating supportive colleagues, many valued having supportive and understanding supervisors. Sanny said that he liked working at AIU because his Faculty Dean and other people "have been very kind to [him], very helpful in whatever ways [he] wanted. Going sometimes beyond their call of duty..." In the same vein, Lara stated, "I felt I was blessed to have a set of colleagues, and even the dean, who was very appreciative and supportive." Both Sanny and Lara appreciated the support they received not only from their colleagues but also from their supervisors. A summary of the themes under elements appreciated is reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Elements Appreciated--Summary of Findings

Themes	Codes	Explanation
Personal and organizational compatibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common interest • faith • academic freedom • support toward professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being among people with shared interests and the same faith • emphasis on faith in the workplace • no micromanagement in the classroom • the emphasis on the importance of growing professionally • the provision of an annual professional development allowance
Personal and environmental fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beauty • peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the beauty of the campus • peaceful environment
Gratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part of an important mission • rewarding experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being part of a faith-based institution • being able to make a significant contribution • being able to help needy students • being able to grow professionally • seeing self as having an important role
Workplace relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supportive network • supportive supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supportive colleagues • good relationship • sharing in each other's joy and giving help in difficult times • prayed for each other • kindness among the faculty members and administration • understanding supervisors

Dealing with Challenges

The third category of questions in the interview was participants' ways of dealing with challenges. While the participants used many strategies, workplace spirituality was the most cited theme. The participants shared the following statements:

Lara: ...take it to God in prayer.

Ponnela: ...Many times, I pray by myself when I sit quietly. After ten minutes, I know what I should do.

Whitmon: The first thing to do is pray.

Reeya: Just pray for them. Give the problem to God. Don't keep too much in our hearts because it will destroy our health.

Conrad: We ask for help from God to guide us. We believe that all challenges are under His control. He can help us to overcome things easier if we put our trust in Him. Then we try to stay calm and do our very best. The rest, if we cannot do, we put in God's guidance. That can relieve our burden.

Tipiana: ...when I have the time to talk, if I am angry, I express my anger. If I was discouraged, unfairly treated, I would just express and pour my heart. And then at first, I would feel better. And then I would be kind of ready to pray. Not that I forget God, but I feel like talking to a human who I can see. Nodding head, at least responding to my complaint.

Ena: I believe that God is the one who brings me to where He wants me to go, and my attitude has always been that I want to be where he wants me to be.

Natasha: I will keep on praying...

As shown by the statements above, praying was a critical way to deal with a difficult situation in the workplace. God was seen as a source of help, strength, and guidance.

Workplace spirituality was shown in bringing challenges to God and finding comfort from God's words. Lara said, "Thanks to God for His word that gives us encouragement. Many times, we will listen to songs that will encourage us." In other words, Lara found encouragement in listening to God's word and spiritual songs.

The second theme in this category is **support from others**. Besides praying, many of the participants talked to someone they trusted. This talking supported them because they felt someone was listening to their woes and allowing them to verbalize their concerns without fear of judgment. This person could be a spouse, a colleague, a supervisor, or a friend. Lara said that she would talk to her husband regarding non-confidential issues, while Ponnella would only speak to her husband. She explained, "I always talk to my husband. Whether it is about my job or a personal issue, I always sit and cry with him. Sometimes I don't talk to anyone else. I talk only to my husband." Others echoed this sentiment. Conrad said, "I talked to [my wife]. She is great support for me." While others spoke directly to God, Tipiana preferred to talk to another person first. She said:

When I have the time to talk, if I am angry, I express my anger. If I was discouraged, unfairly treated, I would just express and pour my heart. And then at first, I would feel better. And then I would be kind of ready to pray. Not that I forget God, but I feel like talking to a human who I can see. Nodding head, at least responding to my complaint.

Tipiana maintained that talking to another person did not mean that she did not need God, but it was part of the process of dealing with challenges. She felt more ready to talk to God after talking to someone in flesh and blood. This support was also expressed in the form of encouragement and companionship of others. Doing things with friends was a strategy some participants used. “Doing things” can take different forms. Lara explained, “What helped many times is taking a little outing with your friends or with your faculty. You go out somewhere, and you just spend some time in nature.” She would come back feeling “refreshed” and “revived.” Whitmon made a similar statement: “Most of the time, we go to relax. Go out and eat. After that, when you look at the problem, it’s not bad after all as I think. Sometimes it happens like that.” Both Lara and Whitmon observed that engaging in a relaxing activity with others helped them to feel stronger in dealing with challenges.

The third theme in this category is a cognitive **response** to problems. The cognitive response was expressed in several ways. One of two ways was by reflecting deeply on the issues. Sanny shared:

“...I like to wait and see how things work. Before I make a decision, I see all the options which are there and evaluate those options. If I do this, what can happen? If I do that, what can happen? So basically, I like to be a very pragmatic person, looking at how things will play out in the real world. So obviously, this thing takes a little bit more time for me to take action.”

Tipiana said:

When I face a difficult time, I ask about the advantages and disadvantages. Advantages will be like, for example, leading out a group of students. Advantages will be managing people and also improving my human skills in how to deal with difficult people. The disadvantage probably will be going through emotional struggles like I give up at some points.

Sanny and Tipiana responded to problems by deep reflection, which involved considering possible options in dealing with complex issues, visualizing the consequences of each option, and carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages of every alternative.

The second way of the mental response is a philosophical approach. This approach was a determination to view problems from a certain angle. One of the two ways of approaching a problem

was by looking for blessings in disguise in a problematic situation. Tipiana said, "...even some new things I have learned through not very positive experience. It does help me to grow in one way or another, either emotionally, socially, or spiritually." She explained that even difficult experiences could be beneficial. The second philosophical way was self-talk on the brevity of situations, including difficult ones. This was an act of choosing to remember the reality that things do not last forever, including challenging situations. Ena explained:

This has always been my philosophy. Sometimes I don't like my schedule, like last semester. I had an 8 o'clock class every day. I was missing morning worship, but this, too, shall pass. And the Lord compensated. Today, I can go to every worship.

For Ena, reminding herself that the difficulties would pass allowed her to be patient with the current challenges, not allowing them to overwhelm her with discouragement.

A summary of themes under ways of dealing with challenges is reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Ways of Dealing with Challenges—Summary of Findings

Themes	Codes	Details
Workplace Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prayers • prayer journaling • word of God • songs of faith • finding strength in God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking things to God in prayer • keep on praying • praying alone • praying with others • finding encouragement from God’s word and songs of faith • finding strength in God •
Support from Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talking to someone • reaching out to others • spending time with friends/loved ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talking to colleagues who could potentially help • talking to a supervisor • ask for assistance • seek companionship and friendship with others • going for outings with friends • talking to spouse talking to someone trustworthy • going for outings with family and friends • doing things with friends
Mental Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking • Analyzing • Self-talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about the issue before concluding • Tried to understand both sides • Identifying what contributed to the problem • This, too, shall pass away

Intention of Leaving

The fourth category of question in the interview was the intention of leaving. In this category, three themes were identified. The first theme was **Work-related Challenges**. Challenges in the workplace came in various forms. One form was the weight of responsibility that led to excessive worries, such as in the case of Reeya. She detailed her struggle:

Someone just told me. You are not the owner of this university. Why do you worry too much? The owner is God. But I still worry. I am stressed out. Too stressed out. In the past, I couldn’t sleep. Maybe [the University] has to find someone who can face their problem. When a problem comes, they are not stressed out like me. If I am stressed out like this, I will get sick, and my life will be short. So, I just find something to do to make me happy so that I won’t worry. So, I can live for a long. I thought of finding another work... and doing many things.

Reeya’s description of her situation shows how she struggled with worrying about the university's financial well-being, especially when enrollment dropped because she was working in an

area directly related to finance. Even when she was reminded that she was not the “owner” of the university, she said, “...I still worry.” The ongoing battle with worry was so stressful for Reeya that she began seriously thinking about leaving. She was unable to detach herself from the issues the University was facing. Even when she mentally knew she should not be worrying, she could not help herself. She decided that it was better for her to leave for her health. Similarly, Ena thought of leaving due to a heavy workload. She explained:

I felt like leaving. I felt like going. You know this QA bothers me so much. They interfered with my love for work. And I thought I don't have to be going through all this. So, I think in my discouragement or whatever because my blood pressure was also being affected.... And last semester also, I was doing this conference. I had 16 or 18 students doing research, and I was directing the research. It was really heavy for me, and I said, I am not doing a good job. I am very ineffective. I should not be teaching anymore. All of that. It was discouraging.

Ena's description indicated that when she had more things than she could handle, she felt “very ineffective” and “felt like leaving” because her health was affected when she struggled with the heavy workload. She thought that she was not doing her work very well. All this led to discouragement that made her think of leaving.

The second form of workplace challenge was the participant's feeling of failure and unappreciated. Whitmon described the disappointment of unmet expectations, especially after working hard to ensure success. When things did not turn out as expected, he thought that he “... cannot improve anything.” When he “[works] very hard” and puts a lot of effort into working on a project, but his expectation regarding the project was not fulfilled, he felt that he “didn't do well.” He began questioning whether he was making any difference in the students' lives he was trying to help. He stated:

Sometimes you feel like you didn't do well or you fail to do that, like helping the students to stop smoking... the problem is still there. Sometimes I feel like I did not do anything. It cannot improve anything.

Whitmon's statement is indicative of his sense of failure when he saw the poor result of his hard work. He began to think that he was not contributing to improving things around him. The sense of failure led to the thought that he could serve more effectively elsewhere. Similarly, feeling

unappreciated could become a genesis for the thought of leaving. Lara had a similar experience. She shared: “We were discouraged.... [My husband] felt it was better to go. You are giving your entire life, your energy to serve in a place; you feel people not appreciating it, not understanding or doubting what you are doing....” This unappreciated feeling stemmed from a lack of trust and the perception of doubts regarding his intention. This led to deep discouragement and the conclusion, “It is better to leave.”

The third form of workplace challenge was difficulty adjusting to leadership or changes in work-relationship. Adjusting to new leadership can be challenging for new leaders and their followers. Natasha shared an experience when a colleague became a supervisor.

[The first year] was quite challenging. Every meeting, I used to dread. I used to dread what the [Chair] would say. I dread how I would react.... I would pray before going. I knew I needed to pray before going. Shut your mouth. Pretend is not personal.... I prayed a lot.

What Natasha shared shows that she found the transition of a colleague to a leadership position challenging because of the changes in their relationship from being colleagues to a leader and follower relationship. She recounted the difficult time.

I said I cannot take this because it was terrible. We can start looking.... You know our office here is very open. We just shout and talk to anybody.... And you bumped into each other every time you open the door. Suddenly, that was gone.... It was not a good thing.... Everyone started feeling that.

The challenges of the new situation were enough to push Natasha to consider looking for a job elsewhere. Similarly, Tipiana also struggled to adjust to the change in her relationship with her former colleagues, who became her supervisor after some changes in middle management. She narrated:

It was a very difficult time. Actually, I started talking to my sister about the available position where I can more and be with my two sisters so that we can work in the same place, and I feel like having friends.... At that time, I had only one child, so I thought to myself. If I decide to move, then this will be the best time. If I have another child, there will be more challenges in the future. It might be difficult for me. I started thinking about that. I was already planning.

Tipiana's description of her situation shows that she struggled to adjust to the changes in leadership in her department. She had such a hard time adjusting to the new leadership style that she started looking for a new job elsewhere.

While Natasha and Tipiana struggled to adjust to new leadership, the prospect of having a new leader was adequate to cause Ponnella to consider leaving. She said to her then-current supervisor: "Okay, if it is that way, I need to think for myself because I stay here because of you. Now, you are not my boss anymore; I don't want to stay." Ponnella had pledged loyalty to her then-supervisor, and the prospect of working for a different supervisor was not something she would welcome. She thought of leaving. However, her supervisor counseled her: "You need to stay even if I am not here. Work for God, for the University, not for any person." The advice by her supervisor to remain and to work for God and the University instead of people was taken to heart, and Ponnella remained.

The second theme in this category is the **Greener Grass Issue**. The greener grass issue referred to the situation when a worker thought of leaving because of the possibility of making a better income elsewhere. Two participants shared that they had been tempted to go for the greener grass. Conrad had observed that AIU alumni with only undergraduate degrees could work in a job that paid them a higher salary than the salary the participant received at AIU. He explained:

I noticed some of our students who graduated here are now rich. They can buy big houses. They can buy a big car, a piece of land, ya. Even though they have lower degrees than us, they can earn more than us.

Conrad's statement shows his observation of the difference in the purchasing power between him and the graduates who had only a bachelor's degree but were receiving a higher salary. He called this the desire "...to experience the world..." and "...finding a job that can earn more". Similarly, Whitmon considered looking for "a good job and money" after seeing his sibling's income from working for a big company.

The third theme is concerned with the **family situation**. Sanny shared:

My last son is going to [Grade] 8. Why am I saying that? These are crucial years for them to change their direction. Because if I have to move, maybe I should move soon. My last son has to be in a school where he is continuing from 8 to 12 at least. I can't put him in a situation where he can go to only 10 or 11, especially in [my country]. The public exams are there, so if I go back to my country, I need to have the time to settle in.

Sanny's sharing indicates that he had thought of leaving because of the intention to have his children study in their homeland. Such leaving needed to be timed right so the children could transition to the educational system in their country with minimum difficulty. While he had not seriously thought of leaving, he expressed concern for his family—aging parents and siblings struggling with health issues. He would like to be home for them.

A summary of the themes under intentions to leave is reported in Table 8.

Table 8

Intention to Quit—Summary of Findings

Themes	Codes	Details
Work-related Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stress • sense of failure • feeling unappreciated • difficulty with new leadership • change in relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant stress • inability to stop worrying • stress-related health issues • outcomes of projects less than desired • problems continued despite efforts • feeling ineffective at doing things • feeling unappreciated • lack of trust • heavy workload • new leadership was seen as not understanding • change from being colleagues to being a supervisor-subordinator relationship • lack of support • feeling useless or not making a meaningful contribution
Greener Grass Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • earning more elsewhere • prosperity of working outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeing former students/others with lower academic degrees receiving higher salaries outside • seeing those working outside with greater property
Family Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's education • family health issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's education in their homeland • health of parents and siblings at home

Reasons to Remain

The fifth category of questions in the interview concerned the reasons for remaining at AIU after the participants had thought of leaving. The first theme is **Affirmation**. Affirmation was experienced as a result of turning to God through prayers, reading the Bible, and listening to spiritual songs and messages. Lara was ready to go with her spouse, who was going through a very difficult discouragement. In their pain, they turned to God for strength. They found encouragement from His word, which gave them “the energy to carry on.” Similarly, Reeya, who had seriously thought about leaving, decided to take leave on the other side of the world for several weeks. She received direction as a result of praying for guidance. She narrated:

I went there, and every day I prayed to God. God, please open the way for me. How is my life? How is the future? So, I was always thinking about AIU. Thinking about my workplace. The church. The people here. I missed it so much. Before I came back here, about three weeks, my heart cooled down. All the worries were gone. So, I came back happily.... I have the energy to work again. Thank you, God. You want me to work in this place.

Reeya's description of her experience praying for guidance shows how she went away to pray about her decision and found herself longing to return to AIU. She could not stop thinking about it. Having studied and worked there for more than two decades, she discovered that she was deeply attached to the University, which had become a home for her. She said, "I love AIU." She decided to stay and resolved to do her best to serve the University.

Two participants thought of leaving because of the challenging adjustment to new leadership. Both prayed about the challenges, and they found different answers. Natasha developed patience and self-control. Before going to any meeting, she would pray, asking God to help her be patient and careful with her words and facial expressions. She said, "...I prayed a lot." Her colleagues described that they had noted changes in her over time. She had become more patient, less combative, and more willing to understand others. Even her supervisor, the one she was with in the beginning, commented that she had changed for the better. The participant also said the supervisor had improved significantly in her leadership and prayed for improvement in her relationship with her subordinates. Natasha shared, "...Later on, it all started improving...a lot. Big difference. That's why everyone is okay now." As for Tipiana, she had already explored where she could relocate. But before making any major decision, she prayed, asking God to help her with her challenges. Her strong commitment to Christian education's mission made her want to find reasons to stay. After praying, she was impressed to research her problem. Tipiana said: "That day, I was busy reading. Evening, I went home, and I kept reading about it, and then the next day, a new thought came to mind. Suddenly, I found out the solution to my problem." Her research led her to the discovery that there was nothing new for her to learn. She realized that her boredom with a routine made it difficult for her to be patient with challenges in the workplace. Once she decided to do new things, she could

enjoy her work as before. There was no reason to leave anymore. She said, “I learned from the experience that if I feel like leaving work, I should start finding new things that I am interested in so that I have a purpose to live.” This was a discovery she made after praying for guidance from God.

The second theme is the **People Factor** which refers to other people’s influence on the participants’ decision not to carry out the intention to leave. The people factor took the form of encouragement. Others’ “love and support” generated encouragement. Lara and her husband were encouraged by others whose kind words gave them the “courage to persevere.” Slowly, discouragement lost its grip on them. She explained:

[My husband] was ready to go back, but there were many people who encouraged him, many individuals who showed their love and support, I believe contribute to [our] desire to stay.... It doesn’t have to be much. It could just be a statement, a word of encouragement that tells you that you are appreciated, and that God appreciates what you are doing gives you, when you are discouraged, courage to persevere.

Lara’s description is a testament to the power of encouragement. She and her husband were ready to leave, but the love and support they received from others via words of appreciation and encouragement changed their mind. Whitmon thought of leaving because he did not think he was doing well in his work. Conversations with his supervisor and friends caused him to reconsider. He shared:

First, I shared this burden with my boss, of course. Well, he tried to comfort and listen. During that time, that’s how I felt. Then just like I said, I shared with friends. We go out and relax. After we came back, then you can see things from a different point of view....then when I come back and when I look at things, I can see things from a different point of view. Even though we cannot achieve what we expect, maybe later we hope that seed that we plant will grow. It will help them in the future. We may not see it now. But we can see it in the future. It will help them in the future. We may not see it now. But we can see it in the future. But that makes me look at things ... how we are blessed by staying here, with friends, a supportive environment.... I have to say that is because of the environment, the Christian environment. So, people are supportive. That’s why you come back to your senses, look at things, okay it’s not as bad as I think rather than keep thinking about leaving.

Whitmon’s account of his intention to leave shows how support from a supervisor and friends can reverse his intention to quit. The conversation with his supervisor and time spent with friends encouraged him to reconsider his intention. In the end, he decided to remain. While

Lara and Whitmon were inspired by the words of appreciation and affirmation from supervisors and friends, Conrad was greatly encouraged by examples of faithfulness from the missionaries he had seen around him. He said:

You learn from other missionaries. The people around you... good examples. They are very devoted. Even if they are talented, they can work and serve other organizations outside and earn a lot of money. But they don't. They prefer staying in the church.

For Conrad, the faithful examples of other workers who could easily work elsewhere and get higher pay but chose to serve in the Church spoke volumes to him. It was one factor that helped him decide to continue serving at AIU.

The third theme is **Family Benefits**. This refers to factors within the family that caused the participants to remain at AIU. For Sanny, his family was the main factor in either staying or leaving. He explained:

...actually, one reason which really kept me is because of my children, too. My children have differences in age, almost four or five years each. Between [Sarah] and [Daniel], four and a half years. [Daniel] and [Sherwin], five years. Because of that now, when [Sarah] was finishing, she has to go to college. She is going to college; my son is getting into college. And my last son is going to be 8. Why am I saying that? These are crucial years for them to change their direction. Because if I have to move, maybe I should move soon. My last son has to be in a school where he is continuing from 8 to 12 at least. I can't put him in a situation where he can go to only 10 or 11. Especially in [my country], the public exams are there, so if I go back to my country, I need to have the time to settle in and do. I was not able to do it for my first son. I had to go immediately, but at that time, I was kind of stuck another three four years. My children's education. That's the main reason why I cannot move. Otherwise, we would have moved.

As Sanny explained in the statement above, his children's education was of paramount importance to him. Still, because of the nature of the education in his country, a transition to a new educational system needed to be timed strategically so that his child(ren) would not waste time waiting to transition to the new system. Missing the strategic timing would mean that the family would remain in AIU to allow the children to finish in the educational system they started. For him, no workplace issue had led him to consider quitting. Another participant, Conrad, wanted to remain at AIU because of his children. He said: "Because they are raised in this church, they should stay in this faith. When they live in this community, they are safe." Concerned about their spiritual safety,

Conrad wanted them to remain in a context where faith was important. He believed staying in the AIU community would keep his children spiritually safe.

The fourth theme is **a Shift in Perspectives**. This refers to changes in how the participants thought about issues that caused them to think of leaving. A shift in perspective is exhibited in a few ways. One is being reminded of a commitment to serve God. Several participants found such a reminder a solid antidote to discouragement, which energized their souls to persevere. In several instances, the thought of leaving disintegrated at the reminder of their commitment to serve God.

Ena explained:

I was baptized at 11. I didn't even receive Bible studies because I came from an Adventist family, but my turning point was one vespers, one Friday evening at [a college]. They rang the bell for sunset, one hour before sunset, and so the campus was all calm and solemn and all that. I was sitting on the grass, on a slope of a hill overlooking the valley, the rice field, and all that. Friday evening, I could just feel that the Holy Spirit was there. And thought about surrendering to God. I just said yes.... It was the beginning. He was guiding throughout. We never have to say, what shall we do next. We never have to wonder what to do. That was one big blessing working for the church. Because outside, once you are dismissed, you are done. You have to look for a job. We work for the church all our working lives. And I must emphasize, no regrets.

For Ena, the intention to leave did not become a reality when she remembered her commitment to dedicate her life to service to God. She had pledged to surrender her life to God; for her, that surrender came in the form of life-long service to the Church. While Ena was helped to remain by a reminder of her commitment, Ponnela was helped to remain because of a shift in perspective. She wanted to leave because the leader she was loyal to was no longer in a leadership position. However, Ponnela was advised by a close friend who was also a colleague to focus on serving God, not a human being. She explained the advice she received: "You need to stay. If I did not be here, but you need to think as we work for God, for the university, not for the person...." Ponnela took the counsel to focus her service on God instead of a person to heart and decided not to leave.

The participants tempted to leave for the greener grass experienced a shift in perspectives when they reevaluated their values and reflected on their previous work experiences outside the

Christian network of institutions. Whitmon and Conrad found reasons to be thankful for what they had and concluded that despite the importance of money, it was not the only essential thing in life. Their working at AIU afforded them blessings that money could not purchase. Whitmon expressed appreciation for his quality of life, and Conrad valued the freedom of being able to keep the Sabbath and the Christian environment in which his children were growing. He said:

...sometimes, we want to experience the world. But again, if we leave the university and work in another place, we may have problems with keeping the Sabbaths. I thought about going and finding a job that can earn more, but then I realized that it is not the right choice because it is a materialistic reason. It will not provide me with peace in my heart.

For Conrad, materialism is not an acceptable reason to leave the University. He believed that such motivation would not give him peace in his heart. In addition, working outside the system may not allow him to keep the Sabbath. Whitmon echoed Conrad’s thought. He explained:

The main purpose is that if you are happy with your life, you will enjoy it, and the most important thing is that you can help other people. So that is more rewarding even though you don’t have much. Of course, comparing with the payment that we received from the university, it’s reasonable. The benefit we have here is reasonable.... Even though your pay is not as high, you have a quality life. Quality life, you enjoy life.... There are many other things money cannot buy.

As Whitmon explained, a good life is a happy one—a life one enjoys. He thought that his service at AIU was rewarding because of the opportunity to help others. He considered himself a happy man. He enjoyed his life even though he had less than some people when it came to the size of his income. However, he thought his salary and the benefits he received were reasonable. He recognized that he enjoyed many blessings in life that cash could not purchase. He concluded that “good job and money...not the main purpose of life.” In the end, Whitmon decided that he had had enough working at AIU and enjoyed many blessings beyond what money could buy. He decided not to move. A summary of the reasons for remaining at AIU is reported in Table 9.

Table 9

Reasons for Still at AIU—Summary of Findings

Themes	Codes	Details
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Affirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • praying • reading God's word • listening to spiritual songs • spiritual strength • answered prayers • renewed sense of mission and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turned to God for strength • received encouragement from God's words • love and support from colleagues and others • insights into what could be done to improve the situation • developed patience and self-control • learned to depend on God more • improvement in the relationship between supervisor and subordinates • found a reason to remain • reminded of the commitment to God's work • reminded of God's leading in life
People Factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouragement • love and support • model of faithfulness in service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inspired by faithful workers in AIU • having a real-life model of faithfulness and commitment at AIU
Family Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children's education • children's spiritual safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoiding disruption to children's studies • raising children in a place saturated with spiritual values
Shift in Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focusing on God's blessing • gratitude • adjusted expectation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being reminded of good things • being reminded of blessings no money can buy • renewed appreciation for what one had • working faithfully and allowing God to take care of the results • being reminded of priority in life • being reminded of what truly mattered in eternity • reminded of serving God, not human beings

Summary

Considering the research question of what factors contributed to the service longevity of the participants, the researcher observed that each participant had thought of leaving but decided not to leave. What made the difference was the willingness to consult God with the intention. In other words, the intention to quit was presented in prayer, and God's guidance was requested. Each participant demonstrated strong workplace spirituality, which proved instrumental in the turning point of the participants' intention to leave.

Table 10 presents a summary of the themes from the five categories of interview questions.

Table 10

Themes of the Five Categories

Reasons for Choosing AIU	Elements Appreciated	Dealing with Challenges	Intention to Quit	Reasons to Remain
Personal and Organizational Compatibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Adventist Atmosphere freedom to keep the religious conviction shared spiritual values and belief system opportunity to grow professionally a change (a new place) desire to make a difference compensation 	Personal and organizational compatibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> common interest faith academic freedom support for professional development 	Workplace Spirituality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prayers prayer journaling word of God songs of faith finding strength in God 	Work-related Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stress sense of failure feeling unappreciated difficulty with new leadership change in relationship 	Affirmation of Faith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answered prayer God's guidance Encouragement from spiritual songs Renewed sense of mission and purpose
Personal and Environmental Fit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> peace and stability of the country preferred weather positive atmosphere 	Personal and environmental fit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> campus beauty peaceful environment 	Support from Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talking to someone reaching out to others spending time with friends/loved ones 	Greener Grass Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prospect of earning more somewhere else prosperity of working outside 	People Factor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouragement love and support model of faithfulness in service
Family Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children's needs family preference 	Gratification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> being part of an important mission rewarding experience 	Mental Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> thinking analyzing self-talk 	Family Situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children's education family health issues 	Family Benefit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children's education children's spiritual safety
Positive Connection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good relationship good memory 	Workplace relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supportive network supportive supervisors 			Shift in Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focusing on God's blessings gratitude adjusted expectation focus on serving God, not human

The themes from *Dealing with Challenges* were used by the participants in dealing with themes in *Intentions to Quit*, which then led to the themes in *Reasons to Remain*. In other words,

when confronted with issues that caused the intention to quit, the participants responded spiritually to the difficulty. How they dealt with the problems led to the eventual decision to remain at AIU.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Decades of studies on turnover have given birth to four theoretical perspectives: organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness. These will serve as theoretical lenses for interpreting findings in this research. Organizational commitment refers to the emotional and functional attachment toward the employing organization (Elizur & Koslowsky, 2001). This attachment is demonstrated in the “extent to which an employee is loyal and willing to contribute to the organization” (Tsai et al., 2011, p. 5322). On the other hand, organizational citizenship behavior refers to the individual behavior motivated by personal choice that promotes the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization (Organ, 1988). Job satisfaction is the “positive emotional state” one has for one’s job or job experience (Locke, 1976, p. 1304), while job embeddedness is a combination of forces that retain an employee in the workplace (Mitchell et al., 2001). In qualitative studies, these theoretical perspectives serve as a guide or lens to help the researcher interpret the results of the data analysis.

The average turnover rate for Asia-Pacific International University from the academic year 2014-2015 to the academic year 2018-2019 was 8.86%. While the rate was not worryingly high, turnover is costly on several fronts. The search for replacements is pricy in terms of financial resources, human energy, and time. In addition, each new employee needs to be trained and mentored to function well in the unique organizational culture of the institution. This difficulty led to the development of the research question of this study—what factors contribute to long-term

service at Asia-Pacific International University? The elements were explored from interview data collected from nine employees who had served for over a decade at the institution.

To discover the factors contributing to service longevity at AIU, a qualitative case study design using narrative inquiry allowed the researcher to hear narratives from long-term employees at Asia-Pacific International University regarding their work experience in the institution. The analysis of the narratives revealed elements that the researcher perceived as having contributed to their service longevity at AIU.

Findings

The interview questions were divided into five categories: (a) reasons for choosing AIU, (b) elements appreciated, (c) dealing with challenges, (d) intentions to quit, and (e) the reasons to remain. In each category of questions, themes were identified.

The analysis of the reasons for choosing AIU examined the factors that influenced the participants' decision to either apply for a job or accept a job offer. This was included in the cross-case analysis because the researcher wanted to see if the reasons to remain after an intention of leaving was born were similar to the initial reasons to accept a job offer at AIU. In this category, four themes were identified. They were personal and organizational compatibility, personal and environmental fit, family influence, and positive connections. The most often cited theme was personal and organizational compatibility. This compatibility came in different forms ranging from faith alignment to desirable benefits the participants anticipated receiving from AIU. Positive connections and family influence were also influential. Those who had studied at AIU were drawn to serve their alma mater because of their positive experience while studying there.

Elements appreciated by the participants were analyzed, and four themes were identified. They were personal and organizational compatibility, personal and environmental fit, gratification, and workplace relationship. Personal and organizational compatibility manifested in different forms. Some valued the Christian

atmosphere created by the community members' common interests and religious beliefs. The emphasis on faith in the workplace further added to the formation of the Christian atmosphere. Others were grateful for the growth, professionally or personally, that came from serving at AIU. Participants expressed gratification in their appreciation for being part of an institution with a critical mission and seeing themselves as playing an important role in this mission. This vital role comes from being able to make meaningful contributions and being able to help needy students. Workplace relationships were a recurring theme in this category. All the participants verbalized appreciation for supportive colleagues. The last theme, personal and environmental fit, was evident from participants' appreciation of the beauty of the campus and the peaceful environment.

The ways the participants dealt with challenges were identified. The data analysis in this category identified three themes: Workplace Spirituality, Support from Others, and Mental Response. Workplace spirituality was demonstrated in two main ways. The first one was prayer, the primary way of dealing with challenges. The second one was to listen to God's word and songs of faith. The second theme was support from others. Intentionally seeking support was also a major coping mechanism. In addition to praying, almost all the participants talked to someone. This could be a trusted colleague, dependable supervisor, reliable spouse, or faithful friend. Going out to nature in the company of family provided comfort. The same can be said of non-nature context as long as good friends are present. The third theme was Cognitive Response. While some were drawn to family and friends, others were drawn to themselves in deep reflection—attempting to understand the difficult situation and decide on the best course of action. Some participants, however, did not see the need

to be analytical. They simply took on a positive outlook and reminded themselves of the transient nature of difficulties.

Different factors shaped the intention to quit. Three themes were identified. The most cited theme for the intention to quit was work-related challenges ranging from stress to discouragement, from difficulty with new leadership to a sense of failure. The second theme was the greener grass issues. Participants saw the outward prosperity of former students or family members who had lower academic credentials but received a bigger salary, enabling them to acquire more considerable property. They felt tempted to work outside where they could receive a greater salary. In addition, family needs in the form of education for children or concerns about family health were a reason to leave.

The analysis of the reasons to remain showed four themes. The themes were Affirmation, People Factor, Family Benefit, and Shift in Perspectives. The affirmation came in the forms of answered prayers, which led to recovery from discouragement, and God's guidance which gave clarity of direction and a renewed sense of mission. The people factor came in different shapes of support and love received from others. This support was very encouraging to the participants. Another form was the inspiration the participants received to remain from witnessing the faithful service and strong commitment to God's work in the lives of other employees of the University. The family benefit was evident from the blessings of undisturbed children's education and the safety of raising children in a place saturated with spiritual values. The shift of perspectives took the form of refocusing attention on God's blessings instead of one's lack; a renewed appreciation of things money cannot purchase that one already had; the development of contentment; and being reminded of what indeed was important.

Discussion

Based on the literature review on job longevity, the researcher selected four models or concepts to form the theoretical background of her study. The four theories were organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness.

Much of the discovery in this study is similar to the results of other studies. People are drawn to serve in a particular institution and remain due to a combination of internal and external variables related to the institution and themselves. It is usually never a single influential factor. Together, the various elements maintain the employee's connection to the organization. Job embeddedness theory supports this (Mitchell et al., 2001). That the diversity and inter-relatedness of influential factors keep the employee embedded in the organization to varying degrees is explained well by the three components of job embeddedness—*fit*, *links*, and *sacrifice*. The participants' compatibility with the organization reflects the *fit* component of job embeddedness. In this study, the participants' values, belief systems, career goals, and aspirations were compatible with the organization. In terms of their surrounding environment, this *fit* was reflected in the participants' compatibility with the societal atmosphere, weather, and political climate. Some of what the participants appreciated in both the personal and organizational compatibility and the personal and environmental fit in the workplace echoed the findings of other studies: compensation (Alameddine et al., 2012; Greenlee & Brown, 2009); supportive administration and employers (Alameddine et al., 2012; Cancio et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Horton et al., 2008; Rycraft, 1994); workplace relationships (Alameddine et al., 2012; L.A. King et al., 2016); gratification (Bakker et al., 2010; Bumgardner, 2005; Horton et al., 2008); commitment and responsibility (Mowday et al., 1982; Rusu, 2013; Self & Dewald, 2011); a sense of mission or calling (Bumgardner, 2005; Ledesma, 2011; Ravari et al., 2012; Rycraft, 1994); spirituality in the workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fitriasaki, 2020); opportunity for professional development (Al Balushi et al., 2022; Greenlee & Brown, 2009). Others not explicitly mentioned in the literature reviewed are the peaceful environment, campus beauty, the Christian atmosphere created by the community members' common interests and religious beliefs, and the emphasis on faith in the workplace, which can be grouped under personal and environmental fit.

The second component of job embeddedness, the *links* component, refers to the number of one's connections to other entities both at work and in the community. In this study, children's need for education, the family's need for a safe environment, family members away in the home country, and friends were represented in the *links* component of job embeddedness. Like the first and second components, the *sacrifice* component reflects the reasons why the intentions of some participants to leave did not materialize. Changing jobs would incur some losses for the participants, including loss of a secure living environment, valuable colleagues, a support system in the workplace, and special benefits.

The second theory, organizational commitment with its three components—*affective*, *continuance*, and *normative*—can also explain the participants' service longevity to a certain degree (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In this study, *affective* commitment (Mowday et al., 1982) was shown in the participants' positive sense of belonging to the university. A previous and/or currently positive experience created this sense of belonging. The *continuance* component further accounted for service longevity. This component was manifested by what the participants gained from working at AIU.

Conversely, these gains could be lost if the participants decided to leave (Becker, 1960). This is similar to the *sacrifice* component of job embeddedness. Like the first two components of organizational commitment, the *normative* component could also explain to a certain degree the long-term service of the participants. This was shown by the participants' sense of mission and loyalty to the organization in response to what God had done for them.

The findings also show evidence of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988; Smith et al., 1983) among long-term employees. The following OCB was observed among the participants: *self-development* (Katz, 1964), which was termed *professional development* in this study; *loyalty* (George & Brief, 1992), which refers to employees' desire to be faithful to the institution; *conscientiousness* which refers to behaviors created by a sense of responsibility (Organ, 1988) evident from the participants' concern about the institution; and

sportsmanship which refers to employees' focus on the positive (Organ, 1988). This observation is supported by similar studies, which found that employees with high levels of OCB tend to exhibit a higher likelihood of remaining in the organization (Chen et al., 1998; Coyne & Ong, 2007; Ma et al., 2016).

In addition to the long-term employees' strong sense of commitment to the organization, they also indicated satisfaction with their overall work experience. This finding concurs with previous studies that a high level of job satisfaction tends to go hand-in-hand with outstanding commitment to work (Dirani & Kuchinke, 2011). It was when they experienced severe dissatisfaction that the thought of leaving occurred.

One key finding is this: The intention to leave is often associated with a specific event or factor whose occurrence overshadowed even the elements one appreciated. In this study, the reasons were constant work-related stress, not feeling appreciated, difficulty adjusting to leadership change, unmet expectations, perceived lack, and family issues. Unlike other studies (Alameddine et al., 2012; Green & Heywood, 2008; Greenlee & Brown, 2009), most participants did not cite salary as a reason for the intention to leave. The two participants who admitted that they were once tempted "to leave for the greener grass" did not leave because of the shift in their perspectives. In their cases, it was not that they were unhappy with the compensation they were receiving, but the prospect of earning more elsewhere was a temptation. Participants eventually admitted that what they received at AIU was adequate for a decent life and shared their observation that having a high-paying job is not a guarantee of quality life and that material possession was not indicative of the presence of peace and well-being.

The intention of leaving caused by administration or leadership is similar to other findings (Alameddine et al., 2012; Cancio et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Lawrence et al., 2014; Rycraft, 1994). A major finding in this study is the impact of new leadership on employees. This issue was cited by three of the nine participants. Two participants intended to quit during the difficult time of adjusting to a new supervisor. One participant planned on quitting at

the prospect of having a new leader. The first two participants, who cited this as the reason they wanted to leave, eventually developed a way of coping with the change by asking God for help. They did not want to remain in a negative state of mind and fervently prayed for help. Instead of quitting immediately, they prayed for direction and strength. Both talked of having to pray regularly for strength. The participant who planned to quit at the prospect of having a new leader decided to remain after being reminded of the need to serve God, not human beings. The three participants' way of dealing with the intention to quit due to leadership change can be seen as a form of psychological capital that "...has a significant negative relationship with... intentions to quit" (Avey et al., 2009, p. 686).

One participant's intention of leaving was closely connected to the family situation, specifically his children's education. It was not related to his work experience at AIU. There was a specific point when it would have been appropriate to leave because of how his country's educational system was structured. If that change did not happen at the "appropriate time," it would not be helpful to leave anymore. This echoes the findings in other studies that employees decided to leave because of issues unrelated to their jobs and workplace (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee et al., 1999).

Another important finding in this study is that long-term employees were not those who had never thought of leaving but those who had thought of quitting but did not implement the intention. In other words, even long-term employees had thought of leaving. All intentions to leave did not become a reality because the participants consciously took the opportunity to reevaluate their intentions in the context of their spiritual life or relationship with God. They prayed about the situation and asked God to guide their decision-making. In addition, they received strong support from colleagues and friends. The individuals' intention to leave was not implemented because of one of the following:

1. The discouragement dissipated over time due to encouragement from colleagues and other sources.

2. A renewed sense of purpose and mission toward service to God and humanity
3. The focus on the “greener grass” was replaced with gratitude for blessings.
4. A decision was made to trust God with work and life. This is very closely connected to workplace spirituality.

Situations 1 to 4 all took place within the spiritual realm of prayer. All participants expressed strong beliefs in the centrality of God in their decision-making. In other words, spirituality in the workplace neutralized the intention to leave, and as a result, the participants worked at least a minimum of a decade at the university.

Conclusions

In summary, the factors contributing to the service longevity at AIU were a combination of personal and organizational compatibility, personal and environmental fit, gratification, and workplace relationship. Long-term employees exercised workplace spirituality in dealing with challenges, received strong support from others, and assumed positive mental responses. When they thought of leaving, they prayerfully reflected on the intention and asked for divine guidance in their decision-making. The turnover intentions were neutralized by a combination of factors—the restoration of courage, a renewed sense of purpose and mission, family benefits, and a shift of perspective that led to the appreciation of blessings associated with serving at the institution.

Recommendations From the Study

The results of this study reveal the multi-factorial nature of intention to leave and the varied forms of antidotes for them. A careful examination of the causes and antidotes of intention to quit shows that higher learning institutions can minimize turnover causes and maximize neutralizing elements through policymaking, strategic planning, and mechanism development. The following are recommended to Asia-Pacific International University.

1. To regularly conduct events intended to nurture workplace spirituality, strengthen the commitment to God’s work and encourage the faith of its employees. Messages of

faithful service and commitment to the mission can boost employees' determination to serve patiently and faithfully. Those with solid workplace spirituality tend to consider any intention to quit carefully and prayerfully and examine the intention in light of service and commitment.

2. To develop an organizational awareness of employees' well-being through established structures and mechanisms. One possibility is to have listening sessions where employees can safely share their joy and burdens. These listening sessions are the mechanism that allows the administration to hear the concerns of the employees and identify the situation that can lead to discouragement. This identification is the first step toward appropriately responding to their challenges—from creating supportive systems to developing solutions and alternatives.
3. To provide support during the leadership transition period. The early part of new leadership can be challenging both for the leaders and the followers. Employees need to be oriented to the transition process of adjusting to new leadership, especially when the new one replaces a well-loved leader. On the other hand, the new leaders need to be aware of the challenges employees face in the transition, especially when replacing someone well-favored by the employees.
4. To make it a priority to continue nurturing solid relationships among the employees through the program and university-level events. It is beneficial to regularly hold seminars or workshops on building and maintaining strong working relationships. Soft skills that include the team player's attitude are not a genetic inheritance but skills that need to be learned and acquired by most people. In a faith-based institution like AIU, much can be said about producing the fruit of the Spirit.


Implications for Future Research

1. Employees' adjustment to new leadership can be investigated to identify themes that lead to the intention to quit during the adjustment period. The findings could potentially inform institutional efforts to provide support and necessary intervention during the challenging phase.
2. The characteristics of employees who are more susceptible to leadership changes could be studied in comparison to those who are not as vulnerable to such transition. The results of such a study could enable the institution to provide appropriate support or develop a suitable intervention for those employees who struggle to adjust to new leadership.
3. The current study can be replicated at a similar institution of higher learning. Such a study could potentially lead to new themes.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Institutional Permission to Collect Data



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ASIA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Christian Medical Foundation of Seventh-day Adventists www.aplu.edu


April 11, 2019

Institutional Review Board
Andrews University
4150 Administrative Drive, Room 322
Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355
United States of America

Re: Ritha Maidom

To Whom It May Concern:

Ritha Maidom has my permission to invite employees of Asia-Pacific International University to participate in her study entitled "An Exploration of Factors Contributing to Service Longevity at Asia-Pacific International University". I believe the findings of this study can potentially develop an understanding of the strategies needed to encourage long-term service among our employees.

Cordially

Dr Damrong Sattayawaksakoon
Vice President for Academic Administration

Sharing the vision of Mission College and Southeast Asia Union College

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

Andrews University
Leadership Department
College of Education and International Services

Informed Consent Form

A. Introduction

I, Ritha Maidom, am in the process of collecting data for my dissertation that aims to explore the factors that contribute to job longevity in the context of Asia-Pacific International University. This study is qualitative in nature, and the main tool for data collection is interview.

Title of Research: An Exploration of Factors Contributing to Service Longevity at Asia-Pacific International University

Researcher: Ritha Maidom

Purpose: This study is interested in finding the answer to this question: What factors are perceived to contribute to longevity among long-term workers at Asia-Pacific International University? In other words, the study seeks to understand why employees serve for a decade or more at this institution.

B. Details

Participant: I understand that I have been invited to participate in this survey because I am currently working/I have worked at Asia-Pacific International University.

Procedure: I understand (a) that I will be asked several questions related to the study; (b) that my responses will not be linked to my personal identity; (c) that even though the data will be individually analyzed, the researcher will ensure that no person-specific information that could identify a participant will be shared, and (d) that I will be interviewed around one to two hours.

Risks and Discomfort: I understand (a) that there is no known threat or risk to my participation in this survey; (b) that I do not need to respond to any question that I do not feel comfortable responding to; (c) that I can discontinue my participation in the research if I feel uncomfortable to continue without fearing any negative consequences, penalty or loss of benefit.

Benefits and Results: I understand (a) that I will gain no financial benefit from participating in the research; (b) that the results may assist the researcher in finding the answer to her research question, (c) that the results of the study will be published in the researcher's dissertation, and may be referred to in discussions and forums, published in research reports and research articles, and cited in presentations.

Storage of Data: I understand (a) that the oral interview will be recorded and transcribed, (b) that both the oral interview and transcriptions will be stored in password-protected files in a secure place for up to 3 years, and (c) after three years, the oral interview and the transcription will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation: I understand (a) that my participation is purely voluntary and (b) that I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty or prejudice.

Confidentiality: I understand (a) that all information collected in this survey will be kept in utmost confidentiality and (b) that no references will be made in any form in the dissertation that could link me to this research.

Contact Information: I understand that if I have any questions, I may contact Ritha Maidom at ritha@apiu.edu or 0823531626, or the Chair of her Dissertation Committee, Dr. Gustavo Gregorutti at ggregoru@andrews.edu.

C. Prospective Participant’s Response

I am indicating my response to the invitation in the table below by checking the statement that best represents my intention and by providing the needed information.

	<p>Having read the description of the study, I have decided to participate in the study by being interviewed.</p> <p>Name of Participant: _____</p> <p>Signature of Participant: _____</p> <p>Name of Witness: _____</p> <p>Signature of Witness: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>
	<p>Having read the description of the study, I have decided not to participate in the study. I understand that there is no negative consequence, penalty, or loss of benefit for not participating in this study.</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>

Please drop your response into Ritha Maidom’s mailbox no. 108 on the ground floor of the Administration Building. Thank you.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about yourself, specifically your family background, educational achievement, and previous work experience.
2. Describe the reasons for your decision to work at AIU.
3. Please describe your role at AIU.
4. What do you appreciate about your work?
5. What are the challenges you face?
6. How do you deal with tough times?
7. What kind of support do you receive at the workplace?
8. Have you ever considered leaving?
9. Describe what keeps you at AIU.
10. Please share an experience that contributes to your stay at AIU.
11. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Follow-up questions will be asked as circumstances require clarification.

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval



May 23, 2019

Ritha Maidom
Tel. +66823531626
Email: ritha@apiu.edu

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
IRB Protocol #:19-055 **Application Type:** Original **Dept.:** Leadership
Review Category: Exempt **Action Taken:** Approved **Advisor:** Gustavo Gregorutti
Title: An exploration of factors contributing to service longevity at Asia-Pacific International University.

Your IRB application for approval of research involving human subjects entitled: "*An exploration of factors contributing to service longevity at Asia-Pacific International University*" IRB protocol # 19-055 has been evaluated and determined Exempt from IRB review under regulation CFR 46.101 (b) (2). You may now proceed with your research.

Please note that any future changes made to the study design and/or informed consent form require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. In case you need to make changes please use the attached report form.

While there appears to be no more than minimum risks with your study, should an incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any research-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University Physician, Dr. Katherine, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We ask that you reference the protocol number in any future correspondence regarding this study for easy retrieval of information.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,

Mordekai Ongo
Research Integrity and Compliance Officer

Institutional Review Board – 8488 E Campus Circle Dr Room 234 - Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355
Tel: (269) 471-6361 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu

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