

The Work Concerns of the Faculty at Midlife: A Phenomenological Case Study

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Abstract Midlife as a phenomenon is truly enigmatic. Oftentimes, it is associated with changing images and myths that include midlife crisis, change of life, the empty nest and many more. On the other hand, some revealed midlife to be simply a calm transition. This study then sought to explore the work concerns of the faculty midlifers of one of the prestigious universities of Cebu City, Philippines. Concerns at work are the aspects and events in their job as a faculty member which they perceived to cause anxiety, depression, and stress. The data of this research were collected through phenomenological case study using in depth face-to-face interviews (FFI) and a focus group interview (FGI). There were eighteen (18) participants who were purposely selected for the FFI. Another six (6) participants joined the FGI. Data garnered from the FFI and FGI were collated, transcribed and coded to find out their themes. From the themes of findings, meanings were formulated based on the theories of Havighurst and Erikson. This research revealed that teachers at midlife are committed to their profession but at times affected by the unsatisfactory performance of the students and lack of support from the administration. They likewise express their needs to continually update their knowledge to remain effective in their jobs.

Keywords Concerns at work, Faculty at midlife, Filipino teachers, Midlife, Phenomenology

1. Introduction

Midlife is perhaps the most ill-defined of any period in life according to the MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Successful Midlife Development (MIDMAC), [22]. Until today, it is regarded the least studied part of the life span [19], [21], [25].

Developmental theorists such as Havighurst and Erikson provided a context for understanding the phenomenon of midlife as experienced by individuals of the same developmental age. Havighurst and Erikson's theories are stage theories. In general, proponents of stage theories regard that all individuals, at about the same time in their lives, to be experiencing about the same events, problems, and challenges in human development [3].

Havighurst [14] describes developmental task as a major accomplishment required of a person at a particular point in life in order to move successfully to the next stage. To him, a developmental task arises at a certain period of life because of a combination of physical maturation and cultural pressure. If the developmental task is achieved or resolved at the appropriate point in development, it leads to relative satisfaction in the present stage and lays the foundation for future success. On the other hand, failure may lead to

unhappiness, disapproval, and difficulty with later tasks [3], [14], [28]. Havighurst [14] mentioned the establishment of a stable career as major accomplishments at middle adulthood. These may also include the need to help children become happy and responsible adults.

Erikson [6], [7], [8] on the other hand divides the life span into eight stages in an ascending arrangement in order to emphasize that in each development stage, there is a characteristic emotional crisis that arises out of the conflict between two opposing trends. The three adult stages of the model are viewed as struggles devoted to the accomplishment of a primary task: young adulthood as a struggle between intimacy and isolation; middle age as a struggle between generativity and stagnation; and old age as a struggle to achieve a sense of integrity.

Larsen & Buss [18] say that at midlife, the main question of the individual is whether he has generated something that he cares about in life. Often this takes the form of a career like teaching that one cares about. Sometimes, caring is achieved in a hobby or a volunteer activity that is particularly generative and that gives the individual something to care about. The chief concern at this period in life is to assist the younger generation to develop themselves and lead useful lives.

Conversely, the feeling of having done nothing to help the next generation is stagnation. Generativity encompasses the adults' desire to leave a legacy of themselves to the next generation. Through generativity, the adult achieves a kind of morality by leaving one's legacy to the next generation.

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By contrast, stagnation (sometimes called “self-absorption”) develops when individuals sense that they have done nothing for the next generation. Self-absorption could be manifested in their avoidance of intimacy and superficial relationships with others [22].

As of 2012, seventy-three percent (73%) of the permanent full-time faculty members in the SKYS University (SU), Cebu City, Philippines, are midlifers [10]. Some may wonder what developmental tasks they consider at their age. At the same time, others may also want to know about their concerns, apprehensions, and anxieties for being in the teaching profession for so long and being at midlife.

This study then investigated the work concerns of the faculty midlifers of SU to find out what developmental tasks hypothetically assumed by Havighurst and what phenomena in the psychosocial development of Erikson are evident among them.

2. Materials and Methods

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the work concerns of the faculty midlifers of SKYS University (SU) (*not her real name*) of Cebu City, Philippines. Work concerns refer to the aspects and events in their job as teachers which they perceived to cause anxiety, depression, and stress.

The participants of this study were the eighteen (18) faculty midlifers who were purposefully selected for the face to face interviews (FFI). Another six (6) were invited for the focus group interview (FGI). The age range of the participants is between 35-59 years old. It should be noted that developmental books still situate midlifers at the age of 35 to 60 [1], [20].

Except for one college, each department or college was represented by at least two of its faculty members. Members of the FGI came from the same college. Moreover, participants for FFI and FGI were equally taken from the different categories of midlifers, proposed by Johnston [16]; the “early bloomers” (35-39), the “bloomers” (40-49) and the “late bloomers” (50-59). In these sense, each category has 6 participants for FFI and 2 participants for FGI respectively. Each participant was given a pseudonym to maintain their animosity. Interviews were conducted during the second semester of the school year 2011-2012.

Through phenomenological case study approach, the work concerns of the faculty at midlife were unconcealed and analyzed. Phenomenology describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. It focuses on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. Accordingly, the basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon into a description of the universal essence [4]. Grbich, [12] added that phenomenology attempts to understand the hidden meanings and the essence of an experience together with how participants make sense of these. It may or may not

involve bracketing or putting aside of experiences of the particular phenomenon.

In this study then, phenomenological case study was used to explore, describe, communicate, interpret and analyze the experiences (work concerns) of the faculty on the phenomenon known as midlife. To gather those data, face to face interviews and focus group interviews (FGI) were conducted.

The data from face to face interviews (FFI) and the focus group interview (FGI) were collated, transcribed, and coded to be able to find out the theme or the differences of the participants in their work concerns. From the themes of findings, their meanings were established based on the theories of Havighurst and Erikson.

3. Results

From the FFI and FGI, the following themes of findings emerged from this study.

Finding 1: A number of participants (7 of 18 [39%]) pointed the unsatisfactory performance of the students to be a disappointment.

The unsatisfactory performance of students, poor school management, unhealthy relationships with colleagues, personal incapacities as a teacher, and low salary are seen by the participants to be their sources of setbacks and frustrations in the teaching profession. But specifically, there were a number of the faculty midlifers (7 of 18 [39%]) who pointed the unsatisfactory performance of their students to be a disappointment. As Angelina described: “[It’s] when I see my students not doing their work.... Even if you have tried doing the right thing, they still do not do their tasks.” Jennifer too complained saying: “[It’s] when there are students who can’t really find meaning in their studies, and they are not performing well when you know that in fact they can really do more than what they are giving you now. That is my setback.”

Another two midlifers commented: “It’s a big frustration in my part if my students cannot easily understand my lessons. And then, I am already trying to...make or let them be acquainted in the strategies that I am doing” (Denzel). In the same line, the other one said: “[It’s] when I see my students having failing grades, and when I see my students not listening during our discussions.”

There are also some (5 of 18 [28%]) of the participants who considered poor school management as frustrating. Two midlifers expressed this disappointment in the following ways:

Sometimes.... [long pause] it’s about...maybe it is about policies in the school that are not fair. Sometimes, it’s a setback when there are people in the school who were pointed to positions when they were not really worthy of the position. (Bruce)

Frustration? [pause]. It is more on management of the school. Looking at the university now...there are some

administrative rules that I am not really happy. The biggest frustration or worry that I have right now is...I can feel that the culture, the university's culture is now losing the original. (Reese)

For others (5 of 18 [28%]), it is the unhealthy relationships with a colleague, personal incapacities as a teacher and their meager salaries as the causes of their frustrations and setbacks. In line with these regards, Penelope shared: "It happened to me just earlier this year, but it is already solved. The issue concerns my co-teacher. We got misunderstandings but I cannot elaborate because it's confidential." On the other hand, Nicolas told: "My frustration is that I don't have time to prepare materials like a PowerPoint presentation for my class because I don't have enough time." Brad likewise complained: "As a teacher, we are not well compensated...with the amount of work and with the effort we are giving in educating the students."

Only one midlifer (6%) claimed that she does not have any frustration or setback at work. She explained:

I am not frustrated even if I am not given any assignment in my department. Even if I am not exposed,... I am just enjoying the company with the people around. (Cameron)

Finding 2: Majority of the participants (11 of 18 [61%]) declared that their teaching career is not in any way affected by their frustrations at work.

Despite all those clamors of setbacks and frustrations, the majority of the participants (11 of 18 [61%]) maintained that their teaching career is not in any way affected by their dissatisfactions at work. Some of them even regarded their frustrations as challenges. As Denzel described: "It makes me more challenged, because that's the time I'll be looking for other strategies that will be suited to them, so that they can easily understand what I am discussing."

Similarly, another midlifer commented:

It doesn't affect me. I will be more challenged.... Maybe, during the earlier part of my career, but at present, as you aged you tend to broaden your horizon and understand people. People are unique and have sort of insecurities in which you cannot do anything.) And what you can do is do the best you could.... Never mind them, as long as you're doing your best. (Nicole)

Two more midlifers explained why they are unaffected by their frustrations at work. One said: "Usually, if I have a problem, I don't want to bring this problem to my students, to my class" (Leonardo). The other one elaborated:

When I teach I don't bring with me my frustrations because in that case the student would become unfortunate.... You just have to maintain your style of teaching no matter what frustrates you...we'll try at least to give them back the worth of their fees...since they are paying much, it would be a pity if you will just take them for granted. (Bruce)

Moreover, another two midlifers shared different sentiments on why they are not changed by frustrations. Jennifer shared: "If frustrations occur, I never allow myself to be affected because I just let them go. If I am angry, I will express it and that's all. I will never surrender." Likewise,

Penelope told: "No, because I look at everything as very positive. Frustrations at work?... I don't mind because I just let frustrations, frustrate about me" (laughs).

Nevertheless, there are also a number of faculty midlifers (4 of 18 [22%]) who accepted that sometimes they are somehow distressed by their work related frustrations. Angelina confessed: "Sometimes, I am not inspired, and I easily become impatient," while Reese told: "Sometimes, I am not motivated to do some work, like for example, when I go to the classroom and I remember my frustrations, I become affected. Sometimes, my motivation to teach will go down."

Furthermore, a few faculty midlifers (3 of 18 [17%]) acknowledged that they are affected too but likewise they feel that they have to go on with their responsibilities as teachers. This realization is best expressed by two midlifers who spoke:

Sometimes, I am tempted not also to give my best because they [administrators] themselves did not care. But then, I can always bounce back and have the thinking that they have their own responsibilities and my responsibility is that of teaching. So, I'm back to the track again and I'm really giving my best. (Scarlet)

Sometimes, it [frustration] really affects us. But I have to try my best that I can move on with my lessons, and I see to it that it could not affect my students. ... Because, there are things that I have to accomplish...like class objectives and goals. So, I need to work on it as fast as I could. (Sean)

Finding 3: More than half of the participants (10 of 18 [56%]) admitted that in some ways they were dismayed by some administrative decisions.

With regards to the issue on administration, more than half of the participants (10 of 18 [56%]) admitted that in some ways they were dismayed by some administrative decisions. Many of them pointed on the more strict policies of the school as the reason. It is so, especially with regards to the students' evaluations of the teacher's performance. In lieu with this regard, two midlifers commented:

I think, there is one, as presently there are some changes pertaining to school policies. The administrators insist that we should get a flat 4.0 [very good] evaluation from our students. But we cannot generally say that it is necessary, because how can we impose discipline? How can we impose corrective measure to our students if we are at their mercy? Then, if we cannot get 4.0, we are given sanctions immediately (Leonardo)

Discouraged? It's the thing that happened last semester. They [administrators] are sending us love letters [written warning] trying to describe and indicate the result of our evaluation which is actually unfair to the teachers because in the first place they have not conducted proper investigation at all, and they have been believing in the students' feedbacks. (Cameron)

Related to this concern, one midlifer remarked about the unwillingness of the administrators to really look into the problem. She said:

The way I see it, the situation...it's more on the failure of the administration to really look into some problems, to look deeper into them. Because [there are] a lot of problems in the university that were not really properly addressed. They addressed them in a different way. It seems that there was a lack of deeper investigations of these problems. They decide immediately. They lack probing on what is really the source, and what is really the problem. (Reese)

Others were likewise discouraged with how some policies are implemented. They complained about its inconsistency and lack of clarity. This grumble is expressed by the faculty midlifers in the following ways:

There was a memo telling us that we could avail a laptop loan. I tried by following the procedure. I wrote a letter noted by our dean. However, it was turned down. I was a little bit discouraged because I need that thing and beside I will pay it through salary deduction. (Jennifer)

There was one time when they [administrators] were not clear about. There was misunderstanding regarding an issue about leave and it was not very clear on my part. I did all my part. I did all, everything that is really very legal and I felt that it was unfair to be deducted on that amount when in fact, I did everything that was stipulated in the rules. (Scarlet)

The lack of support and concern of the administrators towards their employees was also seen a source of dismay among other faculty midlifers. Two midlifers poignantly articulated this discouragement:

I have lots of discouragements from our administrators because most of the time, many decisions has [*sic*] to be approved by them. Then, sometimes you found some plans to be very necessary and important in your department...they are really useful but then most of the time, they don't care. (Bruce)

On the part of the administration, what is discouraging is that they are not actually giving what is due to the employees. They are not justly giving what is due to the teachers.... For example, with regards to the tuition fee increases, we feel that something is hidden. What they were giving is not really enough or the teachers are not actually well compensated with the amount of increase that they had been asking from the students. (Brad)

Still others admitted their discouragements, but they do not want to be affected by it. Morgan shared: "I get discouraged initially when I was taken out from my position (chairmanship), but later I realized that it was how I grow." Sean likewise stated: "There are discouragements but I don't want to go with it. I just think that it is another test in my career."

Nonetheless, there were also a number of the participants (7 of 18 [39%]) who declared that their teaching profession was never discouraged by any administrative decision. When asked if there is an administration decision which lead them to be discouraged in their teaching career, most of them simply answered "None" and made no further comment. However, two of them elaborated. One said: "As of the moment, I can't see of anything [discouragement] because actually they are the one who prodded me to finish my

master [M.A. degree] and to accept this PAASCU accreditation...being part of these PAASCU accreditors" (Alyssa). Another one said: "None so far. I don't want trouble. I want peace of mind, that's why I don't think, if there is any, I don't think of it" (Penelope).

There is one of the participants (6%) however, who refrained from answering the question.

Finding 4: Half of the participants (9 of 18 [50%]) asserted that they did not feel being stuck in their teaching career.

With regards to their growth and development in their teaching profession, half of the participants (9 of 18 [50%]) asserted that they do not feel being stuck. This claim was expressed in various ways. When asked, Reese replied: "Stuck? No, I love teaching. Though my first love is community work, I still love teaching." Alyssa too strongly holds her stand saying: "I don't think so. I am so happy with where I am now." Another midlifer explained: "I have been growing in this [teaching] career. I have been given opportunities by my school to grow and have challenges." The other midlifer further explained:

Being in the academe helps me a lot to grow professionally, career wise.... Teaching is the best for me not only to share but also to respond to God's calling. I could not have written a novel and a book if I am not a teacher. (Morgan)

On the other hand, there is also a number of the participants (5 of 18 [28%]) who otherwise confessed that they feel being stuck in their career. Will told: "Yes, and that's one of the reasons why I am pursuing my masteral [Master's Degree]. I want to go beyond the box or my comfortable zone." Nicolas also relied: "Yes, I am not growing anymore.... That's why I would like to shift a career." In addition, one midlifer shared his realization as he said: "It seems that I'm stuck. I did not take further studies when my business was going well. However, when it was falling, I realized that it would have been better if I pursued further studies." (Matt). Another male midlifer said:

Yes. There is a point that I feel that we have been stuck in our career most especially if we are not given chances to improve professionally and to improve personally. Most oftentimes, we have been neglected...and our qualification and our intellectual ability is not well recognized and well compensated here. (Brad)

Moreover, several faculty midlifers (4 of 18 [22%]) qualified their answers to the question, telling that it is only at times or at some aspects that they feel being stuck in their teaching career. Angelina said: "Maybe a little bit because I have this plan to finish something at this age and so on but they were not achieved. So, I'm a little bit stuck but I'm happy." Denzel too shared: "Yeah, sometimes (giggles)... especially when there are destructors like family problems. It makes me less focused on what I am doing in my teaching job." Lastly, Leonardo noted: "There were times that I feel being stuck but this is basically on the perspective of educational qualification only. However, being in service to

others and being of help to others, I am not.”

Finding 5: More than half of the participants (10 of 18 [56%]) opened that at the moment they neither planned to change their career nor desired to amend administrative decisions.

As to how they would like to change their career or administrative decisions, more than half of the participants (10 of 18 [56%]) opened that at the moment, they neither plan to change career nor desire to amend decisions of their administrators. As Leonardo said: “Well, right now I don’t have plan to change career or administrative decisions because I’m really fulfilled and I’m contented as of now.” Penelope also commented: “I just want everything to be as it is.”

A more elaborate answer on this matter came from a male midlifer who disclosed:

I had the plan to go abroad before but because of my family’s plan, I changed my mind.... In the case of the administrative decisions, it would be difficult for us to change them since they have their own ways of making decisions. (Bruce)

Still in line with the above comments, Angelina said: “I don’t like giving comments on the administration side (laughs)...but in my career, I don’t want to change anything. I just love the way I am right now. I just love it.”

The other faculty midlifers (4 of 18 [22%]) on the other hand were somehow contemplating on changing either their career or administrative ways of making decisions for the better. Scarlet suggested: “Maybe the administrators should present clear policies, and clear policies must be made known to the people for feedback before it can be made into a school regulation.” Along this idea, Jennifer likewise proposed: “For them [administrators] also to know the needs of the teachers and for them to present clear guidelines on when and how to avail privileges...because you’ll get confused why it was turned down yet approved in another office.”

Then again, some faculty midlifers (2 of 18 [11%]) were just pondering on improving their career. As Denzel said: “With regards to my career, I just want to improve and take the challenge to become the best.” Megan also shared: “In my teaching, I just want to learn more. But I also consider every other opportunities [*sic*] like teaching abroad.”

Still others (2 of 18 [11%]) wanted to augment another interest into their teaching profession. Morgan told: “At this moment, there is no need for me to change my career. I only have to add being a researcher, being a novelist, a composer and a poet,” while Will too opened: “I want to be a businessman (laughs).... I want to work both as a businessman and as a teacher.”

Finding 6: All participants (100%) acknowledged that they still needed to learn some things in order for them to do their job effectively.

Furthermore, all 18 participants (100%) acknowledged that they still need to learn some things in order for them to do their job effectively. However, they varied on their

teaching needs. To be effective, some faculty midlifers feel that they need to update themselves with new techniques and strategies in teaching. On this regard, Scarlet shared: “I want to learn the current trends in teaching and maybe the more technical aspects like how to save time embedding a movie in your PowerPoint.” Nicolas likewise said: “I need to learn more about...maybe how to use PowerPoint presentation” (laughs).

Still in line with furthering one’s know-how on teaching strategies, Denzel told: “I believe I need to learn the latest teaching strategies that can be applied in our classroom set-ups and then the easier for the kids to understand, the better if there is.” Will too shared: “I want to develop more and enhance my teaching skills in order to give more to the students. For example, instructional competencies, how to deliver lessons and methodologies on how to prepare them.”

For others, they can learn more on how to become an effective teacher by attending seminars. Three midlifers articulated this need. One said: “In order to do my job effectively...perhaps, I wanted to attend more seminars to enhance my ability. That’s all” (Reese). The second one stated: “I love to attend seminars because it will enhance me more, especially updating myself in what I am teaching” (Penelope). The last one shared: “I want to attend seminar especially on new technologies. Though I am about to retire, I am still willing to learn those things.” (Matt)

On the other hand, continuing education is the answer of some midlifers to become better in teaching. As one of them said: “I think one way is to proceed to a continuous education, and I think that is also one way of obtaining ideas, experiences and lesson to be learned in a higher order manner” (Leonardo). One midlifer who handles a position also desires to learn more especially those that are related to her job. She expressed:

If I’m still in this position as a student affairs program coordinator, what I would like to learn about is investigative skills...especially when students experience looses of their things, how to deal with that? What legalities there are? I don’t want to be sued or find myself in court later. I also want to improve in my ability to organize groups. (Alyssa)

Lastly, one male midlifer considered self-help endeavors as his option to improve himself in his teaching profession. He told:

In as much as we want to upgrade ourselves by attending seminars or through continuing education, reality tells us that we have limited resources for that. Only few can be sent to seminars and our personal resources may not be enough for our continuing education. So, as an alternative, I just need to read more, study more and acquire more knowledge by myself in order to give better education to my students. (Brad)

The Focus Group Interview

It appeared that the primary concern of the focus group members at work boiled down on the issue about their students’ academic performance and the students’ evaluations of the teacher’s performance. Much like in the

interviews, focus group members dislike students who are doing poorly in their classes. Likewise, it frustrates them to think that the present administrators put more value on the feedbacks of the students. With this, it seemed to them that their job security is in jeopardy.

Salma opened this concern saying:

What concerns me is this craze that even if you are already a permanent employee, you can still lose your job just because of the students' evaluations.... What about the other evaluations?...it looks like we are at the mercy of our students. What we'll gonna do inside in our classrooms, just always smile and please our students?) (Salma)

Linda expressed her agreement saying: "Eventually, that will be the standard. Our examinations should be very easy as well." Again, the issue on the importance of students' evaluation of teacher's performance was raised. The group agreed that its passing grade is really too high. Jim said: "For me, 4.0 is actually too high since the average is 3.0 which is already considered 'good'." Pamela followed up and said: "Considering you have a probationary contract, if you have below 4.2, you cannot be re-hired. It really seems, we are so pathetic here."

John entered the dialogue and shared: "This semester my average is probably 4.2, my lowest in 20 years of teaching. Why? It's because I'm not so friendly with my students." John elaborated how he handled his students saying: "When I give exams, it's not really that difficult. Why they find it difficult? Because these students never bother...to read their books."

Jim concluded and closed the topic as he said: "That's the most frustrating part of our job as educators."

Formulated Meanings from the Themes of Findings

1. Faculty midlifers are committed in their tasks to be generative in their work. The unsatisfactory performance of students in class is a source of discouragement in the attainment of that goal.
2. Faculty midlifers are at times affected by administrative decisions that do not support their goals.
3. Faculty midlifers seem to consider their teaching profession as stable and unlikely be changed by their frustrations and depressions at work.
4. Faculty midlifers appear to be growing professionally. However, they still want to broaden their knowledge to do their tasks effectively.

4. Discussions

It could be indubitable to speak that the faculty midlifers of SU are committed to their teaching profession. The mean of their years of teaching is 18.23 and most of them have rendered 10 to 19 years in the teaching career. Moreover, many of the interview participants also claimed that they do not have any plan to change their career. A number of participants uttered this commitment. For instance, Angelina said: "In my career, I don't want to change anything. I just love the way I am right now." Leonardo likewise shared:

"Right now, I don't have plans to change my career...because I'm really fulfilled, and I'm contented as of now."

Rhodes (1983) in [23] contended that work satisfaction increases steadily throughout the work life from age 20 to at least 60 for both college-educated and non-college-educated adults. The same pattern has been found for both women and men. Nevertheless, there are some individuals in middle age who decide that they don't want to do the same work they have been doing for the rest of their lives [15]. For [24], if individuals perceive that they are behind schedule on what they want from their job or if they realize that their goals are unrealistic, there is a great likelihood that they don't like the work they are doing anymore. They may find that their job has become too stressful and they become motivated to change jobs.

However, changing career is not a plan among the faculty midlifers of SU. Except for one, the participants of this study are firm in their decision to remain in their chosen career, although some consider opportunities to just change working environment such as working abroad or add on it some interest that could augment their family income. In line with this perspective, Megan shared: "In my teaching, I just want to learn more. But I also consider every other opportunities [*sic*] like teaching abroad." On the other hand Will opened: "I want to work both as a businessman and as a teacher."

The role of work is central during the middle years. Middle-aged adults may reach their peak in position and earnings. But, they may saddled with multiple financial burdens from rent or mortgage, child care, medical bills, home repairs, college tuitions, or loans to family members [24]. It could be for these reasons that the faculty midlifers of SU would like to try their luck abroad or put up a business to boost their financial resources.

Though committed in their career, the faculty midlifer likewise acknowledge their work stressors. Faculty midlifers are most dissatisfied when their students are not performing well in their subjects. One participant described this frustration as she shared:

[It's] when there are students who can't really find meaning in their studies and they are not performing well when you know that in fact they can really do more than what they are giving you now. That is my setback. (Jennifer)

Denzel too commented: "It's a big frustration in my part if my students cannot easily understand my lessons. And then, I am already trying to...make or let them be acquainted in the strategies that I am doing."

According to [17] Filipino teachers never hesitate to share their knowledge to their students. They make sure that their students are able to learn from them. They even reach their hands to those students who need them even in off duty hours. Hence, it might be so frustrating on their part not to see a good result, or if they are just taken for granted by their students. Besides, for many authors, work generativity means that midlifers are also inclined to pass down to the next generations the skills that they have developed [22].

Furthermore, the faculty midlifers are dismayed by some

administrative decisions or policies which they consider to be non-supportive to the teachers' cause. On this regard, the following comments can be presented:

The administrators insist that we should get a flat 4.0 [very good] evaluation from our students. But we cannot generally say that it is necessary, because how can we impose corrective measures to our students if we are at their mercy? Then, if we cannot get 4.0, we are given sanctions immediately. (Leonardo)

On the part of the administration, what is discouraging is that they are not actually giving what is due to the teachers.... For example, with regards to the tuition fee increases, we feel that something is hidden. What they were giving is not really enough or the teachers are not actually well-compensated with the amount of increases they had been asking from the students. (Brad)

In many educational institutions, the student evaluations of the teacher's performance are given importance. Student ratings are one of the several methods used by educational institutions to evaluate a faculty member's teaching performance. Performance evaluation is a tool used for identification of teachers' development needs and for improvement of the teaching-learning situations. It is used to determine whether teachers had developed certain competencies that will enable them to perform their job at a level that is conducive to the attainment of higher educational standards [11].

Moreover, it should be noted that school administration nowadays is considered a business. As Francis Patton, the twelfth President of Princeton University remarked: "College administration is a business in which Trustees are partners, professors-the salesman, and the students-the customers." According to this rhetoric, the student evaluations of teachers have become "a form of customer satisfaction survey" [13]. However, student evaluations of the teacher's performance is not devoid of weaknesses. Many researches found out some loopholes from its usage. Hence, it is recommended that its results should be viewed cautiously especially when they are used for administrative purposes [10].

Furthermore, teachers receiving low or insufficient remuneration is again brought up against the administrators. It was already reported by [2] that Filipino teachers were among the least paid in Asia. Their salaries then may not succiently gratify the needs of the faculty midlifers.

But despite all those frustrations and discouragements at work, the faculty midlifers maintained that their commitment to teaching is not in any way affected. This strong commitment to the teaching profession is expressed by a participant who said: "When I teach I don't bring with me my frustrations because in that case the students would become unfortunate" (Bruce). Another participant shared: "If frustrations occur, I never allow myself to be affected because I just let them go" (Jennifer). This ability to control frustrations and discouragement may have something to do with the teachers' emotional maturity.

It is said that as an individual ages, he also becomes

emotionally mature. It is indeed revealed that there is a positive correlation between the age and the emotional health status of the faculty midlifers [10]. Thus, as they age, they likewise become emotionally stable. The faculty midlifers then may not be easily disappointed by frustrations and setbacks at work. This finding is in congruence with several other studies. They too discovered that emotional control improves with aging [26]; that people develop better skills for regulating their emotions as they age [19], [27]; and that emotional intelligence increases slightly with age [9].

With regards to their professional growth, the faculty midlifers are divided in their stand. Half of them contended that they don't feel being stuck in their career, but the other half claimed otherwise. They confessed that they feel being stuck or at times they feel that they are not growing professionally anymore. Positive remark can be heard from one participant who said:

Being in the academe helps me a lot to grow professionally, career wise.... Teaching is best for me not only to share but also to respond to God's calling. I could not have written a novel and a book if I am not a teacher. (Morgan)

On the contrary, another midlifer shared: "Yes, I am not growing anymore.... That's why I would like to shift a career"(Nicolas). Angelina too told: "Maybe a little bit because I have this plan to finish something at this age and so on but they were not achieved."

Accordingly, the current middle aged worker faces several important challenges in the twenty-first century [24]. These include the globalization of work, rapid developments in information technologies, downsizing of organization, and early retirement. Csaja, (2001) as cited by [24] also told that proliferation of computer technology compels middle aged adults to become increasingly computer literate to maintain their work competence. Having the sense of being able to catch up or not with the new trends in the work environment could be one of the gauges in which the faculty midlifers evaluate themselves as being stuck or not in their teaching profession.

Nevertheless, the faculty midlifers open themselves to the possibility of growth and development as all of them acknowledge that they still need to learn some things in order for them to do their job effectively. Scarlet expressed this desire for development as she said: "I want to learn the current trends in teaching and maybe the more technical aspects like how to save time embedding a movie in your powerpoint." Similarly, Denzel told: "I believe I need to learn the latest teaching strategies that can be applied in our classroom set-ups and then the easier the kids to understand, the better if there is."

Galeon, Garciano Jr., & Yburan, [11] found out that the teaching performance ratings of the faculty members in college as evaluated by their students are negatively related to their ages. As their ages increase, their performance ratings decrease. But as the participants of this study revealed, they are still very much willing to improve their performance by upgrading themselves with knowledge of the

new teaching methodologies.

In addition, they also recognize the importance of continuing education to become better in teaching. as one of them shared: "I think one way is to proceed to a continuous education, and I think that is also one way of obtaining ideas, experiences and lessons to be learned in a higher order manner"(Leonardo). To recall, [5] have found out significant association between low level of education and psychological distress in both genders. They found out that low level of education is associated with low sense of mastery, low social support, negative life events, low household income, and unemployment. Higher educational attainment or upgrading one's knowledge and skills in teaching could therefore serve as a buffer of distress among the faculty midlifers especially at work. They may give them the positive attitude towards their midlife events.

In the mind of Havighurst, these challenges faced by the faculty midlifers at work can be considered one of their psychological tasks at work. Besides, by becoming effective and efficient teachers, they could also become more equipped to teach their students and show their generativity which is the primary task of individuals at midlife according to Erikson.

5. Conclusions

At midlife, the faculty members of SU consider teaching as a stable career. It is hardly changed despite their discouragements and setbacks at work. They are committed to produce educated and responsible students. Thus, they are likely frustrated by their students' unsatisfactory performance more than the poor school management, unhealthy relationships in the workplace and low salaries.

Faculty midlifers desire to continually grow and develop in their teaching profession through continuous education and by updating themselves to new teaching methods and classroom materials. They aspire to do their job effectively. Being so, make them become generative and avoid stagnancy.

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