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The Experiences and Reflections of Retired Filipino Salesian Educators on the Preventive System of Education

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Abstract. Catholic schools in the Philippines are led by the religious in collaboration with lay people. In Don Bosco schools, where the teachers' roles have evolved, they take a more active part in carrying out the school's vision and mission. Also called Salesian educators, these teachers are guided by the preventive system of education which is anchored on reason, religion, and loving kindness. Some of them have already retired after at least twenty-five years of service. During those years, they have imbibed the principles of the preventive system of education through their rich experience in applying it to different generations of students. Using the phenomenological method, the study aims to explore the experiences of eight retired Salesian educators including their reflections on its relevance today. The findings showed they value and understand fully the meaning of the preventive system of education. Highlighting the importance of faith, presence, and discipline, they believe that it is a holistic development of students, forming them to become good Christians and honest citizens. Through presence and accompaniment, they were able to build meaningful relationships with the students. Looking deeply into their reflections, they believe on its relevance in the digital age, particularly in assisting the students in dealing with their mental health. Therefore, the school policies and programs should be enhanced according to the needs in the physical and virtual learning environments. Moreover, the preventive system should stay relevant by adapting to the changes and developments in education.

Keywords: preventive system of education; retired Filipino teachers, mental health; digital age

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1. Introduction

Being a predominantly Catholic nation, there are many Catholic schools in the Philippines managed by different religious congregations. One of them is the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDBs), founded by St. John Bosco, the patron saint of youth. With evangelization and education of the young as its primary mission, they were able to establish more than twenty educational institutions since their arrival in 1951. In all these schools, the preventive system of education is the core of its educational system anchored on reason, religion and loving kindness. The SDBs believe in forming the young to become “Good Christians and Honest Citizens.” St. John Bosco was concerned with the transformation of the lives of every young person with whom he came into contact, resonating with ‘the uniqueness of the individual’. Dialogue was the starting point which would only happen if there was a genuine personal interest in each student (Lydon, 2021).

The students and graduates of Don Bosco schools who are also called “Bosconians,” attribute their character to how they were formed through the preventive system. They always remember the prayers, liturgical celebrations, retreats and recollections, including the priests, religious brothers and lay teachers who accompanied them in all the activities. However, while it is perceived to be a very effective system of education, it was never free from serious disciplinary problems. With the rise of social media, there has been an unexpected change in the life and behavior of young people. Unfortunately, there was also an increase in disciplinary concerns, which became even worse during and after the COVID-19 pandemic where a significant increase in bullying and cyberbullying cases was reported particularly in schools.

Sanapo (2017) found that school bullying among children occurred in selected schools in the Philippines with the results showing that 40.6% or roughly four out of ten Filipino children experienced bullying from their peers. A corollary to this is the findings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 on bullying, which showed that the Philippines had the highest percentage of bullying (40%) among all participating countries and territories. These results do not paint a positive picture of the environment of Philippines schools, especially considering that the Anti-Bullying Act, or Republic Act No. 10627, was signed into law in 2013. (Bernardo et al., 2024). However, there are schools that do continue to implement it effectively.

The preventive system of education has been accepted and applied by teachers of Don Bosco schools, also known as “Salesian educators.” In hindsight, based on his experiences as a teacher and academic head in a Don Bosco school for thirty-two years and his many conversations with the eight retired Salesian educators when they were still active teachers, the researcher believes that it has been effective. With all the formation programs, retreats, recollections, and liturgical celebrations that they participated in for at least twenty-five years, it can be assumed that they have imbibed it. Certainly, they have seen how Bosconians were formed through the preventive system. A study by Conjoh and Jalloh (2023) showed that the preventive system produces better outcomes while the repressive system appears to have negative outcomes.

It can be surmised that it was effective particularly when technology and social media were not as big as they are today. However, with these becoming a big part in young people's lives, this influences their thinking and behavior and affects their mental health. In a study on the effects of social media on Filipino adolescents' mental health, excessive online engagement together with curated content was found to often result in increased anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Social comparison and fear of missing out are emerging as important stressors, magnified by both cultural norms and platform-specific algorithm functions (Casilao & Salapa, 2024). As retired Salesian educators, their extensive knowledge and experience of how it works may be helpful in underscoring more deeply its value and relevance in the past, present, and future.

The active Salesian educators are the ones presently implementing the preventive system. While they have received the training needed, the experiences and reflections of the retired Salesian educators may also afford a fresh perspective and inspiration on how they can apply it meaningfully. In a study by Ben-Peretz (2002) about the wisdom of retired teachers, it was found that they focused on the necessary conditions for learning from experience, including the process itself. It was mentioned that maturity, time, and interaction with others are some of the necessary conditions for learning from experience. The learning process is characterized by the narrative, emotional aspects of learning from experience, and the role of disequilibrium and reframing

Studying the experiences and reflections of retired teachers remains unexplored, particularly in Don Bosco schools. While a significant number of research have been conducted about the experiences of active teachers, there are no studies about how the wisdom of the retired Salesian educators can assist the current teachers to become better Salesian educators in applying the preventive system. Moreover, their experiences and insights may help in the enhancement of school policies, programs, and practices. Hence, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do the retired Salesian educators describe their understanding and experiences about the preventive system of education?
2. What do they consider as its significant impact on education?
3. What are their reflections on its relevance in education today?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Preventive System of Education

The preventive system of education was introduced by St. John Bosco, an Italian priest who became the patron saint of youth, grounded in reason, religion, and loving-kindness. It promotes the holistic development of young people intellectually, morally, and spiritually (Pardillo, 2025). It speaks about making the boys "good Christians and honest citizens," and can be considered a modern version of the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau on education. According to Rousseau, by making the citizen good by training, the rest will follow. This method helps the young to grow by giving them opportunities through experiential learning, nurturing their talents, abilities, and skills (Thomas &

Kakati, 2025). In a similar study, it was concluded that the methods of preventive education are aimed at the development of students' intellectual abilities, their individuality and uniqueness, and their positive changes in the awareness of health culture. Furthermore, it is aimed to gain knowledge and social experience in the process of communication, not only with adults, but also with peers, to increase competence in the formation of health culture, and to prevent negative behavior (Surgova & Faichuk, 2022).

In consideration of other educational philosophies, behaviorism can be considered closely related. Whatever the teacher provides will influence the students' output, and the more often the stimulus is given, the clearer the students' response. For this reason, reinforcement should be given as motivation to students. as good reinforcement is expected to shape the character of students (Veranica, 2024). However, the preventive system of education includes more personal stimuli – religion and loving kindness.

2.2. Faith Formation

The core of the curriculum in any Don Bosco school is religion, and evangelization has a vital role. This pillar serves as a means to guide learners to feel and experience God's presence in their lives. Don Bosco implements different religious practices like the Holy Mass, Marian devotion, confession, monthly recollection, and other faith formation activities. All of these are used to develop the faith and morals of students, with the aim that they grow into individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also rich in spiritual and moral values (Simarmata & Pinem, 2025).

Combining education and religion indicates that a holistic formation happens, captured in St. John Bosco's aphorism 'honest citizens and good Christians' (Lydon & Briody, 2023). In fact, the Philippine Catholic School Standards for Basic Education (2016) recognizes the importance of faith formation. The religious education program integrates faith and Filipino culture and life with emphasis of the development of enduring values; it develops personal and appropriate expressions of faith.

2.3. Value of Discipline

Inherent in holistic formation is the value of discipline. Children are sent to school not only to learn intellectually but also to have discipline which is considered an important component in education. They are guided by their teachers to respect and follow the school policies. Quality schools and orderly environments consistently produce higher student achievement and less misbehavior (Black, 2016). In the Philippines, behaviors that are against discipline, like bullying, have been a serious concern, particularly in public schools.

Related laws like the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 were implemented to respond to such misbehaviors but apparently the implementing rules are outdated and no longer responsive to school level realities. Teachers have lamented difficulties due to its outdated definition of bullying, the lack or inconsistency of localized anti-bullying policies, and support for guidance counselors who take on most of the work in the Child Protection Committees (EDCOM II Year II Report, 2025).

Therefore, discipline will always be valued as it is an important component in student learning.

2.4. Education: A Matter of the Heart

While Don Bosco schools value discipline, they believe that education is a matter of the heart. Students learn not only in different subjects but also about life. While students may perform well or poorly, it is how they are understood and assisted in learning that is important. For a student to learn better, teachers should touch the heart first before the mind: the presence of teachers is important in education because it touches the heart. Their presence inspires the students and encourages them to perform better (Thomas & Kakati, 2022). A study on teacher empathy and student well-being by Ahmed (2025) found that the development of empathy and belongingness in the classroom is not a fringe benefit, but an essential requirement of student success.

By being compassionate and encouraging a sense of belonging, teachers create the basis for having resilient, motivated, and emotionally secure learners. In a related study by Daaboul (2024), the value of love was underscored as a foundational element to effective teaching, promoting emotional well-being, enhancing student engagement, and fostering a positive learning environment. Many teachers considered love as an important component of education, considering it an integral part of their professional responsibilities. The study emphasizes the benefits of love pedagogy in reducing behavioral issues, increasing participation, and supporting holistic student development.

2.5. Knowing Today's Learners

Teachers should know who their students are. Each generation of students is different and unique. For today's generation, social media is an integral part of their life. Most of the students in elementary and high school are from Generation Alpha (born from 2010-2024) who are ultra-digital natives, the first generation raised with tablets, smartphones, and artificial intelligence, and globally aware at a very young age. Höfrová et al. (2024) found that Generation Alpha is different, and a major concern is their use of technology, which is leading to decreased opportunities for social-emotional development and increased mental health problems. They were found to exhibit behaviors such as being more curious, free from any rules, being more ill-tempered, more mobile and more self-centered than Generation Z. Teachers are expected to conduct class activities and manage classrooms that will respond to their learning styles and characteristics. It can be assumed, therefore, that the preventive system of education will work effectively for today's generation.

2.6. Insights from Retired Teachers

Retired teachers have taught students from different generations. In one way or the other, they were able to apply the preventive system of education across generations. Though retired, their rich experience can be utilized in providing insights and assistance in today's education. Their capacities and experience should be used differently by inviting them to assist new teachers. Through workshops or learning groups, retired teachers and a few less experienced teachers can share experiences and exchange ideas related to teaching (Hassani et

al., 2025). In a study on how recently retired physics teachers can provide an informal mentoring intervention for new physics teachers to support teacher knowledge growth and influence their retention in the teaching profession, Cottle (2021) showed that substantive content of the mentoring discussions that took place addressed issues of general pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge. The retired teacher mentors were very excited and able to act as mentors.

The preventive system of education underscores the importance of academic performance, faith formation and discipline. Teachers have to know their students and establish a good relationship with them through communication and presence. The retired Salesian educators have accrued many meaningful experiences and insights which can be offered to active Salesian educators in applying it in enhancing student learning and development today. Literature supports its relevance yesterday, today and tomorrow.

3. Methodology

The study used a phenomenological design in understanding the experiences and reflections of selected retired Salesian educators on the preventive system of education of St. John Bosco in relation to stewardship. Phenomenological research is a method of inquiry from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of the persons about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description concludes in the essence of the experiences for several persons who have all experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

A purposive sampling strategy was employed in selecting the participants. Purposive sampling is effective in matching the sample to the research objectives, thus improving the rigor and trustworthiness of the study (Campbell et al., 2020). Participants in the study were eight retired Salesian educators (RSE) who had taught in a Don Bosco school in the National Capital Region, Philippines for at least twenty-five years. Table 1 presents the profile of the participants.

Table 1: Participants' Profile

Participants	Years of Teaching	Retirement Year
Retired Salesian Educator 1	36 years	2021
Retired Salesian Educator 2	41 years	2024
Retired Salesian Educator 3	35 years	2024
Retired Salesian Educator 4	25 years	2022
Retired Salesian Educator 5	35 years	2022
Retired Salesian Educator 6	40 years	2023
Retired Salesian Educator 7	36 years	2023
Retired Salesian Educator 8	31 years	2020

The interview questions were developed by the researcher and subjected to validation by a religious advisor to the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco and an active Salesian educator who has been teaching for twenty years in a Don Bosco school. After the validation of the interview questions, the researcher contacted 10 retired Salesian educators and eight signified their intention to participate in the study. A letter was sent to them through email including the interview questions and

informed consent form. After sending their informed consent form and written responses to the interview questions, an interview schedule was finalized based on the availability of the participants. Five agreed for online interview via Zoom while three preferred an on-site interview. Before the interview, the purpose of the study was discussed and their consent to participate in the study was sought. The interview was conducted for 30 to 45 minutes. This study underwent ethics review and was cleared by the Philippine Normal University Research Ethics Board.

There was data saturation after interviewing the sixth participant. However, the researcher decided to continue the data gathering with the next two participants to ensure data saturation, which yielded very similar results. In analyzing the data gathered, the study followed the procedure recommended by Collaizi (Creswell & Poth, 2016). First, there should be familiarization with the texts and transcripts of participants' responses through being read and re-read. Second, a reduction of participants' responses to meaningful statements or quotes which directly related to the participant's experiences of the phenomenon under investigation was lifted, identified, and appropriately categorized.

Thirdly, construction of meaning was derived from the responses of the participants or a textual description of their experiences. Fourth was the combination of significant statements into a common theme. The themes were developed based only on the data gathered from the interviews. The fifth step was the development of a comprehensive description of the phenomenon being studied. Sixth was the creation of a structural description of the participants' experiences, and the fundamental structure of the phenomenon. Finally, it was the member checking our presentation of the findings with the participants and experts for verification and confirmation of the findings with the participants' experiences.

After finalizing the study, the data will be shared to the Don Bosco school where the retired Salesian educators taught for at least twenty-five years. If needed, the results will be explained to the school administrators and teachers.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Understanding the preventive system of education by the retired Salesian educators

The retired Salesian educators said that the meaning of the preventive system of education, considered as the foundation of Salesian education, is strongly grounded on faith and presence: it is about reason, religion and loving kindness, and presence and relationships. This is its simplest but powerful meaning because it forms young people through faith, knowledge and love.

"It is nurturing young people through reason, religion, and loving-kindness." (RSE 3)

"This is a method where school rules and regulations are anchored on reason, religion and loving kindness. This is the guide of every student in their learning journey." (RSE 5)

“Preventive system is reason, religion, and loving kindness. It creates an environment where young people can freely embrace positive choices. It is a way of promoting virtue and goodness to every learner.” (RSE 8)

Reason is about developing young people become critical thinkers and eventually responsible citizens. For reasons to have more essence and moral grounding, faith is the core in the formation. By instilling the importance of prayer and morality, these young people are also formed into good Christians. Through loving kindness, every student is taught and educated with much understanding and love. St. John Bosco was able to sense naturally the needs and expectations of young people. As such a distinctive characteristic of the educational method developed by St. John Bosco was its preventive system with reason, religion and educational love as its main pillars (Markiewicz, 2021).

The preventive system is also about action. Presence and relationships are considered as another important meaning to it.

“Being with the students during recess and lunch time would give a teacher ample time to know the students well.” (RSE 5)

“Don Bosco’s system of education is based on assistance and accompaniment, where the Salesian educator is perceived as a father, mother, brother, sister or friend, where the prevailing atmosphere is family spirit.” (RSE 1)

“I was simply present to them and with them. And presence is really very important, a presence that is not policing, but one that radiates active and empathic presence.” (RSE 3)

In education, the retired Salesian educators strongly agree that presence leads to better relationships. Students learn when someone is sincerely taking care of them. When teachers assist the students outside the classroom, particularly in the playground during recess, lunch or dismissal, they get to know more about their students. Journeying with the students through assistance is understood as guiding the students in their continuous effort to become good Christians and honest citizens. The teacher’s assistance is not only about being physically present with the students but having a personal encounter with them. At the heart of such education is the principle of accompaniment, which refers to walking alongside the students (Stańkowski, 2025).

The preventive system is a pedagogy of love and discipline. When students come to school, teachers become their second parents. Education matters because of love and discipline which are anchored in faith. The retired Salesian educators mentioned that the preventive system of education is a holistic approach; while students are expected to learn in the classroom, they are also formed spiritually, socially, and morally.

“It focuses on understanding students’ needs and fostering strong relationships to prevent problems before they arise. Instead of punishment, it emphasizes proactive guidance and positive role modeling.”

The goal is to help students grow holistically i.e. academically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually into responsible and moral young men.” (RSE 4)

“When a student committed a mistake, he must know the error that he has done and the reason why the action was not correct. It must be done with kindness avoiding all violent punishment. In this manner, the student will not resent the correction or the punishment he received.” (RSE 1)

The preventive system touches the heart first and then the head. Learning will never take place without love and discipline. The Salesians of Don Bosco put it into action by prioritizing holistic education that goes beyond the traditional academic engagement. The researcher resonates with the understanding of the retired Salesian educators that is about the holistic development of the students. , recalling what he learned from the various formations, including his experiences, that it is about the total development of the students grounded on faith. The goal is to develop students into well-rounded individuals who will be ready to deal with life’s challenges by having resilience, confidence, and a strong moral foundation. This comprehensive approach nurtures intellectual growth, moral character, emotional intelligence, and spiritual development, ensuring that students are equipped for both personal and professional success (Pardillo, 2025).

4.2. Retired Salesian Educators Experiences in Applying the Preventive System

Table 2 reveals that the retired Salesian educators applied the preventive system through consistent communication and animating presence, being meaningfully present and showing love and concern to the students.

Table 2: Experiences in Applying the Preventive System

Themes	Sub-themes
Constant Communication and Animating Presence	Presence with the students
	Providing assistance to the students
Showing Love and Concern	Building relationships
	Instilling discipline

4.2.1. Constant Communication and Animating Presence

The preventive system of education is strongly anchored on reason, religion, and loving kindness. The retired Salesian educators shared that they were visibly present and in consistent communication with their students. The presence of teachers is highly valued, but it is more than just being present. It means having an animating presence with them, talking about life and learning. This theme identifies presence and understanding of students as the experiences of retired teachers in carrying out the preventive system of education. They said that being constantly present with students leads to a meaningful relationship with them.

“Presence is really very important, a presence that is not policing, but one that radiates active and empathic presence.” (RSE 1)

“As much as possible, teachers should be with their students in the places where they assemble and never leave the students unoccupied. As Don Bosco says, “ Idleness is the workshop of the devil.” (RSE 7)

“Rooted on relationships, assistance and accompaniment, we seek to make ourselves loved and in turn make the young feel that they are loved; we believe in their capacity to do good and thus our loving presence prevents the young from doing wrong.” (RSE 6)

Accompaniment and being consistently present may be considered as the most challenging in applying the preventive system of education but the retired Salesian educators never complained about it. They were able to see its value rather than the difficulty of doing it. The researcher completely agrees because he felt how much the students appreciated the presence of their teachers inside and outside the classroom. When teachers are visibly present, students feel assisted and cared for.

Though with limitations, presence also means being available and their presence is welcoming, it is an opportunity to listen, share stories, laugh and know more about each other. The teachers and their presence should inspire the students to perform better. Teachers have to be very thoughtful and creative when dealing with young people, hence, they can instill in them a strong desire for learning and honest life (Thomas & Kakati, 2022).

Through presence, the retired Salesian educators were able to meet and get to know the students. This is where the relationship starts. Through listening and dialogue, every teacher is given an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with the students.

“I applied the Preventive System by building trust, respect, and understanding my students.” (RSE 8)

“I extended any assistance I can give them in whatever way I can, and this made them feel they are accepted and loved.” (RSE 6)

“I was able to apply the preventive system because I was able to build relationships with a listening ears and heart with the young, being present with them, knowing and loving what they love to do or their interests, always believing in their potentials and I was able to create memorable and remarkable experiences with them. I did this physically and virtually.” (RSE 2)

Teachers are able to understand the students and lead them in the right direction because of their presence. The students are prevented from doing inappropriate or immoral acts in dealing with their personal concerns because their teachers are present to listen to and understand them. Young people are worthy of love simply because they are young. This unconditional love from the educator ensures the effectiveness of accompanying the young person on their path toward maturity (Stankowski, 2025).

4.2.2. Showing Love and Concern

To the retired Salesian educators, another theme that emerged in applying the preventive system is showing love and concern to their students. Through loving kindness, teachers are able to show genuinely their love and concern to their

students. School is seen as a second home to the students, and teachers as their second parents and the retired Salesian educators said that this is an opportunity to build relationships with their students. The preventive system provides an avenue to start a genuine relationship with them.

"I was able to build relationships with a listening ears and heart with the young, being present with them, knowing and loving what they love to do or their interests, always believing in their potentials." (RSE 2)

"I was able to do apply this by showing love to them despite their misbehaviors or mischievousness. They have to be understood and make them feel that they are important." (RSE 5)

Despite their mischievousness and irritating behavior, I showed love and understanding because they have to feel loved. (RSE 4)

In most cases, teachers who show a high sense of concern to the students are able to build a parent-like relationship. The students open up and show trust to their teachers. If teachers just talk to the students during classes and have only few engagements with them, it will just be considered an encounter and not a meaningful presence wherein a better teacher-student relationship begins. Teachers should show that they are warm, positive and sensitive so that students will feel safe when they are with them. Effective teachers are described as warm and sensitive persons; they are able to develop meaningful and honest relationships because of their interactions with their students (Yusuf et al., 2023).

According to retired Salesian educators, when showing love and concern to the students through the preventive system, it is not enough to understand and accept them. Inherent in the system is the need to make the students understand their mistakes and instill discipline. Students have to undergo a reflection process and appropriate discipline to realize and truly amend for their mistakes. Instilling discipline starts with reason.

"When a student committed a mistake, he must know the error that he has done and the reason why the action was not correct. It must be done with kindness avoiding all violent punishment. In this manner, the student will not resent the correction or the punishment he received." (RSE 6)

"Through reason, I encouraged dialogue and accountability." (RSE 6)

"It is always about emphasizing on discipline because this is one of the best manifestations of the preventive system." (RSE 1)

"It emphasizes proactive guidance over punishment, fostering strong relationships, understanding students' needs, and providing moral and spiritual support." (RSE 8)

In any school, discipline is part of its program and policies. In applying the preventive system, it makes the students understand and learn from their mistakes through reason. Loving kindness comes into the implementation of discipline by handing out appropriate interventions that will assist the students to understand and learn from their mistakes. Central to effective classroom

management is showing positive discipline which is grounded on compassion and Gospel values. This includes having established clear rules and routines at the outset, and teachers acting as role models (Pineda, 2025).

4.3. Impact of the Preventive System in Education

Without hesitation, the retired Salesian educators proudly admitted the preventive system of education has made an impact in Philippine education. Table 3 shows that holistic development and values formation anchored on faith are its most significant impact in education.

Table 3: Significant Impact of the Preventive System in Education

Themes	Sub-themes
Holistic Development of Students	Balanced Formation
	Discipline
Values Formation of Students Anchored on Faith	Faith and Values
	Concern for Others

4.3.1. Holistic Development of Students

The preventive system of education is anchored on reason, religion and loving kindness. Student formation is on faith, knowledge (academics), and heart. While education is initially perceived as knowledge development, the preventive system goes beyond this. It focuses on the holistic development of students, forming them to become good Christians and honest citizens. According to the retired Salesian educators, this is the impact of the preventive system of education which their former students appreciate. Specifically, they cited the balanced formation and discipline as their foundation in the performance of their duties as professionals.

Having worked in a Don Bosco school for more than two decades, they appreciated the balanced formation that it provides for the students. Education is about the mind, heart and faith. The preventive system ensures that each student also grows spiritually and emotionally.

"I consider the most significant impact of the Preventive System of St. John Bosco in Philippine education to be its emphasis on holistic development and values formation. It nurtures not only academic or technical excellence but also spiritual growth, and social responsibility among students." (RSE 5)

"Its most significant impact in Philippine education is it teaches the young to be good Christians and upright citizens, and young people who have "malasakit" (care) for others." (RSE 2)

"To me, it's the formation and discipline of students because it is preventive and not repressive. Students become responsible citizens who have "Fear of the Lord." (RSE 4)

Education is not just a matter of the mind. It is also a matter of the heart where students do not only learn but also grow as human beings showing love and respect to others and society. The retired teachers consider holistic formation as

the fruit of the preventive system of education. Its goal is to form students into well-rounded individuals who are ready to meet the challenges of life with resilience, confidence and a strong moral foundation. This comprehensive method nurtures the intellect, morality, emotions, and faith of the students, equipping them for both personal and professional success (Pardillo, 2025).

Through reason and religion, the preventive system instills discipline in every student. It is important that students do not just follow the policies but also understand them. Discipline is one of the most significant impacts in education according to all the retired Salesian educators.

"Its biggest contribution is the pedagogy in the formation and discipline among students because it is preventive and not repressive." (RSE 7)

"Because of faith, students' manifest discipline in their life." (RSE 3)

"Bosconians are known to be disciplined students with a strong sense of faith in God. This makes them different from other graduates of Catholic schools." (RSE 4)

"Our students show that they are not only good but also respectful. As professionals, they are able to show that they are disciplined individuals." (RSE 1)

A disciplined student does not only care about himself but also for others. He follows the rules because everyone will benefit from it. Hence, discipline will continue to be relevant in education. School regulations are considered useful for preparing for challenges in the world of college and work, especially in building character discipline and the ability to adapt to the environment. To help students understand and increase their sense of discipline regarding the importance of obeying a regulation, schools can hold regular discussions involving students, as this aims to make them aware of the benefits of the regulation (Larasati, 2024).

4.3.2. Values Formation of Students Anchored on Faith

While parents consider Don Bosco schools as providing good academic and technical education, they almost emphasize that their children receive the most important education, which is faith formation. The retired Salesian educators said that faith and values, and concern for others are also the significant impact of the preventive system in education. Bosconians become God-fearing persons whose lives are also anchored on values.

"Students have faith and fear of the Lord. They become worthy contributors in society." (RSE 8)

"The Preventive System of St. John Bosco in Philippine education integrates religion in the different core curriculum of every subject." (RSE 4)

"The faith and values formation continue to make a difference in the lives of our students. They love God and behave according to the Christian values instilled in them." (RSE 2)

“The discipline of the students is grounded on faith and values. Because they believe and respect God, they become better individuals who truly manifests “Run, jump, shout and make noise but do not sin.” (RSE 5)

The preventive system of education allows the students to reflect and find meaning in what they do through faith formation. Effective classroom management in private Catholic schools involves a faith-centered, holistic approach that supports students’ academic, moral, and spiritual growth (Pineda, 2025).

While forming good students is necessary for society to be better and progressive, it is equally important to have individuals who have genuine concern for others. According to the retired Salesian educators, the preventive system of education through faith formation instills the value of altruism to every student. Through a show of concern for others, they are able to make a simple yet very significant impact in life.

“It’s most significant impact in Philippine education is that it teaches the young to be good Christians and upright citizens, and young people who have genuine concern for others.” (RSE 7)

“It instills the value of charity, making our students have concern for others. They do not only pray for them but also take action to show charity.” (RSE 2)

“In Filipino culture, preventive system is what we call “malasakit” sa kapwa” which means caring for others. This is its impact to education here in the Philippines.” (RSE 4)

The preventive system of education encourages the students to do good by contributing meaningfully to society. This is indicative of the impact of the preventive system. It makes every student appreciate the value of obedience, responsibility, and charity. It creates a nurturing environment grounded in trust, presence, and personal responsibility. It emphasizes emotional intelligence, relational pedagogy, and a strong educator-student relationship, aligning with the values of Christian personalism, which upholds the dignity and integral development of each learner (Simarmata & Pinem, 2025).

4.4. Relevance of the Preventive System in Education Today

The retired Salesian educators shared that their former students value highly their education in a Don Bosco school. The value and effectiveness of the preventive system can’t be ignored. They said that it will remain relevant today and the future despite the changes in culture brought about by the influence of technology and social media. Given the culture and environment of young people today, they unanimously agreed that the preventive system is very relevant in education today for it is responsive to the present needs of students, and the importance of faith formation, which can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Relevance of the Preventive System of Education Today

Themes	Sub-themes
Responsive to the Present	Accompaniment
Needs of Students	Holistic Formation
Faith Formation	Value of Faith
	Importance of Values Formation

4.4.1. Responsive to the Present Needs of Students

The preventive system of education is dynamic because reason, religion and loving kindness will never become obsolete. With technology becoming part of today's culture, reason and religion will come into play to provide balance. The beliefs, values, and behaviors of young people are influenced by social media and technology. Study shows that mental health concerns like anxiety and depression are being experienced by today's young people, but the retired Salesian educators highlighted that religion, and loving kindness will surely respond to the students' needs today.

"It is highly relevant today because many young people are experiencing difficulties in life which leads to mental health concerns and depression. Faith, love and assistance will help them deal with these difficulties." (RSE 6)

"The importance of showing love or charity to students will make them feel accepted, appreciated and inspired." (RSE 3)

"This system creates a supportive, student-centered environment where learners are guided with care and respect instead of punishment." (RSE 8)

Through accompaniment, teachers are able to know and find out the needs of the students. Accompaniment, which is a manifestation of love, contributes to helping students handle and recover from their problems like anxiety or depression. Teachers are able to walk alongside, making the first move to offer a listening ear or the hand of friendship. They make themselves available where there is a situation of need. It is this point of sharing which can prove transformative both for the teacher and student (Lydon, 2022).

Looking into the current situation of young people, they are formed academically, morally, and spiritually. The retired Salesian educators emphasized that learning education should not only be focused in the academics but also on discipline and transformation. Hence, it should be holistic, which the preventive system provides -reason, religion and loving kindness.

"By focusing on the three pillars of the preventive system, it encourages students to develop critical thinking, strong moral foundations, and emotional well-being. This system creates a supportive, student-centered environment where learners are guided with care and respect instead of punishment. " (RSE 4)

“The preventive system is about academic, behavior and spiritual formation. It continues to be relevant because it is a well-rounded education.” (RSE 6)

“Forming the students to become good Christians and honest citizens means that the preventive system is holistic. It develops the mind and the heart.” (RSE 2)

The various needs of students require a holistic formation which will respond to the needs of the students today which includes mental health, strong discipline, and values formation. Holistic education combines all aspects of development like physical, social, psychological, ethical and spiritual and is important in the overall development of students today (Islam & Rakshe, 2025).

4.4.2. Faith Formation

One of the anchors of the preventive system of education is religion. Catholic schools have continued to give premium to faith in education. Considering the culture and situation of today’s youth, the retired Salesian educators believed in the value of faith development. They added that faith formation is much needed today in order to assist the students in becoming stronger in life.

“I agree that the preventive system of education is still relevant today because it is anchored on our faith.” (RSE 2)

“The preventive system is relevant today because it is taking into account that students are taught to move into the world of work, armed with spiritual strength and confidence to face head on the challenges in life.” (RSE 3)

“Young people’s faith should be nurtured today to be emotionally strong. This is the relevance of the preventive system -faith formation.” (RSE 7)

Aside from the academics, having faith formation provides balance in nurturing the youth. Exposed to online harms, young students may be able to handle them by relying on their faith. Faith formation can also be done online since most students are online today. Modern learners, accustomed to interactive and collaborative experiences facilitated by technology, benefit from this approach. However, just using technology is inadequate. Having a contextual and critical approach to theology is vital. This approach connects the teachings of the Church with current issues and students’ personal experiences. Technology strengthens understanding and assists sharing faith with others through multimedia tools. The Church can enhance the learning experience by integrating digital tools, making faith education more accessible and meaningful (Tarihora et al., 2024).

Equally important in today’s education is values formation. The Philippine Basic Education Curriculum includes values as one of the subjects to be taken by all students. A corollary to faith integration in the Catholic schools’ curriculum is values integration. The retired Salesian educators emphasized that students should be instilled with values that will protect them from harm brought about by the different influences, primarily from social media. The preventive system of education ensures that values formation is at the forefront of education.

“The preventive system of education remains relevant today because it fosters value formation among the students and educators as well. Thereby creates compassionate and student-centered spaces.” (RSE 4)

“The preventive system of education is still relevant today as it promotes a proactive and values-based approach to teaching and learning.” (RSE 2)

“Even before the government mandated values and character education, Don Bosco schools are already doing it. Aligned with faith, values formation is evident in the curriculum and other school activities. This shows the relevance of the preventive system today.” (RSE 5)

A study by Olaya (2024) on the implementation of a school-based values formation program found that it has a big and substantial impact on students, instilling good values and character traits. It strongly suggests the need to enhance and continue the program in order to address the observation on the decline in values and moral character among Filipino students.

With the different influences at work today, particularly from the internet, young people can be easily swayed to accept false beliefs, making them believe that this is the truth. Values formation leads to the development of moral behavior that will make students accept and promote what is good.

5. Discussion

The preventive system is the educational pedagogy of Don Bosco schools. While students, parents, and teachers appreciate it, there is a need to understand it more deeply by exploring the experiences and reflections of retired Salesian educators who applied it for more than two decades. These will provide enlightenment and inputs in guiding active Salesian educators in implementing the preventive system including the enhancement of school policies and programs.

The research found that retired Salesian educators have a full grasp of the true meaning of the preventive system of education. Because they have lived and applied it faithfully by accompanying and being present with their students, they truly understood its meaning and importance in education. The encounter with the students in the classroom and other formal activities is not enough. Teachers must establish an animating presence with young people. They should be in touch with them in all imaginable situations of the school day including activities, which gives the teacher an opportunity to interact with them both as a teacher and a friend (Lydon, 2022).

More specifically, the retired Salesian educators shared that they were visibly present and in constant communication with their students. Though challenging to be consistently present with them, they did not complain for they truly understood and appreciated the preventive system. As they build relationships with them, they also instilled discipline. An authentic teacher-student relationship will not be established if there is lack of communication and presence. Some added that communication and presence should be physical and virtual. To them, it was a great experience being with the students for a genuine relationship was

developed. Students need to feel that they are understood and loved. This is the “pedagogy of presence” where teachers are available during break time, eating with the students, assisting them in academic and spiritual activities, and listening to their personal stories (Pardillo, 2025).

As they reflected on their experiences, they felt the impact of the preventive system lies in the holistic development of students, which includes emphasis on faith and values formation. Hence, they are able to form students who are “Good Christians and Honest Citizens.” Reason, religion and loving kindness will never go wrong. Because it is holistic, Bosconians become God-fearing individuals who also value faith and discipline. Holistic formation provides a balance between cognitive, affective, physical, and spiritual development of a person. It means the integration of all domains, the main aim of human excellence (Islam & Rakshe, 2025).

The retired Salesian educators truly believe that the preventive system of education remains very relevant today. Faith and values formation should continue to be strong in the education of the young for it responds to their needs today. The Philippine Catholic Schools Standards for Basic Education (2016) emphasizes having a faith-filled learning conducive to the integral formation of the learners. It fosters a special atmosphere to help the young grow by giving attention and care for their development. Moreover, their animating presence, physically and virtually, is very important and must be strongly felt by the students. Accompanying them with love, patience and understanding will provide the needed guidance in their concerns today, which include primarily mental health.

In the Philippines, mental health became a serious concern during the pandemic due to stress and cyberbullying. A proactive mindset in handling cyberbullying determines how learning could become a safe and meaningful experience, whether in or out of school, whether online or offline. Preventing cyberbullying calls for existing policies to extend their vision to proactive action, which requires education and inspiring collaboration. Education should target the learners themselves to recognize cyberbullying and its effects (Ancho et al., 2024). Young people feel that they are supported and valued when their teachers spend time listening and providing guidance. Through this, students grow personally because of the positive learning atmosphere (Pardillo, 2025).

6. Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the understanding and experiences of the retired Salesian educators on the preventive system of education. The findings revealed that they have truly understood its meaning and applied it with commitment. From their experiences, it is a holistic formation where faith, discipline, and love play a vital role in forming the students into “Good Christians and Honest Citizens.” In terms of the relevance of the preventive system of education today, they firmly believe that it will be very effective because faith and presence are greatly needed in assisting the students in the digital age. Students are becoming more prone to mental health problems due to their exposure to social media.

The implications of these findings suggest that the preventive system of education should include pedagogy in the digital age. Today's presence is more than being physically visible. School policies and programs should be enhanced in order to assist the students in dealing with bullying and other mental health concerns. This may include regular student consultation and counseling. Innovative teacher training programs like "digital presence" and "faith in the digital world" can make teachers more competent and relevant. In the hiring of new teachers, commitment should be a key factor. Additionally, parent-teacher collaboration must be strengthened through on-site and online conferences.

Future research such as a quantitative study on the preventive system may provide a generalization of the findings. Research on "Reason," a pillar of the preventive system, may enrich the findings of this study. Furthermore, a compendium of the retired Salesian educators' best practices might be created and published. Looking more deeply, the preventive system will remain relevant as an educational pedagogy as long as it responds to the needs of each generation of students and adapts to the digital age and beyond.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in the study and acknowledges Philippine Normal University-Manila for its support.

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