

# Transitional Experiences of Newly Hired Teachers in Department of Education

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**Abstract**— *The newly hired teachers of the bureau serving for not more than 5 years in the government schools but have more than 5 years of teaching experience in the private institutions were the interest of this investigation. The study yielded the following perspectives describing the teachers' transitional experiences. These include: students, relationship with stakeholders, administration, workloads, adaptation to the new working environment and their general impression about teaching in a public school. Study revealed beginning teachers generally had more positive experiences in private school than in public school. Transition experiences were described as a "reality shock", never easy, overwhelming and discouraging for some. The teachers' high regard to the teaching profession on the other hand able them to adapt some mechanisms to ease their transition. Nonetheless, results challenge the bureau to create a more relevant teacher induction framework for the beginning teachers.*

**Keywords**— *Department of Education; newly hired teachers; transitional experiences.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Public and private institutions offer different experiences. Teachers in search of a job should consider factors that can help to make the right decision. In terms of teaching opportunities, there are a great number of teaching positions available in the public sector because there are many more public than private schools. On the other hand, private schools can offer greater flexibility to teachers.

As the factors linked to improvements in student outcomes become more apparent, governments around the world are looking at the quality of their teaching workforce. Teacher practice is at the heart of many discussions while efforts to develop and support teachers are continually being implemented and studied.

One segment of the teaching workforce that may need particular attention and support comprises teachers who are new in the profession. Teaching and Learning International Survey in 2008 reported that new teachers often lack the necessary classroom management skills for effective classroom teaching and poorer disciplinary climate. In addition, on average, nearly one-third of new teachers had a high level of need for professional development for effectively addressing student discipline and behavior problems, and 25% of new teachers reported that they had a high level of need for professional development to improve their classroom management skills (Jensen et al., 2008).

On the other hand, there are plenty of seasoned teachers and has proven their caliber in teaching, yet found their selves dissatisfied for some reasons and even to the point of leaving

their jobs even prior retirement. In some cases, teachers leave the profession in their early years of teaching due to variety of factors such as classroom climate, feeling of low self-efficacy and relevant experiences in the field of education. Moreover, according to Choy (1997) teacher attrition is higher in private schools, but private school teachers are more satisfied with their working conditions.

Currently, the Philippine education system is in its full implementation of an important educational reform, that is the K to 12 curriculum in basic education, which resulted to unending educational, social and political issues. Consequently, the Department of Education has continuously hired thousands of teachers for the past years. For example, roughly 61,000 in 2013 (Salaveria, 2012) and some 39,000 for the school year 2015-16 (Malipot, 2014) eventually caused exodus of teachers including those from higher education institutions because of the fear being displaced in the higher education once the senior high school commence. Majority of these newly hired teachers are seasoned or experienced teachers in private schools who have decided to transfer to government schools due to low pay, poor work benefits, and no security of tenure (Sambalod, 2014).

The Philippine government recognizes the welfare of every teacher. The 1987 Philippine Constitution, article XIV, section 5 (4) states that the state shall enhance the right of teachers to professional advancement. Non-teaching academic and non-academic personnel shall enjoy the protection of the state (De Leon, 2008). Education Act of 1982, Chapter 1, sec.5 paragraph 3, states that: the state shall promote the social economic status of all school personnel, uphold their rights, define their obligations, and improve their living and working conditions and career prospects.

One of the greatest appeals of working in a public school is a higher salary. However, salaries vary from state to state, system to system and with reference to the position. Public school teachers typically make more than their private school counterparts.

The admirable efforts of the government to provide quality education might not be fully realized due to several problems emerging in our educational system especially in the public school: very limited school facilities, uncontrollable growth rate of school children, illiteracy problem, low morale of teachers associated with low salary, unwholesome working conditions, challenging school administrators and transitional experiences of new teachers working in the public school specifically because of too much work beyond their competence.

Hangreaves et al. (1990) stated that transitions are best seen as developmental and temporal processes which cross social, academic, and procedural issues. Transitions entail changes in school cultures, increased academic demands, rotary systems, and shifts in peer groups which can be difficult to negotiate. According to Schonert-Reichi (2000), periods of transition can increase risk as they necessitate individual and systemic restructuring and adaptive capabilities.

Further, a case study conducted by Harvey (2003) found that teachers’ transitional experiences were inhibited by a lack of formal and effective transitional structures and processes. The school’s supportive environment however, appeared to counter-balance somewhat the deleterious effects of less-than-adequate transition management practices. The research further suggests that a more systematic approach to transition management is warranted.

To Cuizon (2013), it is imperative to understand the significance of the lived experiences in his study on the mission of the Filipino Somascan religious of the Philippines and its relation and contribution in motivating people to personal and social transformation because whether it is positive or negative, they are significant doors of opportunities to self-transformation and to explore their dedication and authentic commitment to socially transformative mission.

**II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the transitional experiences of newly hired teachers in the public school. The objectives of the study were to: (1) determine the transitional experiences of the newly hired teachers in DepEd in terms of (a) students, (b) relationship with stakeholders, (c) administration, (d) workloads, and (e) opportunities for professional growth; (2) describe their adaptation to their new working environment; and (3) describe their general impression about teaching in public school.

By investigating the transitional experiences of the teachers new in the public system, the researchers sought to draw significant insights to provide basis for interventions or programs on how the DepEd sector could help the new teachers adapt and gain quality experiences for quality service.

**III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

The study is qualitative case study design wherein the researchers purposefully select intrinsic case to be able to

draw the perspectives of newly hired teachers in the public education sector. Stake’s approach to conducting a case study was adopted in this investigation: (1) determination of the study approach, (2) identification of case of the new teachers (intrinsic case) and purposeful sampling, (3) data collection through interviews and open-ended and guided response type questionnaire, (4) holistic analysis of data, and enriching the analysis in the context of the case, and finally (5) interpretive phase to be able to report the meaning of the case or situation of the key informants.

Data in study were gathered from seven key informants, two from Sorsogon City Division (elementary), two from Albay Division (secondary) and three from Naga City Division (secondary) who were classified as new in the public service having been serving the public school just at least 3 years ago compared to their more than 5 years service in the private sector. Key informants were asked to describe their transitional experiences in public school both positive and negative. They were likewise asked regarding their previous teaching job and their experiences in relation to students’ behavior and academic and nonacademic performance, relationship with stakeholders (peers, students, parents, and administration), administrator’s leadership and management styles, workloads and opportunities for professional growth to be able to draw deeper analysis of their transitional experiences recognizing the influence of one’s prior experience to current perspectives. Adaptive mechanisms to the new working environment and general impression about teaching in public school was also sought to provide a more holistic description of their experience.

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Teachers who served as key informants for this study described their transitional experiences of being a public school teacher from the following perspectives: positive and negative experiences in relation to students, relationship with stakeholders, administrators, workloads and opportunities for professional growth considering also their past experiences in their previous schools, their adaptation to the new working environment and their general impression about teaching in public school. Responses varied with experience and draws significant findings.

TABLE 1. Profile of the key informants

Profile		Key informants						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No. of years in service	Private	11 years	7 years	11 years	17 years	7 years	17 years	15 years
	Public	2 years	1 year	1 year & 8 mos.	2 years	3 years	2 years	3 years
Type of school	Private	Non-sectarian	Non-sectarian	Sectarian	Non-sectarian	Sectarian	Non-sectarian	Non-sectarian
	Public	Public E/S	Public E/S	Public H/S	Public H/S	Public (H/S)	Public H/S	Public H/S
Grade/ year level handled	Private	Primary	Primary	All year levels	All year levels	HED	HED	HED
	Public	Intermediate	Intermediate	All year levels	Fourth year	All levels	Grade 7	Grade 9
Subjects handled	Private	Filipino, Science, English	Mathematics & Science	Mathematics	Mathematics	English	Social Sciences	English
	Public	Filipino	All subjects	Mathematics	Mathematics	English	Aralin Panlipunan	English

Data table 1 presents the profile of the key informants that qualifies them to be the sources of data in this study. Five of seven teachers had been in teaching profession for more than a decade in non-sectarian private schools and currently working in secondary public schools. Three were previously in higher education institutions, while others in basic education. It is notable that no so obvious changes in the subjects being handled then and now, except for the two elementary teachers in which one had only one preparation while the other had it all as compared before.

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**On students.** Teachers generally had satisfying experience with their students in the private school than with the students in public school. Matter on discipline towards others such as ability to abide the rules and regulation and respect for authority were some commendable traits which apparently need to be more developed among public school students. Some key informants in fact explicitly stated regarding their students in private school that “...they abide/follow school rules and regulations (religiously),...has high regard to persons in authority or respectful and polite to the teachers, administrators, peers and elderly, and .. good manners of the students are observed- prim in words, behaviors and grooming” whereas when asked about their students now in public school, some they said, “...it’s really hard to impose discipline, ...school rules/policies are not observed religiously,...discipline among pupils were no longer observed, ...spoiled-brat, ...hard to handle especially the lower sections, ...mean to their classmates and other people most at times, ... some students lack respect to teachers and some even regard teaching profession as a not-so-good” profession.

This does not however mean that public school students are not disciplined or respectful. Some actually said that their students now “exhibit a more respectful behavior towards authorities and their teachers, polite, and friendly” compared to their students. Another testimony supports this observed discipline and respect among public students compared to private school students where the latter were described as “a big number also act superior than their teachers at times..., disciplining was somehow a hard task and challenging especially those pupils (particularly boys) coming from affluent families..., some were hard headed and spoiled-brat, and ...some students act superior than their teachers.”

Given such observation and experience of the new teachers goes to show the diversity in classrooms. Heterogeneous school population creates additional challenges for school teachers and administrators who must be sensitive to different cultural backgrounds and the interactions among individuals (Choy, 1997).

Value for education as indicated in the study habits and participation in academic and nonacademic activities had been emphasized more common to private school students. This observation was evident when majority of the teachers said that private school students have “... (previous school) have better or very good study habits compared to (present school)... only very few students have study habits problems...”,

majority of the students attended their classes regularly, and they always come to school prepared physically and mentally with all the materials needed for the day’s lesson” compared to the public school students wherein they commented that they have “no study habits,... poor attendance or frequent absences and rampant truancy”. One teacher though said that her previous students are no different to public school students since only “30% of them have good study habits.”

Also academic and nonacademic performance as described by the teachers shows big difference. According to them, majority of the learners in their previous schools were active and participative both but greater in nonacademic aspect. One teacher described it, “Excellent academic and non-academic performance. Students are well motivated on their studies.” Another claimed, “My previous school focused on academic and non-academic performance of their pupils. They conducted monthly tests and periodic tests to assess pupil’s performance. To improve non-academic performance, the school organizes clubs, conducts weekly meeting and home visits, participates in community activities and joins religious celebrations. Others said, “active in non-academic activities and can perform academic-related tasks with less supervision”, “active in non-academic disciplines like in sports, music, theaters, arts, and others”, and ...”more active especially to extra-curricular activities.” Nevertheless data interview reveals that some public school students also have deep sense of value for high school education like the one described by the key informant saying that his students has “strong desire to learn and finish high school” and “almost half of the class on the Science Oriented/honors class show interest in learning” as well as being “active in co-curricular activities”.

Differences in the attitude towards education between the two kinds of students show that teachers had gone through challenges on motivating their present students to become more responsible of their own learning. They also understood the culture behind these differences as indicated by their statement which says regarding private students such as, “They were exposed with the different technologies that will help them to be globally competitive and updated with the latest news/trends. They have all the means/resources to join in all the non-academic activities and very participative in extra-curricular activities”. Another teacher understood it this way, “I don’t have much empathy on my students in the private school they have good family relationships, which means, and families are supportive of their children’s education.” True to these statements are the psychological theories and research on motivation and learning suggesting that motivation does not only refer to student attributes such as attitudes and effort. Instead, differences in motivation may arise from different sets of experiences that the students from the two types of schools have (Bandura, 2001 in Bernardo, et al. 2014). Applying these perspectives to the students in the private and public school would mean that these students have distinct motivations emerging from different cultural background which should be understood by the teachers.

**On relationship with stakeholders.** According to Choy (1997) school climate can significantly affect the quality of the educational experience for students, teachers, and other staff as well as parents' satisfaction with their child's school. Neither teachers nor students can perform at their best if their school is unsafe or disrupted by misbehaving students or if there is a lack of cooperation among teachers or between the school and parents. Based on the dialogical interview with the beginning teachers, it is positive to note that most of them experiences harmonious and supportive relationship with their peers in public school though this harmony was experienced well when they were in private school with the claim such as *"genuine dealings and less politics, ...harmonious and supportive of each other, and "An excellent camaraderie is built among peers and co-workers within the school. There is a very good working environment"*. Good working relationship with current co-teachers was supported by the following statements of the teachers: *"I'm just lucky because there's no big difference between my colleagues in (SAA) and (SVGHS). They were friendly, accommodating, approachable and easy to work with", "...we also share laughs and tears and celebrate special occasions together."* On the other hand, it is notable that some of them observed some issues on factions and conflicts which are not handled properly.

Almost all of the key informants also experienced harmonious relationship with students and parents both in private and public school, except for some who find their previous students to be *"bratty apparently making them disrespectful."* Parents were described as very supportive to school activities exhibited by their attendance in PTA meetings and other activities. It was described by one teacher, *"We have a regular PTA meetings, the teacher-parent partner relationship are always being practiced in all the school activities. Parents are very supportive."*

Their relationship however with the administrators revealed some degree of differences. Teachers generally had experienced far better professional relationship with their previous administrators than the present. They commented, *"The teachers have formal and professional relationship with the administrators. They were a bit strict and formal in dealing with their teachers. Everything should be on-time. They were very particular on teacher's work ethics, attitude and moral values."* *"As long as you do your job well, everything goes well. Encouraging and supportive. Appreciative of everything done to the school"*, said the other. *"Administrators in private institutions are very much capable of being in their positions. They have good relationship with their subordinates and deal and address issues professionally,"* commented by the other one. On a positive note, some teachers commended their current administrators like being *"considerate, shares ideas and expertise and involvement of teachers in decision making"*.

**On administration.** When asked about leadership and management styles, interview revealed that private and public school administration had varying leadership and management styles. Supportive of the above discussion on relationship with administrators, private school administration was found to be more people empowering, democratic, collaborative and less

bureaucratic. In their words, they said, *"...observed due process, fairness, promptness, privacy and constructiveness in decision and actions"; "showed accountability for efficient and effective administration and management of school by rendering adequate performance appraisal for teaching and non-teaching personnel"; "...majority of my superiors leads by setting GOOD EXAMPLE, respect the ideas of teachers and also the students in formulating rules. Consultation meetings were conducted first before an implementation of new policy/rules"; "...empower the teachers and students"; "follows collaborative way of making decisions. Proper consultation is evident in the policy-making instances. Monitors effective implementation of policies and programs. Finances are carefully managed and reported"*. Few however experienced authoritative style, described as *"very strict in their implementation of the school's policies. They have the authoritative style of leadership"* and *"...ones who sole create school's policies. All the teachers and students are subjected to obey and follow the rules implemented. They do not tolerate late submission of reports."*

Similar to Alimi's (2011) study findings which showed that teachers of private secondary schools have high perception of their principals' pedagogical skill effectiveness than teachers of public schools, this study showed that beginning teachers maintains high administrative effectiveness compared to the current administrators. These more-specific sets of leadership practices as described by Leithwood (2004) significantly and positively influence direct experiences like making sense of work and finding a sense of identity for people within their work context, for example: offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and providing appropriate models of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization.

When asked to describe their current experience among their administrators, dialogic interview divulged the difficulty of beginning teachers in relating with their administrators because of some issues in leadership and management. *"Instruction is controlled"; "Strict and authoritative"; "Instructional decisions are based on school need and staff opinion"; "In my almost two years in public school, I was never observed in the classroom. I cannot remember any positive experience with the administrator. I was evaluated fairly in PAST. I prepared my LP daily but it was not checked regularly. All my suggested activities were not supported financially. All decisions made were not done professionally. No consultation. Memos about free trainings/seminars were given to us very late"; "Some administrators exercise bias and favoritism"; "Favoritism is evident" and "...cannot make major decisions without consulting the "higher ups" regardless of how urgent the matter is,"* were some of their personal statements regarding their experiences with their principals. Data implies that these beginning teachers are experiencing frustrations when it comes to leadership and management as per observation and experience with their administrators. This is maybe due to their ideals and previous experiences wherein the former administrators regard attainment of organizational goal as a function of the cumulative inter play of the forces (internal and external)

influencing an organization. The kind of leadership described by Ibukun (2004) as cited in Alimi, et al. (2011), the art of influencing others to work enthusiastically towards the achievement of organizational goals, which appears not strictly practiced in public school system.

**On workloads.** Based from the informants' data profile, it can be gleaned that their current teaching loads were given in accordance to their previous trainings. Majority find it as negative experience now for them to be having several preparations and handling multiple grade/year level though. One teacher expressed, *"Overloaded for teachers are given teaching loads with multiple year level and preparations other than additional assignments like advisorship, coordinatorship, etc., while teachers in the private institutions enjoy honorarium and an equivalent unit whenever they are given additional assignments"*. They likewise find the public school system to be having too much paper works. Nonetheless, one teacher commented *"Manageable and fairly given. Less paper works"*.

These experience confronting teachers warrants better adaptability. According to Harmon (2009), schools are complex institutions which require teaching staff to be proficient in their academic subject as well as manage student behaviors, meet diverse student needs, understand and operate within the schools unique culture recognizing their crucial role in promoting strong schools of instructional richness.

**Opportunities for professional growth.** Bierlein (1993) emphasized that teachers needed in-service or enhancement programs to learn to work more effectively with previously underserved students, including minorities and students with limited English proficiency. Similarly, Rao (1989) stressed that seminars and training courses become a major factor in the professional growth of teachers and is related to lifelong education and enhancing their role as participants in these changes. This particular need was positively experienced by the teachers from their previous employment which all commended the free training, workshops and seminars plus study and scholarship grants. Specifically said, *"...entitled for a study grants (Post-Graduate Study). All teachers were given a chance to attend seminars/ trainings for professional growth"; "... provided with training and workshops"; "seminars, trainings and study grants are given."* This however was a rare opportunity in public schools as the teachers explained it. They said for example, *"Being the only Mathematics teacher in our school, I am always assigned to attend the k-12 training in summer"; "There are no good trainings/seminars that is funded by MOOE. Memos about trainings/activities were given very late"; "Rarely available"; "Very limited opportunities of attending seminars or trainings where expenses are covered by the school especially for the newly hired teachers in the public schools. More so, we are not entitled to a study leave not until we reached the seven years of service" and "Teachers are not subsidized by the government for graduate and post graduate education."*

This means that this issue matters to these teachers because of their desire for professional growth and development, which seemingly hard to realize when in public school. For Liethwood (2004), while assessments capture people's

attention, productive change requires a powerful response to the dilemmas and conflicts they create. For district leaders, an effective response is to develop a strong, in-house, systematically aligned, professional development program. In this sense, public school teachers are hoping for fair and relevant capacity building opportunities.

**Adaptation to the new working environment.** To perform their duties responsibly out of love for the vocation, maintain attitude of professionalism as well as professional relationship with colleagues and being open to the culture of public school were some of the adaptive mechanisms that emerged from the investigation. For example, some teachers explicitly stated, *"Performing my duties to the school where I am assigned by discharging my responsibilities in accordance to school's policies, goals, and objectives"; "Maintaining a professional attitude towards my work, pupils, co-teachers and administrators in a supportive and cordial manner"; "I love my work. I believe that if you love what you do, everything becomes easy and will just fall into right places" and "...just do what is right and proper. What matters to me is to impart learning"*. The adaptive mechanisms manifested by the teachers basically say that here's nothing we can do to prevent some initial difficulties and challenges but something can be done to make transition easier.

**General impression about teaching in a public school.** Teaching in a public school was found by all key informants as a challenging task, yet fulfilling as they contribute to the development of the Filipino learners and national development. One says it's a struggle. Teachers had a bigger perspective of the real issues of Philippine education system as described during the interview. The following were some of their explicit impression about teaching in public school:

*"Teaching in the public school is a challenging task. In order to address the key issues of quality education, the Department of Education implemented educational reforms, programmes and projects. However, many problems are still emerging in Philippine education. One school related issue is unqualified and poorly trained teachers. Teachers should accept and respond to this challenge. We can show this by showing deep conviction in helping ourselves grow professionally. Through this, we can uphold the highest possible standard of quality education. This will help our clientele improve their lives through the acquired knowledge and be a productive citizen in the future. In the end, teachers can be of help and be a part of the solutions."*

*"Teaching in public school is challenging yet fulfilling. It gives me tremendous satisfaction. One of the benefits of teaching in the public institution is receiving a high salary with reference to your position. If you are really good, your school head will surely tap you and help for your promotion. It just a matter of doing what is right and doing what is you are capable of. Show the best you can and do your*

part to improve not only yourself but the school you are working with”.

*“If not for salary and other benefits I would rather go to private schools. The government is spending so much to improve the quality of teaching and education per se in the public sector yet many schools are not properly equipped. Classrooms and chairs are lacking, instructional materials are insufficient, and buildings are dilapidated. Teachers and parents are spending so much just to have conducive place for learning. For me being in public school is seemingly a never-ending struggle and challenge!”*

*“Big class sizes are common with shortages of desks, books, and materials. Teachers are responsible for equipping and maintaining their classrooms...on their own peso. Some teachers are all too often called away from their classrooms with nobody left to supervise the students. Way too much time to spend by some teachers and students and numerous annual activities. The student population tends to be more diverse. Needs to improve the downloading of communications to the school community”*

True to their statements, indeed the Philippine education system had been in these long time issues and concerns on the quality of education which until this time, beginning teachers are experiencing. According to Durban et al. (2012), to provide quality education to all students is the most important mission of every educational institution. However, with the multifarious problems facing the public schools, its delivery is hindered. Reality tells us that even if the public school teachers are qualified to teach, the lack of instructional materials, inadequate facilities and lack of training for professional growth hindered them to perform at their best.

Transition of the beginning teachers was never easy. Majority experienced some kind of "reality shock." The transition to the new teaching assignment was overwhelming and discouraging for some. Transition experience on students proves that private and public school students are indeed diverse as manifested in attitudes and behaviours. To some extent however, beginning teachers found the need to further improve public school students' attitude and behaviours towards others and education. Harmonious and supportive relationship with their peers in public school was experienced by the teachers though this harmony was noted to be more evident and genuine in private school. Relationship with students and parents was described fairly. Parents were said to be very supportive to school activities exhibited by their attendance in Parent-Teachers Association meetings and other activities.

Teachers generally had experienced far better professional relationship with their previous administrators than the present. Public school leadership and management style was by far frustrating as described my majority being authoritative, controlled and bias compared to their previous experience which was people empowering, leadership is distributed,

democratic, collaborative and less bureaucratic. Majority described it as negative experience now for them to be having several preparations and handling multiple grade/year level and additional assignments, although their current teaching loads were similar to their previous teaching loads in private school.

Love and passion for the profession, performing duties responsibly, maintaining the attitude of professionalism and being open to the culture of public school were some of the adaptive mechanisms that emerged from the investigation. Teaching in a public school was described by all key informants as a challenging task, yet fulfilling for they believe they are contributing to the development of the Filipino learners and national development. Bigger perspective of the real issues and concerns of Philippine education system was viewed by the beginning teachers to be the real challenge for them as teachers.

Based from the foregoing results and findings, the researchers hereby recommend that a methodical teacher orientation program be intensified by the human resource department not only in the private institutions but more so in the government sector. Furthermore, the Department of Education should intensify the Teacher Induction Program and see to it that the program includes all necessary information from the policies, nature of public schools' stakeholders and physical environment, the promotional qualifications and procedures and the like because seemingly, teachers experiences in the private to the government sector really are different. The newly hired teachers should not be given overloads (as much as possible) at least on their first year of teaching to give them enough time to adjust smoothly with the system. The DepEd should likewise revisit their policies on promotional qualifications and procedures and consider that these newly hired teachers in DepEd are not really new in the profession thus should be given the same opportunities. With these, the researchers believe that the newly hired teachers will be able to perform their best thus help in the realization of DepEd's vision of quality education for all.

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