



STORIES OF EDUCATION GRADUATES WORKING IN THE BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING (BPO) INDUSTRY: ITS IMPLICATIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the experiences of education graduates working in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry in Iloilo City and to identify the implications for Higher Education Institutions during the school year 2025–2026. The participants were ten (10) selected education graduates who had worked in the BPO industry for five years or more. The study used purposive sampling, a non-probability technique in which participants are selected based on specific characteristics and the objectives of the research. Findings showed that the main reasons education graduates pursued careers in the BPO industry were financial incentives, health insurance benefits, and workplace flexibility and support. The challenges they encountered included poor work–life balance, skills mismatch, and health-related issues. To cope with these challenges, participants reported adopting a positive mindset, practicing effective time management, and maintaining their health.

Keywords: *Teacher Education Graduates, BPO Industry, Implications, Higher Education Institutions*

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, the call center industry in the Philippines has grown significantly. The country's appeal is largely due to its large pool of college graduates who are proficient in American English and possess computer literacy. The sector has also drawn workers with competitive salaries and financial benefits, contributing to its expansion.

Smithers and Robinson (2023) investigated the factors that influence teachers' decisions to leave the profession. They identified five key elements: workload, new challenges, classroom conditions, salary, and personal circumstances. Their findings revealed that workload and compensation had the most and least impact on teachers' decisions to quit, respectively. Similarly, Watt and Richardson (2020) highlighted that the increasing salary gap between teaching and other professions is a major reason why people perceive teaching as less rewarding than other careers.

Abalun (2024) notes that teachers' salaries are a major deterrent, often coupled with low pay and heavy workloads. The poor reputation of the teaching profession discourages the most talented students from choosing to become teachers. For years, the government's failure to address these issues has worsened teachers' economic conditions and damaged the profession's image. Many individuals opt for other careers due to the educational system's inability to absorb them adequately (PSA, 2023).

Teachers' daily lives are greatly influenced by their personal experiences. Each educator faces life's challenges in their own way. They often struggle with feelings of fear,

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disappointment, stress, lack of self-confidence, incompleteness, dependency, and difficulty in managing daily pressures (Burgos, 2020).

With these concerns in mind, the researchers decided to conduct this study. The research aimed to explore the lives of education graduates who work as customer service representatives. The study focused on understanding the factors that led these individuals to choose customer service as a career and what has kept them in the field. The goal was to provide insights and valuable information for future graduates who will soon begin their professional careers. Therefore, this study examined the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of education graduates working as customer service representatives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, sampling design, participants of the study, data gathering procedures, research instruments, validity of research instruments and data analysis was used in this study.

Research Method

The research method employed in this study was a descriptive approach using in-depth interviews. According to Boyce and Neale (2022), in-depth interviews are a qualitative research technique that involves conducting interviews with a small group of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular issue, progress, or situation.

During the interview process, the interviewer was given the opportunity to reflect on a series of questions related to a specific topic. The goal was to gather the key insights or

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necessary views of the participants on the issue at hand, within a social context, by analyzing their responses to the questions.

Research Design

This study used narrative research design. This is a qualitative method where researchers collect and analyze stories from individuals to understand their life experiences, focusing on themes, events, and meanings within a chronological context, often involving interviews, journals, and personal documents, with a key being the researcher “restorying” these accounts to highlight patterns and participant perspectives, fostering a deep, collaborative understanding of a phenomenon (Smith, 2023).

The goal of phenomenology is to understand the perspective of others, and how this perspective may vary from commonly held views by focusing on a person’s subjective interpretations of what she experiences. Phenomenology is done by interviewing the subjects to learn their impressions, and is frequently used in such fields as psychology, sociology, and social work (Creswell, as cited by Betito, 2024).

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were the selected ten (10) education graduates who stayed five years or more in BPO industry in Iloilo City during the school year 2025-2026.

The participants of the study possess the necessary traits to answer the research questions. The researcher ensures that the participants are appropriate for the intervention and reduces risks.

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The inclusion criteria determine which members of the target population can participate in the research study. These allows the researcher to study the needs of a relatively homogeneous group.

Sampling Design

A purposive sampling design was utilized in this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on the research objectives and the specific characteristics of the population. Also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, purposive sampling involves intentionally choosing informants who are able to provide insight into a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen, as cited by Betito, 2024).

Research Instrument

The researcher developed a set of interview guide questions and an interview schedule to gather pertinent information about the phenomenological experiences of multi-grade school teachers. Open-ended questions were employed during the interviews. The researcher asked participants to respond to the questions and followed up with additional questions based on their responses.

Voice and video recorders were used for data collection and documentation, with the participants' consent.

Thematic analysis was employed to summarize and interpret the results of the study.

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Validity of the Research Instrument

Before determining the validity of the interview schedule developed by the researcher, the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a panel of experts in the fields of research, testing and assessment, and English reviewed and modified each question. Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the inferences made by the researcher.

In terms of content-related evidence of validity, the content and format must align with the definition of the variables and the sample of subjects being measured, which is also essential for validating the items in the instrument. The principle of validity applies not only to interpretive and action inferences derived from test scores, as traditionally understood, but also to inferences based on any method of observing or documenting consistent behaviors or attributes (Brains, 2021).

Data Gathering Procedures

Upon receiving approval from the Dean of the Graduate School and the adviser to conduct the research, the researcher identified the respondents and those specifically involved in the study. A letter requesting permission to conduct the study was sent to participants from various BPO industries based in Iloilo City.

Before the interviews, the researcher required participants to sign a waiver or permission form related to the conduct of the study.

During the interview, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the participants, explaining each item to ensure that the necessary data was accurately collected.

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All information and responses were recorded, compiled, and analyzed. For ethical considerations, the data collected during the study was treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for the purpose of this research.

Data Analyses

The data gathered in this study was carefully analyzed using a thematic approach. This qualitative analysis method was employed to identify the themes related to the phenomenological experiences of education graduates working in the BPO industry and their implications for Higher Education Institutions.

In conducting the phenomenological study, the researcher aimed to uncover the essential structure of a particular phenomenon by interviewing individuals who had firsthand experience with it. The researcher extracted relevant statements from each participant's description of the phenomenon and grouped them into themes. These themes were then integrated into a narrative description of the phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen, as cited by Navarro, 2023).

Additionally, Braun and Clark (2023) explained that thematic analysis involves several steps to identify patterns in qualitative data. The process begins with familiarizing oneself with the data by thoroughly reading it. This is followed by generating initial codes to label interesting features, and then searching for themes by grouping codes into potential themes. The next step is reviewing these themes to ensure they align with the data, followed by defining and naming the themes to clarify their meanings. Finally, the researcher writes up the analysis, crafting a coherent narrative.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to explore the experiences of education graduates working in the BPO industry in Iloilo City and its implications for Higher Education Institutions during the school year 2025-2026.

The participants of this study consisted of ten (10) education graduates who have worked in the BPO industry for five or more years.

Voice and video recorders were used for data collection and documentation, subject to the participants' consent. These instruments, along with field notes taken during the interviews, were used for analysis.

Before finalizing the interview schedule created by the researcher, each item was submitted for review and modification by experts in the fields of research, testing and assessment, and English.

Purposive sampling was employed in this study. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample selected based on the objectives of the study and the characteristics of the population.

The comments and suggestions from the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule items were incorporated, leading to the development of the final interview schedule.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Dean of the Graduate School. In addition, consent was acquired from the participants to allow the researcher to proceed with the study.

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In this study, in-depth interviews under a qualitative research design were utilized. During the interview, the researcher asked a series of questions regarding specific issues, with the goal of capturing the main ideas and concepts.

Digital voice or video recorders were also employed to gather the necessary data for the study. The objective was to obtain a clear understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

The researcher conducted the interviews either by visiting the participants at a location of their convenience or through online platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, or other platforms preferred by the participants.

After conducting the interviews, the researcher consolidated the collected data. A thematic analysis approach was used to interpret the data.

The findings of the study were the following;

Based on the results of the study, education graduates pursued careers in the BPO industry mainly because of financial incentives, health insurance benefits, and workplace flexibility and support.

However, they also encountered several challenges, including poor work-life balance, skills mismatch, and health-related issues.

To manage these difficulties, the graduates employed coping strategies such as maintaining a positive mindset, practicing time management, and taking care of their health.

The findings further imply that Higher Education Institutions need to reassess the relevance of their curricula and revise teacher education programs to better prepare graduates

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with skills suited not only for teaching but also for diverse career opportunities, while responding to employment trends and community needs.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights of this study, the following recommendations are highlighted.

Higher Education Institutions should provide training and capacity building to ensure that education graduates are equipped of pedagogical skills and talents to address aligned with the needs of the learners in the community. The Department of Education should provide more teaching items to cater the needs of hundreds of education graduates every year.

Education graduates should maximize their strong communication, patience, and instructional skills, which are highly valued in roles such as corporate trainers, quality assurance specialists, and team leaders.

Education graduates should undergo training in specialized areas like advanced IT skills, or specific BPO-related NC III/IV courses to boost employability and salaries.

To validate the results of the present investigation, parallel studies may be conducted on a larger scale, considering additional variables that were not addressed in this study.

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