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TEACHERS IN SEVEN CITIES: EXPERIENCES IN THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

CHARITY ROSE A. CALICARAN
Teacher III
Dao Primary School
calicarancharityrosealimante@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This descriptive-qualitative study determined the experiences of teachers in seven cities in the conduct of research in education as basis for policy recommendation in the Municipality of Alimodian during the school year 2024-2025. Based on the results of the in-depth interview with the participants, it was found out that teachers in seven cities experienced lots of documents to prepare, feeling excited, feeling nervous and scared, limited resources and difficulty in conducting research, and involvement of participants. It was found out that the challenges encountered by teachers in seven cities in conducting research were availability of participants/respondents, bad weather, looking for literature and completing the process, time management, and limited resources. Based on the results, teachers in seven cities cope with these challenges through conducting research, flexibility, development of a support system, intrinsic motivation and open mindedness.

Keywords: *Teachers, Seven Cities, Experiences, Research, Policy Recommendation*

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INTRODUCTION

Experiences play a vital part in people's lives. As working professionals, teachers, through life progression, and each of them has their way of dealing with their lived experiences. The dangerous battle experienced by teachers as individuals look inside the classroom and in the human hearts. They struggle with fear, disappointments, stress, lack of self-confidence, feelings of incompleteness, dependency, and the inability to cope with the conditions in their daily lives. While these experiences and challenges can defeat everyone, they can also catalyze enhancement in preparation for the promising development in the cognitive, spiritual, social, and personal aspect and understanding of one's professional opportunities and trials (Bilbao, 2012).

Teachers play a vital role during formative years of development in the life of every learner. The importance of teachers is something that cannot be underestimated. Teachers stand as second parent, an encourager, a motivator, a molder of one's mind, and a maker of difference in shaping learners to be better citizens of the country.

Teaching in a far-flung area specifically at Dao Primary School, which is 28 kilometers away from the town and can only be accessible through motorcycle is really challenging. It is a challenge that entails a lot of courage and perseverance to perform certain tasks assigned.

However, it is a privilege for teachers to have been given an opportunity to serve their students and their community.

Teaching in a remote school gives teachers more patience and inspiration to perform their best in teaching their learners. They get inspiration from their students who also walk to

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school for 5 kilometers. Some of these teachers endure staying at the staff house for five days leaving their kids at home. It must be disheartening on their part, but because of their love and passion for teaching they pursue and do their duties and obligations for the best interest of the students.

The distance of their schools from their houses is never a hindrance for them to perform the task equally, while some of them are pursuing graduate studies for their professional growth.

The researcher observed that this problem has affected teachers especially in accomplishing that different tasks, in school.

Basically, teachers are responsible for teaching basic knowledge to learners especially when they are assigned in far flung schools because learners depend on them. So, this means that they need extreme dedication to meet expectations from the community.

The researcher believed that teaching is a great privilege. However, it becomes challenging due to various tasks and responsibilities assigned to teacher.

To handle challenges teachers employed activities such as hanging out with their colleagues and learners in the farm, swimming at the mini falls and cooking grilled bananas. This coping mechanism help them overcome stress and help them relax even in a short period of time.

In view of this, the experiences and observation of the researcher served as the reason in conducting this study.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Method

The research method utilized in this study was qualitative research using in-depth interview.

Descriptive method, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2007), is used to describe a given situation as fully and carefully as possible.

The interviewer and the interviewee during the interview were allowed to sit together in a distance and to think about the series of questions about a certain issue. The aim was to get the main or the necessary views of the participants in a certain issue in a social context through the responses of the participants to the questions.

Research Design

The study used phenomenological research design. Phenomenology was considered a philosophical approach to undertaking qualitative research. The goal of phenomenology was to understand how others view the world, and how this view may vary from commonly held views by focusing on a person's subjective interpretations of what she experiences. Phenomenology was done by interviewing the subjects to learn their impressions, and is frequently used in such fields as psychology, sociology, and social work.

According to Smith (2013), phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some

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object. An experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were all teachers conducting and have been conducting research in the seven cities of the Municipality of Alimodian.

There were seven of them. Participant 1 was a Teacher-In-Charge of the school. Participant 2 was a Teacher-I and assigned to teach Grades 4-6 classes. Participant 3 was Teacher-I and assigned to teach Grade six class. Participant 4 was a Teacher-I and assigned to teach Kindergarte. Participant 5 was a Teacher-III and assigned to teach Grade One. Participant 6 was a Teacher-I and assigned to teach Grade fou. and Participant 7 was a Teacher-III and assigned as Teacher-In-Charge of the school.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling design was used in the study. Purposive sampling according to Nikolopoulou (2023) refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that needs in the sample. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling.

Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives.

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Purposive sampling is common in qualitative research and mixed methods research. It is particularly useful in finding information-rich cases or making the most out of limited resources but is at high risk for research biases like observer bias.

Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule.

The interview schedule had four questions focusing on the purpose of study.

Voice and video recorder were also used for data gathering and documentation depending upon the permission of the participants.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Prior to the determination of the validity of the interview schedule made by the researcher, the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School then a panel of jurors who were considered for their expertise in the field of research, testing and assessment, and English, were requested to validate each question for review and modification.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of inferences that a researcher makes. In content-related evidence of validity, the content and format must be consistent with the definition of variables and sample of subject to be measured and is also helpful in validating the items in the questionnaire (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2007).

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Comments, corrections, and suggestions of the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule were considered using the appropriate form of Good and Scates (Appendix A).

Data Gathering Procedures

Permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Office of the District Supervisors, School Heads, and individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools/community/place convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

The researcher conducted an interview to the participants but prior to this, the researcher encouraged first the participants to sign a waiver or permission relative to the conduct of the study.

During the in-depth interview, the researcher used voice and video recorders to completely capture the interviewee's words. The researcher consolidated all collected data after series of interviews.

Data Analysis

The information gathered was analyzed using thematic approach.

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), the aim of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, such as patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes

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to address the research or say something about an issue. This is summarizing, analyzing and interpreting the data gathered and making sense of it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study, the insights drawn from the findings, and the recommendations arrived at by the researcher.

Summary

This study aimed to assess the experiences of teachers in seven cities in conducting research for policy recommendations in the Municipality of Alimodian during the school year 2024-2025. Utilizing a qualitative method with a phenomenological design, the researcher utilized in-depth interviews with teachers from seven cities within the municipality. A researcher-made interview schedule, validated by a panel of experts, was employed for data collection, which included voice and video recordings, subject to participant consent. After obtaining necessary permits from relevant authorities, the researcher conducted interviews at convenient locations for participants. The collected data was then analyzed and interpreted using a thematic approach.

The following are the findings of the study:

The research reveals that teachers were deployed to remote schools, where most educators in seven cities lacked significant experience. It is common for individuals who frequently travel to eventually assume the role of Teacher-In-Charge, with Teacher-III representing the highest rank. Assignments for each grade level are determined by student

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enrollment and teacher availability. While one teacher engaged in action research, most teacher's studies were focused on master's theses. These educators tend to conduct research out of necessity rather than personal interest.

Based on the results of the in-depth interview with the participants, it was found out that experiences of teachers in seven cities on the conduct of research included a lot of documents to prepare, feeling excited, feeling nervous and scared, limited resources and difficulty in conducting research, and involvement of participants.

It was found out that the challenges encountered by teachers in seven cities in conducting research were availability of participants/respondents, bad weather, looking for literature and completing the process, time management, and limited resources.

It was also found out that ways on how teachers in seven cities cope with the challenges encountered in conducting research were flexibility, development of a support system, intrinsic motivation, and open mindedness.

Insights

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

There are barriers in conducting research but there is also a sense of excitement and motivation. Addressing the needs of teachers can help foster a more positive and productive research environment for teachers.

Teachers need more support for a greater participation and encouragement in research and ultimately the improvement of the quality of education in their communities.

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Fostering a supportive research environment is necessary for teachers in seven cities by empowering them the advancement of knowledge and letting them feel that they are being supported.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

Experienced teachers should be actively recruited and assigned to remote schools. They should be provided with financial or other incentives to attract and retain them in remote schools

especially those in underserved areas. This ensures that they can achieve higher level of expertise and pedagogical skills to address the unique challenges of these locations.

Specialized training programs for teachers assigned to remote schools should be created. The training may focus on culturally responsive pedagogy, addressing unique learners' need, and managing resource constraints.

There should be more opportunities for teachers to engage in research that aligns with their interests and passion. This may include providing them access to relevant research resources, connecting them with mentors, and encouraging them to collaborate with their colleagues.

Teacher who engage in research should acknowledged and rewarded, even if it's driven by necessity. This may include providing them research grants, professional development opportunities, or recognition at school or district levels.

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Teachers should be encouraged to conduct research that directly addresses real-world challenges they face in their classrooms. This may help them see the practical value of research and its potential to improve their teaching practices.

A copy of policy recommendations should be given to the Schools Division Office and Regional Office for their information, provision of technical assistance and other support.

If the copy of this recommended policies would not be implemented, school heads and the Schools District Supervisor are encouraged to relatively implement these in a local arrangement bases only.

A similar study is also encouraged to be conducted in the future and consider other variables not used nor mentioned in the study.

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