



MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES OF UPLAND, LOWLAND AND ISLAND SCHOOL TEACHERS: BASES FOR WELLNESS PROGRAM

JONBON A. IWAG

TEACHER III

Sincua Primary School

jonbon.iwag@deped.gov.ph

ABSTRACT

The qualitative study aimed to determine memorable experiences of teachers assigned in lowland, upland, and island schools as bases for wellness program. In-depth interview was used to gather data with phenomenology as research designed. There were 15 participants' teachers assigned in the different areas of the 5th District of Iloilo. The results showed that the feeling of happiness, support extended, and learners' attitude and behavior are considered memorable experiences for teachers assigned in upland area. Home visitation, stakeholder's participation, and challenging experiences were memorable for teachers in lowland while transportation and relationship with community were memorable for teachers in the island. Teachers assigned in upland, lowland, and island schools had their fair share of challenges from stress, multitasking, poor internet connection, task management, lack of budget and difficulty in teaching while teaching in their designated areas. To manage those challenges, teachers employed various coping mechanisms. They utilized effective time management and effective communication with stakeholders. They also learned to be positive, resourceful, and adaptable in order effectively

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manage these challenges. Given the findings of the study, a wellness program was proposed for teachers assigned in upland, lowland, and island schools.

Keywords: *Memorable Experiences, Teachers, Lowland, Upland, Lowland and, Island Schools, Wellness Program*

INTRODUCTION

Education in remote areas is a worldwide issue especially since remote areas are home to 46% of the worldwide population, and to 23% of the European population (Chunling, 2011). However, serious educational inequalities exist between remote and urban schools, which have serious long-term social and economic consequences (Braun et al., 2006).

One of the main educational inequalities that teachers in remote areas face is that of their professional development. Since it is not always easy to travel long distances to attend professional development workshops and presentations, remote teachers miss out on many of the training and other opportunities that are available to teachers in other settings (Kelly and Forgaty, 2015).

This disadvantage leads to serious inequalities since research has consistently shown that effective professional development is strongly linked to improved student outcomes (Smith Gillespie, 2007; Hattie, 2009) and that it plays a major role in the success of high-performing,

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high-needs remote schools (Barley and Beesley, 2007). However, very little is known about the factors that are associated with teacher professional development in remote regions, beyond their geographical isolation (Arnold et al., 2005; Glover et al., 2016).

Experiences play a vital part in the daily lives of people. As working professional teachers, we all go through life progressions, and each person has their way of dealing with their lived experiences. The dangerous battle of experienced teachers as individuals is scrapped inside the classroom and in human hearts. They struggle with fear, disappointments, stress, a 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, personal, and understanding of one's professional opportunities and trials (Bilbao, 2012).

As a result, teaching is more than just a fine profession; it is a mission, and it is motivated by commitment and dedication rather than money.

Teaching aimed at bringing meaningful learning and intention of facilitating learning. Teaching entails giving of oneself to others in the hopes that perhaps, the piece one provides will grow in the heart of another and, more crucially, that it might cause other people to blossom.

The passion of teaching and calling to be the agents of change, the teachers endure hardship and risks to deliver the quality education to every learner (Passion for Teaching, 2022).

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Furthermore, teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in school, college or university. They work as catalyst of change.

In this study, the researcher explored the real experiences of fifteen teachers who are teaching in the different areas in the 5th District of Iloilo.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

The research methodology, research design, study participants, data collection techniques, research instrument, and data analysis are all covered in this chapter. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the memorable experiences of teachers in the 5th District of Iloilo.

Research Method

The research method utilized in this study was qualitative research using in-depth interviews. According to Stanford Libraries (2023), Qualitative research is the naturalistic study of social meanings and processes, using interviews, observations, and the analysis of texts and images.

The interviewer with the interviewee during the interview was 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.

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Research Design

The study used phenomenological research design. A philosophical strategy for conducting qualitative research is phenomenology. By concentrating on a person's subjective perceptions of what she encounters, phenomenology seeks to understand how others view the world and how this perspective may differ from widely accepted beliefs. Phenomenology, which is widely applied in disciplines like psychology, sociology, and social work, involves interviewing the subjects to learn about their impressions.

According to Smith (2013), phenomenology is the study of consciousness structures as they are perceived in the first person. As it is an experience of or about some object, the intentionality, or being oriented toward something, is the main structural component of an experience. By virtue of its content or meaning (which symbolizes the object) and the proper enabling conditions, an experience is directed toward an object.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the 15 selected teacher informants in the 5th District of Iloilo, 5 teachers came from lowland areas of the Schools District of Sara; 5 teachers from upland areas of the Schools District of Lemery; and 5 teachers from island areas of the Schools District of Concepcion Cluster II.

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Sampling Design

The study sampling strategy used in the study was purposive. A non-probability sample called a purposive sample is chosen based on demographic characteristics and the goal of the study. Judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling are other terms for purposeful sampling.

Research Instrument

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

The interview schedule included three primary questions on the goal of the study, along with a number of follow-up inquiries based on the informants' responses.

Voice and video recorder were 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 are considered for their expertise in the field of research, testing and assessment, and English, were requested to validate each question for review and modification.

A researcher's conclusions must be suitable, meaningful, correct, and valuable in order to be considered valid. The content and format of content-related evidence of validity must be

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consistent with the definition of variables and sample of the subject to be measured, and shall also aid in validating the questionnaire's items.

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 will personally went to the schools, community or place convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

Before the participants interview with a participant, the researcher asked them to sign a consent form or waiver pertaining to the way the study would be conducted. The study rigorously adhered to and followed the minimum health protocols required by the Inter Agency Task Force (IATF), Department of Health (DOH) standards during the pandemic, DepEd Orders on the Health protocols, Local Government Units, and the Barangay health protocols.

Using in-depth interview, voice and video recorder were also provided to completely capture the interviewee's words. The researcher consolidated all of the collected data after a series of interviews.

Data Analysis

The information gathered was analyzed using a thematic approach.

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Finding patterns or themes in qualitative data is the process of thematic analysis. The goal of a thematic analysis, according to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), is to find themes, such as fascinating or significant patterns in the data, and then utilize those themes to discuss the research or make a point about a problem. This involves condensing, evaluating, and interpreting the information gathered and giving it meaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was conducted to determine the memorable experiences of teachers assigned in lowland, upland and island schools, Schools District of Sara, Lemery and Concepcion during the school year 2022-2023.

The research method utilized in the study was qualitative method, using in-depth interviews, and the research design is phenomenology.

The participants of the study were the 15 selected teachers, 5 from the Upland schools in the Schools District of Sara, 5 from lowland schools in the Schools District of Lemery, and 5 from the island schools in the Schools District of Concepcion for the school year 2022-2023.

A researcher-made interview schedule was used as an instrument to gather data.

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

The questionnaire underwent content-validation by the Panel of Experts. The validity of the questions in interview schedule was evaluated using Fraenkel and Wallen's (2007) Criteria for the

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Content Validation. The researcher considered all comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the tool. After the questionnaire had been found valid, permits were prepared to allow the researcher to start conducting the in-depth interview.

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

The researcher consolidated all collected data after a series of interviews. The information was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted using thematic approach.

The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the results of the in-depth interview, teachers assigned in lowland, upland and island schools, revealed that they considered happiness of everybody, support extended, learners' attitude and behavior, home visitation, stakeholder's community involvement, challenging, transportation, and relationship with the community as their memorable experiences.

On the other hand, teachers assigned in upland, low land, and island schools, encountered challenges such as stress, multitasking, poor internet connection, lack of budget, Time management, difficulty in traveling, and homesickness while working on their areas of designation.

The in-depth interview revealed that teachers assigned in upland, lowland, and island schools manage those challenges, it was found out that it was time management, effective

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communication with stakeholders, positive outlook in life, resourceful, managing time Efficiently and being adjusting with the environment.

A teacher's training and workshops is proposed to address problems on the delivery of the assigned topics and teachers' attitude as identified during the interview with the participants.

A proposed provision of support program is presented to address the problem on school heads' support as mentioned by most of the teachers during the interview.

The time management system is proposed to address problems on time, especially the hectic schedules of teachers, as discussed and mentioned by most of them during the in-depth interview.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

Teachers, as facilitators of learning and tour guides of both worlds (theory and practice), have extraordinary experiences with their learners. These experiences serve as their driving force to maintain harmonious relationships with learners and drive them towards the goal of making an accessible education for all regardless of how far these learners lived. There are learners who are snotty and difficult to deal with, but that do not hinder teachers to keep them from doing more than just a job, but a vocation. Teachers always show that this world isn't terrible to live. They keep proving that this world is a place where everyone is interconnected regardless of learner's life background.

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Teachers may seem jolly inside the class, but they also are fed up with the challenges they face not only in the four corners of the classroom but also as they gear each new day towards reaching the unreached. Teaching nowadays is challenged because of the lack of necessary resources for the delivery of learning, and lack of transportation allowance for those who are teaching in far-flung areas. These led them to their inability sometimes to cope with conditions in their daily lives. The feelings of sadness, worry, and pain are some of what they feel as they leave their loved ones and traverse a different path, and that makes them stressed. Fortunately, these experiences had even made them more resilient, brave, consistent, and determined to make difference in the lives of school children.

Support materials for the delivery of learning, Internet connectivity, Stakeholders' support, and wellness programs are just some of the most important things needed for the success of building a better nation for our children. Teachers are entrusted with so many activities every day and that they need support from internal and external stakeholders to alleviate their suffering. Support mechanisms should be organized that will benefit learners' love for learning. Positive work outcomes and organizational and stakeholders' commitment is necessary for a long-term benefit that will foster initiatives and promote well-being of teachers and the entire school community.

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Conclusion

Teachers' well-being should be given priority by the school administration and the Department of Education. It is necessary to support them on this aspect as they are prone to overwork that led them to feel mental and emotional instability. Support mechanism like that of symposia on multi-tasking and management of stress and time should be done by school to equip teachers and staff to face the challenges of their work and to keep them from doing things positively. It is a necessity to have this program as it entails a leverage of key resources – mainly teachers to hone timid and thoughtless school children.

Establishing communication and linkages among stakeholders is a tedious task for school personnel but doing so means seeking their sides and their input, feedback, and collaboration to ensure that the plans and programs of the school are comprehensive and that it is align and should be included in the School Improvement Plan. Stakeholders play a very important role in the achievement of the department's goal as collective feedback and efforts lead to a more progressive state of educational institutions for continued improvements.

Teachers should be engaged in different seminars, trainings, and workshops regarding financial literacy and survival strategies outside home situation most especially in dealing with school decisions. They will be equipped with skills needed for financial decisions and it's finding solutions to the long-standing problems when it comes to financial resources and profit gains. Survival strategies should also be taught to teachers, most especially those who worked in the

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