

Profession by Heart: Commitment of Neophyte Non-education Graduate Senior High School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the manifestations of commitment to the teaching profession of the Neophyte Non-Education-Graduates Senior High School Teachers. This study utilized a phenomenological narrative approach to explore common themes emerging from the lived experiences and manifestations of commitment to the teaching profession of the Neophytes. Based on the results of the study, the following findings were noted: (1) Most of the informants in this study were passers of Licensure Examination for Teachers and occupied permanent position in the field with Outstanding and Very Satisfactory work performance ratings; (2) The reasons in changing their careers were personal factors, influence and inspiration from their parents, friends and teachers; (3) Accomplishing voluminous paperwork especially doing Daily Lesson Log was the most challenging task for them; (4) Mentoring of senior colleagues, master teachers, and school heads was the best coping mechanisms of the informants; (5) Willingness to extend time to their students and go above and beyond what was expected to them as classroom teachers were their best manifestations of commitment; (6) A kind heart and love for students were the primordial qualities that an individual must possess before entering the field of teaching; and (7) It is worth noting that teaching profession not only transformed the lives of the students, it also created a colossal impact in the lives of the informants. It can be concluded that while the previous work performance ratings of the neophytes proved that they performed well in their respective schools, taking and passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers, pursuing graduate studies, and going above and beyond what was expected for them as classroom teachers were direct manifestations of their commitment to the teaching profession. Thus, Neophyte Non-Education-Graduate Senior High School Teachers are highly qualified and committed teachers by heart.

Keywords: neophyte, non- education graduates, senior high school teachers, manifestations of commitment

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INTRODUCTION

In the data presented by the DepEd in 2016, in the first implementation of the Senior High School Program, out of the 1.517 million students enrolled, 60.27 percent, or over 914,000 students, signed up for Academic Track, 39.15 percent signed up in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood Track, .38 percent for Arts and Design Track, and .20 percent for Sports Track. As a result, the Department of Education (DepEd) needs to hire 30,000 SHS teaching staff (full-time and part-time teaching positions) and 6,000 non-teaching staff every year for school years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. At present, according to the data from the DepEd Central Office, there are 55,156 senior high teachers for the school year 2018-2019 but still need to hire 8,618 new SHS teachers. With the given data, if DepEd limits the teaching opportunity in SHS to licensed teachers only, it will become a big challenge for the department to address the number of vacant teaching positions. After all, the SHS Program calls for professionals with specialization for the various tracks and is not exclusive to generic teachers alone. For this reason, the department called on qualified and highly competent professionals and practitioners in the different fields who are interested in teaching subjects of four (4) SHS tracks: academic, technical-vocational-livelihood, arts and design, and sports. These SHS tracks demand highly competent individuals to deliver the various subjects with depth and length. With a great number of required teaching forces to teach in senior high school, the hiring guidelines for senior high school teachers, therefore, are not limited to education graduates alone, as mentioned above; they are also open to other professionals who are willing to join the pool of teachers in the Senior High School, following the corresponding conditions stipulated in DepEd Order No. 3, s. 2016. This DepEd Order adheres to the merit and fitness principle of the Civil Service Doctrine of the Philippine Constitution. Like any qualification standards, parameters, and guidelines on recruitment, the commitment of these professionals and practitioners cannot be measured at this stage alone. Their level of commitment can only be seen once they are in the field. Most of the applicants are non-education graduates who came from different industries and are considered neophytes in the field of teaching, it is a huge challenge for the DepEd to make sure that all the recruited Senior High School teachers, specifically neophyte non-education graduates, are committed and faithful to the principles prescribed by the department for them to achieve the ultimate goal of teachers, which is to provide quality education for the students. Thus, the researcher decided to explore the manifestations of commitment to the teaching profession of these Neophyte Non-Education-Graduate Senior High School Teachers. The researcher believes that these Neophytes not only confronted loads of challenges in teaching but also struggled a lot, proving their commitment to the field.

Research Questions

1. To determine the profile of the informants in terms of;
 - 1.1. subjects taught
 - 1.2. educational qualification
 - 1.3. length of service in the former and current job
 - 1.4. position/designation in the former and current job
 - 1.5. salaries and benefits in the former and current job, and
 - 1.6. working status in the former and current job
2. To determine the reason of the informants in choosing teaching as their profession.
3. To determine the challenges they experienced in the academe.
4. To identify the coping mechanism of the informants in responding to the voluminous work of teachers in public schools.
5. To determine the manifestations of commitment of the informants in teaching.



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6. To share pieces of advice to the future neophytes who may opt to follow in their footsteps in so far as commitment to teaching is concerned.

METHODS

Study Design

This study essentially made use of the phenomenological narrative approach to explore common themes emerging from the lived experiences and manifestations of commitment to the teaching profession of the Neophytes.

Population and Sample

In selecting the key informants of this study, a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques was utilized. The researcher considered Clusters six (6) and seven (7) Secondary Schools which include Apalit High School, San Matias High School, San Simon High School, Macabebe High School, and San Vicente San Francisco High School respectively offering senior high school in the Division of Pampanga as the locale of the study. Fifteen (15) Neophyte Non-Education-Graduate Senior High School Teachers were considered in this study using parameters set by the researcher like the geographic location of their schools or accessibility and access of the researcher to their schools. Most of the informants were part of the mass hiring of teachers during the first implementation of senior high school in the school year 2016-2017 and some were newly hired. Moreover, informants are Neophyte Non-Education-Graduates or professionals who came from different fields or industries.

Instrumentation

The researcher designed a semi-structured interview using open-ended questions. The semi-structured interview of this study was divided into three (3) parts, which include the personal profile of the informants, interview questions, and follow-up questions. The semi-structured interview was guided by the questions lifted from the questionnaire made by Meera Varadharajan in her study, Lived Experiences of Second Career Beginning Teachers (UTS Ethics approval reference no. 2009-367A). The questionnaire consists of questions about the lived experiences of seven second-career beginning teachers from schools in the state of New South Wales, Australia. The said questions will be modified to suit better to the present study.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis was used in this study to analyze the data. The data from the informants were transcribed verbatim for a more accurate report. The data from the interviews did not pass through the process of sanitization to preserve the original responses of the informants.

RESULTS

Personal Profile of the Informants

There are fifteen (15) Non-Education-Graduate Neophyte Senior High School Teachers included in this study. Ten (10) informants are from Cluster Six (6), and Five (5) are from Cluster Seven (7), respectively.



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Table 1. Personal Profile and Career History/Background of the Informants

Informants	Bachelor's Degree	Former career/s	Present career and rank/position
1	AB Communication	Executive Producer (ABS-CBN) and Associate Producer (GMA 7)	Teacher II
2	BS Commerce	Restaurant Supervisor Dubai, UAE	Teacher II
3	BS Computer Engineering	Associate Software Engineer	Teacher I
4	BS Accountancy	Accountant, Financial Accountant, Sales Accountant, Checking Supervisor at SM City Pampanga and, College Instructor at Pampanga Colleges	Teacher II
5	BS Psychology	Guidance Counselor	Teacher II
6	BS Electrical Engineering	Systems Planning and Design Engineer (Pampanga Electric Cooperative, PELCO III)	Teacher II
7	BA Economics	Executive Virtual Assistant and Quality Assurance Analyst (BPO Industry)	Teacher II
8	BA Economics	Member Services Officer II (PAG-IBIG Fund)	Teacher II
9	Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	IT Specialist, Graphic Designer, and System Analyst	Teacher II
10	BA English Studies	Inventory Clerk	Teacher II
11	BS Business Administration major in Banking and Finance	Clerk (shipping company) and volunteer Kindergarten Teacher	Teacher II



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12	BSc Business Administration	Executive Marketing Assistant (BPI), Assistant Professor (HAU) and STI College (San Fernando Pampanga)	Master Teacher I
13	Bachelor of Commerce major in Business Management	Administrative Staff (Municipality of San Simon)	Teacher II
14	BS Hotel Restaurant Management	Hotel Manager TESDA Trainer	Teacher II
15	Bachelor of Science in Computer Science	Computer Technician, Graphic Artist, IT Specialist and Art Director	Teacher II

Manifestations of Commitment of Informants

The informants were asked on how they manifest their commitment in the teaching profession. With sincerity, they simply responded:

"I manifest my commitment in teaching in a way that I will not stop if my students just know a little. I want to teach them more because it is actually what they need. Teaching does not end in the classroom. It may also be outside the classroom. Example, if there are students who really want to learn, want to become better, want to become the best, do not just stop in the classroom. If possible, give them more as long as you can. Because who knows, that it can be the way to help them reach their dreams that they really want to achieve."

"Maybe, I can see it as even when I reach the age for retirement, I will still choose teaching. It is even you are going to pay for them. I am willing to do even that. And sometimes, those students who have immersion in Apalit, if they do not have a place to sleep because it is already time, I am willing to let them sleep in my house if they really need to."

"In a scale of 1 to 5, maybe it will be 4. Because I can sacrifice my Saturday for school. And also there are several instances that I spend too much for the students, and for the beautification of my classroom."

"I am taking up an MBA and I am planning to finish it. And then, I will attend more training, more seminars to improve myself in teaching, those teaching skills and knowledge."

"Commitment is really hard especially in teaching, maybe if I deliver my lesson in 101 percent. So, in terms of teaching, maybe that is commitment."

"Maybe, as long as I want to teach every student, I can say that my commitment is there when it comes to teaching. It's not like I am just going to enter the classroom without preparation, because there are some teachers who are doing that. I am the type of teacher who will try hard to make students learn something every meeting. I can say that I am committed."



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"When it comes to commitment I can say that I am willing to teach even if I only have 3 students. So even if they are feeling lazy, it is okay. I am still going to teach those students who want to learn. So it is like, I am willing to share what I can share."

"In many things, just punctuality, on time submission of reports. Also, I have a good relationship with the students."

"I go to work 100% so I can finish my work. I pass what I am supposed to pass and I give my 100% to my students. I have this motto that I want to share to my students and to other people, Excellence is the hallmark of everything I do. I will not stop, unless I am finished. I will not stop, as long as my work is not done and as long as I am not contended, I will not stop."

"Manifest, like what they usually say that teaching is a calling. So I need to give my heart. So I need to give all my heart, I need to dedicate my heart, my life to teaching."

"I always go to my class prepared. You need to have enough knowledge. I am not perfect but always try to impart knowledge to my students."

"It is easy to say that I do not have absences. I never came late. I was submitting my reports on time. I am teaching well inside the classroom. Maybe more on those are basic which are already expected because that is included in our job description. Maybe when you go beyond to what is expected of a classroom teacher. When you are being humane to your students and extending your services beyond your classroom duties."

"Maybe, I can show it, or I have already shown it, although we are being paid, it is still a different thing when teachers give their time and effort. In my part, I think I am usually doing it right because this is what I am actually doing the whole day. As an adviser, I go to their houses, ask if they are okay, what is new today, how is their subject today and asked if they have problems. I am committed. I can say that I am committed because I am always doing ways to share good values with them. I want that every time I am in front of them I can share those beautiful values. But of course, we are not perfect in everything but I am still looking for ways for them to acquire knowledge and values."

"By giving a lot of time and patiently listening to their personal problems, not just personal problems but also the academic problems of the students."

"Maybe it is like you are willing to share to your students even your personal life. Actually even sometimes it is very personal, like me as an ICT Teacher, just for the students to have their National Certificate, if they do not have money? If it is just a small amount, why not just give it? But those in the higher positions do not know that. I am the only one who knows it and the students. There are also students who do not have their allowance, so if I still have the budget I give them some. When there are students who have poor eyesight, if you have the budget, you may give a pair to them. When we say commitment you need to be consistent of what you have pledged to be. You do not have to post about how good teacher you are in social media. You just have to be true to your love to your students and continue to love teaching."



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Themes Identified During Coding

Extend time and exert effort (Going above and beyond): While some of the informants said that submission of different reports on time is a sign of their commitment to teaching, it is interesting to note that most of the informants manifest their commitment through their willingness to extend their time for their students and go above and beyond what is expected of them as classroom teachers. These kinds of testimonies from the informants proved that the teaching profession touched their lives and enabled them to develop such profound commitment among themselves.

CONCLUSION

While the previous work performance ratings of the neophytes proved that they performed well in their respective schools, taking and passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers, pursuing graduate studies, and going above and beyond what was expected of them as classroom teachers were direct manifestations of their commitment to the teaching profession. Thus, Neophyte Non-Education-Graduate Senior High School Teachers are highly qualified and committed teachers by heart. Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are summarized: 1. There should be proper planning in terms of hiring teachers in the division where these informants belong. The Teacher Induction Program (TIP) should be made a month or weeks before the opening of classes after the hiring process. In the existing practice of the division, the newly hired teachers were provided an induction program usually sometime in August, September, or October, and lasted only for 3 days. This kind of practice defeats the purpose of induction, which is to provide a systematic structure of support to the neophyte teachers. Having an induction program before the opening of classes will help the beginning teachers to somehow see the realities of being in public school and equip themselves with the different practices and culture of their new endeavor. 2. There should be a separate induction program for teachers between education and non-education graduates. These two types of neophyte teachers have distinct needs as far as the teaching profession is concerned. 3. Although there are six (6) existing modules for common topics and another six (6) key stage topics for SHS teachers in the teacher induction program of the Department of Education, it is important that these topics are religiously accomplished and monitored and that the individuals responsible for the said program are committed to addressing the needs of the beginning teachers. 4. The induction program for teachers and seminars, especially for Non-Education Graduates must put a premium on classroom management, positive discipline, and teaching techniques and strategies. Also, Lesson Planning and accomplishing paperwork should be the fundamental concerns. 5. Mentoring relationships between the neophyte and experienced teachers must always be taken into account and become a system in school, since this is one of the best coping mechanisms for the neophyte or beginning teachers in the teaching profession. 6. Future neophytes must take into consideration the pieces of advice of the informants to have an idea of what to expect in the field of teaching. In addition to the above-mentioned recommendations, the researcher recommends the pieces of advice from the informants to the future Neophytes. The Neophytes recommend that, aside from patience and tolerance, resourcefulness, adaptability, and the right choice of people to rely on, having a kind heart and love for the students and the profession were the words that were redundantly uttered by the informants when asked about pieces of advice that they can give to individuals who may opt to follow their footsteps in the future. According to them, these were the primordial qualities that an individual must possess before entering the field of teaching. Having a kind and loving heart in teaching means loving and committing to the profession wholeheartedly.



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