



Regenesis and revelation of the novel profession: Lived experiences of second-career teachers

Jewel A. Oliveros¹, Ramon Clemente Martin F. Lachica²

¹ Schools Division of Escalante City, Negros Occidental, Philippines

² University of St. La Salle, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines

Corresponding email: jaoliveros2015@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of second-career teachers in relation to their new professional roles and responsibilities in the public secondary schools. Using a qualitative methodology, specifically the phenomenological approach, the data were gathered from 10 participants through an in-depth interview. The participants were purposively selected with the inclusion criteria that the participants must be regular-permanent teachers, have taught in the division for at least two years, previously undertaken a degree in a field outside of education, and employed in a profession unrelated to education. The data were recorded, transcribed, validated, and analyzed using Creswell's method of analyzing lived experiences. This data revealed four themes, namely: (1.) impetus for career shift, (2.) the hurdles of teaching, (3.) overcoming public school realities, and (4.) the gift of public school teaching. The impetus for career shift includes two subthemes namely: (a.) influence of significant others and (b.) the lure of better pay and privileges. The theme hurdles of teaching include four subthemes namely: (a.) struggling with the basics, (b.) dealing with changing behavior in changing times, (c.) the dearth of learning support in the public school and (d.) overwhelming clerical work. Overcoming public school realities include three subthemes: (a.) gaining wisdom from the older one, (b.) shelling-out of personal resources, and (c.) tapping first career experience. Lastly, the gift of public school teaching is a theme that describes the satisfaction and fulfillment of second-career teachers in public school teaching. Recommendations point to the need of implementing policies and practices and providing support for second-career teachers' professional development.

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INTRODUCTION

While conventional teacher preparation programs still offer training for aspiring educators, numerous individuals with backgrounds outside education are now exploring alternative certification routes to address the demands for certified professionals in schools (Anderson, Fry, & Hourcade, 2014). These diverse groups of career-changers are identified as second-career teachers who shift from careers in professional discipline to the field of education (Collazo, 2019) and they represent a broader phenomenon observed both nationally and internationally, wherein professionals opt to change careers midway through their professional journey (Valcour & Tolbert, 2003 as cited in Daguplo, 2017).

This group of teachers is deemed well-matched to the requirements of today's workplace. They wield a positive influence and play a pivotal role in reshaping school culture. Additionally, they bring valuable professional backgrounds, maturity, and worldly perspectives into the classroom (Varadharajan, 2014). Research indicates that successive generations, including the contemporary one and beyond, are increasingly likely to change careers multiple times throughout their working lives. This trend is influenced by shifts in labor market conditions and changes in modern society, including advancements in technology, globalization, and economic dynamics (Powers, 2002, as cited in Bernal Jr., De Vera, & Salazar, 2018).

The presence of alternative pathways to teacher certification has expanded the chances for individuals changing careers to enter teaching profession (Marinell & Johnson, 2014). In the Philippines, an alternative method to become qualified as a teacher involves first earning a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degree, followed by enrollment in a College of Education for an 18-unit professional education program. Completing either pathway enables the graduate to take the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT). Passing the LEPT is the passport for entry in the public schools.

The proliferation of second-career teachers, whether licensed or unlicensed, within public schools is supported by Section 8 of Republic Act No. 10533. This provision permits the Department of Education to employ graduates from fields such as science, mathematics, statistics, engineering, music, and other specialized disciplines. These professionals can teach in areas where there is shortage of qualified applicants.

In one of the division offices of Negros Occidental, it has been observed that there are remarkably substantial numbers of second-career teachers entering the public secondary schools, and their numbers continue to expand every school year. This increasing presence of second-career teachers in the teaching profession is an interesting phenomenon among professionals who come from different industries but choose to teach in the public secondary schools. Apparently, there is a great deal of literature that can be found to understand why professionals change careers and shift to the field of teaching. However, it is worthy to explore the experiences of these career switchers on how they navigate and overcome the demands of the teaching profession, especially in the public secondary schools. Thus, a thorough investigation of this group of teachers must be undertaken.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This phenomenological study aimed to explore the lived experiences of second-career teachers in relation to their new professional roles and responsibilities in the public secondary schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative approach in looking into the participants' lived experiences as second-career teachers in the public secondary schools in one of the division offices in Negros Occidental. Qualitative research focuses on meaning and the lived experiences deeply embedded in an individual's socio-cultural context. It immerses the researcher within a specific context, allowing for an in-depth study of the phenomenon. A

phenomenological approach is appropriate for this study as its intent is to document the lived experiences of the second-career teachers in the public secondary schools.

Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that centers on identifying shared lived experiences within a particular group, aiming primarily to elucidate the essence of the phenomenon under study. Specifically, in-depth interview was conducted with individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation, or experience. In this study, the lived experiences of the participants were obtained using in-depth interview. Consequently, the participants' stories served as the primary data of this study (Creswell, 2014).

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were the 10 second-career teachers from the different public secondary schools in one of the division offices in Negros Occidental. The participants were purposively selected based on the following inclusion criteria: regular-permanent teachers, have taught in the public secondary schools for at least two years, previously undertaken a degree in a field outside of education, and employed in a profession unrelated to education.

Instrument

An interview guide was prepared to gather the data on the lived experiences of second-career teachers. It consisted of open-ended questions. Part I of the interview guide consisted of questions pertaining to the profile of the participants. Part II included the primary and probing questions focusing on their experiences as second-career teachers in the public secondary schools. The interview guide was validated by the members of the panel, course facilitator, and research adviser.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data gathering commenced as soon as permission from the Schools Division Superintendent in one of the division offices in Negros Occidental to conduct this study was obtained. Having identified the potential participants, the researcher obtained their permission to participate in the study. The researchers set a schedule for an interview with the participants. The purpose of this study was explained to the participants including how the interview would commence. The terms of confidentiality, such as the use of pseudonym to protect the real identity of the participants, were emphasized. Written free prior and informed consent was signed by the participants to close the agreement. The 10 participants were interviewed in a face-to-face setting. During the interview, participants were invited to express their memories freely and share in any manner they deemed beneficial. If ever they had questions or clarifications, these were entertained before the start of the interview. The face-to-face interview was expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes. The participants were informed that the interview would be audio-recorded. During the interview, the researcher took down notes. Occurrence of fatigue or lack of interest among participants was carefully observed. An effort was made to interview the participants in environments in which they felt comfortable, with their privacy ensured, and conducive to data gathering.

Data Analysis

Initial data analysis already started even during the verbatim data transcription of the audio-recorded of the interviews. For this study, data were explicated using Creswell's (2014) six steps for data analysis and interpretation. These steps include organizing and transcribing the data, thoroughly reviewing all gathered information, coding the data comprehensively, outlining descriptions of the context or individuals along with categories or themes for analysis, presenting these descriptions and themes in a qualitative narrative, and finally, interpreting the findings or results within the qualitative research framework. Creswell (2014) underscores the importance of ensuring the trustworthiness of a study as a form of validation. He further elaborates that validation comprises strategies employed by researchers to ensure the accuracy of their study. These strategies encompass

four key aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this phenomenological study, the four aspects of trustworthiness were observed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To comprehend the experiences of second-career teachers transitioning into the profession, the narratives and accounts provided by participants were analyzed to identify emergent themes. The following are the four main themes that could be helpful in fulfilling the purpose of this study: (1.) Impetus for Career Shift, (2.) The Hurdles of Teaching, (3.) Overcoming Public School Realities, and (4.) The Gift of Public School Teaching. To support each thematic element, pertinent excerpts from the interviews with participants were included.

Theme 1: Impetus of Career Shifting

The shift to a teaching career after spending many years in a previous profession is a distinctive professional journey, influenced by underlying reasons tied to the transition. One of the inquiries posed to participants who have shifted from one career to another is whether there existed a pivotal moment that preceded their transition. Interestingly, based on the participants' narratives, there are two major reasons why they join the teaching profession, and this will be discussed below as subthemes, namely: (a.) influence of significant others and (b.) the lure of better pay and privileges.

Subtheme 1: Influence of significant others

Second-career teachers often highlight the impact of their family and friends during their transition into the teaching profession. For instance, JJ's family members and friends played a crucial role in his career change decision. Their positive influence guided him toward teaching, and their support and encouragement motivated him to pursue this path.

Marko mentioned that his thinking was positively influenced by the members of his family who were also teachers, and this aided him in the process: "I saw my mom as a teacher, also my brother, then my sister. They are all teachers. They influence me to become a teacher."

Similarly, Cai's decisions to pursue a teaching career was influenced, in part, by having family members who were also teachers: According to Cai, "*Ni-ingon si Mama nako akong in-law nga retired teacher na 'day what if mo eskwela ka day.*" (My mother-in-law who is a retired teacher said, 'Cai what if you will go to school [take supplemental units in education]').

Rose and Jelai also describe how their friends or colleagues have influenced them on taking supplemental units in education. Rose recalled, "I have a friend or colleague that motivates or inspires me to take another chance in life and take another course [units in education]". Jelai had the same experience (*Nang-hagad akoang classmate sa college nga mo-eskwela mi ug supplemental.*) (My classmate in college invited me to take the supplemental [units in education]).

As shared by the six participants, the genesis for transitioning into teaching occurs when someone encourages or influences them to go into schooling again by taking supplemental units in education. It can be gleaned from the responses of the participants that most of their so-called influencers are associated with the teaching field, being a teacher or a school principal. It appears that the participants seem to see the inspiration to teach through them, thus igniting their interest to take part also in this noble profession. This push factor combined with the interest of the participants may be associated also with the demands of teachers in the public school now. In the study of Lopez (2017), participants expressed their motivations for seeking teacher education certification despite having previously worked in non-education fields. They referenced this to the influence of their relatives who were also teachers. Similarly, the study of Varadharan (2014) indicated that one of the reasons behind the

decision taken by the participants to leave their careers for new careers was that their families and friends encouraged them to start teaching. All participants in the study of Cutler (2017) stated that familial support is essential to a successful career change transition.

Subtheme 2: The lure of better pay and privileges

One of the common threads among the participants' decision to transfer in the public school is the allure of salaries and benefits coupled with security of tenure. These extrinsic motivations resonate in the narratives of the second-career teachers in this study. The participants shared their preconceived ideas on the benefits when hired in the public school:

According to Che-che, *“My honest answer, nakita nako ang stability of tenure kong mag-teacher ko, and of course dako ang sweldo sa teacher.”* (My honest answer, there is stability of tenure in teaching and of course the salary is also high)

Renz had similar thoughts about the salaries and benefits he will be receiving when hired in the public school: *“In terms of money matters na pud, the salaries and benefits dako, usa pud dira nia kay murag stable job.”* (In terms of money matters, [in teaching] the salaries and benefits are high at the same time you have a stable job.) Having previously employed in the private industries, Rose and Jans were very candid and forthcoming in comparing their salaries before and at the present:

Rose commented, *“Of course, the salary, because the salary of the private school or private company differ, differ talaga dako siya 'g deperensya compared to the public, so mao na I decided to switch my career path.”* (Of course, the salary, because the salary of the private school or private company differ, there is a big difference compared to the public, that is why I decided to switch my career path.).

Jans concurred and added, *“Dako jud ang sweldo sa teacher compared sa sweldo nako sa coop as accounts clerk, 3 times man jud sya ang sweldo nako.”* (The salary of the teacher is higher compared to my salary as accounts clerk at the coop, it is 3 times higher.)

Salary and job security are basic and vital considerations in changing careers as revealed by the stories of nine participants. This means that economic aspects present in a job can help motivate a person to stay on or look for other lucrative career opportunities in other organizations. It is undeniable that most of the individuals who transition into second-career teaching consider higher compensation and security of tenure associated with the new profession. Being hired also in the public school will entitle a teacher to have a regular-permanent status of employment, thus there is job security. This finding, however, contradicts the findings of several studies about career-switchers in the teaching field. In the study of Collazo (2019), participants mentioned their extrinsic challenge as career-changers, which is low salary in the teaching profession. Having been previously employed to a well-paid career, the participants in the studies of Varadharan (2014) and Kahn (2015) revealed that financial and monetary rewards are a concern to them due to the reduction in their salaries or lower salary they are receiving.

Theme 2: The Hurdles of Teaching

The descriptions of how the second-career teachers immersed themselves in the public secondary schools are interesting. As second-career teachers commencing teaching in a classroom after completing units in education and having the license to teach, issues existed and were raised by the teacher participants during their transition process. This theme sheds light on the challenges faced by participants as they acclimated to their work environment and how these difficulties influenced their overall school experiences. Participants' descriptions of the different challenges they encountered are varied as represented by the four subthemes: struggling with the basics, managing students' behavior, the dearth of learning support in school, and the overwhelming clerical work.

Subtheme 1: Struggling with the basics

Coming from different careers in information technology and business often places second-career teachers in situations that deviate from their usual work routines or norms. Many have encountered challenges in the teaching field, especially in the preparation of their daily lesson plans, delivery of the lessons, and constructing test questionnaires aligned with the table of specifications.

Cai, Len-len, and JJ reflected their lack of knowledge in the preparation of lessons when they first entered the teaching career.

“Wala ko kabalo as in, wa jud koy know-how about lesson planning.” “Cai”, (I really do not know; I don’t have the know-how about lesson planning.)

“Dili ko kabalo maghimo lesson plan, unsa-on pag-objective.” (“Len-len”), (I do not know how to make lesson plan, how to create the objective.)

“Di gud ko kabalo mo ubra og lesson plan, bisan gani karon usahay mag-libog pa ko.” (“JJ”), (I really do not know how to prepare a lesson plan, even until now, I was sometimes confused [in the preparation].) Besides the struggles in lesson planning, the second-career teachers’ worst nightmare in teaching is the preparation of the test questionnaires aligned to the table of specifications. Jelai and Renz shared their thoughts on this:

“First jud nako na experience na na-stress jud ko, ang lesson plan. Nya timing pud to manug exam, first time nako na ning-ubra og TOS kay wala man ko experience before sa TOS, ang test questions na dapat multiple choice. Nya ako na realize pagka-budlaya di ay ug questions na multiple choice na e-base jud nimo sa TOS.” (“Jelai”), (My first experience [in teaching] which I am so stressed about is the lesson plan. During that time also was exam, it was my first time to make a TOS [Table of Specification] in which the test questions should be multiple choice. I realized how difficult it was to create multiple choice questions that should be align with the TOS.)

Renz commented that the preparation of reports, lesson planning, test questionnaire during exams is considered as challenging requirements to him: *“Mga reports, lesson planning, labi na jud ma abot ang exam, mga TOS, test questionnaire, nya dili pa ka kabalo, murag challenge jud ni na mga requirements.”*

Collectively, the participants expressed the difficulties they encountered in the teaching field. They had struggled with the preparation of lesson plans and constructing test questions following the table of specifications. It appears that their preparations during their supplemental studies did not suffice what is expected in the public school teaching. This finding is parallel with the study of Rubalcaba (2018) in that the alternative certification program of the participants did not adequately prepare them for the first day of school and there has been no training focused on what is supposed to do during the first week which includes preparing lesson plans. Sylvia’s (2017) research echoes a similar sentiment. Tradespeople who shift to vocational technical teaching often find that the classroom experience doesn’t align with their initial expectations. Consequently, they grapple with unfamiliar aspects such as classroom management, lesson planning preparation, and teaching students, all with minimal prior preparation.

Subtheme 2: Dealing with changing behavior in changing times

This thematic aspect describes the experiences of second-career teachers when dealing with the students’ behavior in public school. In the interviews, participants shared that they had not been exposed in the public secondary school environment prior to becoming a teacher, thus dealing with the students’ behavior in the classroom was also their first time.

Jelai, an alumna of the school where she was teaching, recalled her high school days on how she behaved and valued respect towards her teachers. Now that she is a classroom teacher, she is amazed at how the students behave in school: *“Na culture shock ko kay lain jud ang mga students. Ang mga estudyante ba lain na jud ug pamatasan; nia jud na na wala ga pamati...nia juy uban na dili interesado sa imohang klase ba.”* (I was culture-shocked because students nowadays are very different. They really behave badly; there are those who are not listening...others are not really interested in your class.)

Like Jelai, Che-che also referred to her high school days when students had very high regard in all their teachers. She condemned how students nowadays treat their teachers: *“Kay karon akong na-observe, ang mga estudyante, mo good morning lang sa teacher na may ara sila subject and the rest wala na, wala na sila batasan.”* (Nowadays, I observed that the students will greet you “good morning” if you are their subject teacher but if not, they will just ignore, they don’t have respect.)

“Grabe guid sila. Kung pangmandu-an mo, mo sukol, dili na lang jud kay padalman nimo maka-sala ra ka.” (*“Len-Len”*). (They are extremely stubborn. They resist when you give them tasks. I’d rather not insist so I won’t get in trouble.)

“Tapos ang behavior pud usahay sa public, budlayan ka usahay mag-saway. Damo nag padungol.” (*“Tony”*). (The behavior [of students] in the public [school], it is very difficult to discipline them. Many are behaving badly.)

Dealing with the changing behavior of the students seems to be a daunting task that a public school teacher should handle on a daily basis. It appears that this kind of task is even more difficult for second-career teachers considering that they have not experienced it even before entering the teaching profession. It can be observed from the responses that these career-switchers referred on their conduct back when they were still high school students. They pointed out that they valued respect for their teachers and most of all gave importance to their studies. Being a teacher now appears that this is also their point of reference on how the students should behave in school. However, in these changing times, students may seem to behave differently. In the study of Rubalcaba (2018), second-career teachers shared that classroom management played a major role and made their transition difficult. The participants felt that they were challenged by the behavior of their students. The same point is echoed in the studies of Bin Omar’s (2016), Lopez’s (2017), and Canos’s (2017) that classroom management is a challenge for career-switchers. According to Canos (2017), participants expressed a desire for additional support and training to effectively influence student behavior, enhance student motivation, and establish or uphold a respectful classroom environment (Canos, 2017).

Subtheme 3: The dearth of learning support in the public school

This thematic aspect explores the views of the participants about the lack of learning support in public schools. As mentioned by the participants, the learning support that they considered lacking in the public school are learning materials, textbooks, and facilities. Rose, Marko, and Jelai lamented over the lack of learning materials and textbooks in their respective schools.

According to Rose, *“Ang learning materials limited, so dili sya maka-igo sa mga bata kay limited lang, mao ra na, sariling sikap ka, kay if mag-depend lang ka sa school na materials kulang jud.”* (The learning materials are limited; it is not enough for the learners that is why you need to provide on your own because if you will just depend on the school materials, it is not enough.)

Marko added, *“Ang SHS lacks resources. Parehas sa TVL, jutay ra jud kaayo ang textbooks, learning materials especially sa specialization.”* (The SHS lacks resources. For instance, in TVL [Technical, Vocational and Livelihood], the textbooks and learning materials especially on the specialization are insufficient.)

Handling subjects which greatly focused on skills development of the students, Tony and Len-len bemoaned over the lack of needed facilities to be utilized in teaching:

According to Tony, “*Ang una-una guid is ang facilities. Ang akon nga specialization is ICT, then nag-abot ko to sa school na wala computers.*” (First and foremost are the facilities. My specialization is ICT, however when I arrived in my school there were no available computers.)

Cai also expressed her frustration which other participants reiterated: “*Ang ako problema jud is kung nia ka diri sa TLE, this is a skill nga subject, so ang mga plato, kutsara, number one is tubig, wala tubig, mga gamit.*” (My problem is when you are handling TLE [Technology and Livelihood Education], this is a skill subject, there are no available kitchen utensils and water.)

Textbooks and instructional materials including computer technology and equipment, serve as the primary tools that teachers utilize to structure their lessons and provide students with access to content knowledge and essential skills. However, it can be gleaned from the responses that the dearth of learning support in the public schools has been the major concern among second-career teachers. It appears that this concern has hampered their preparations and instructional delivery considering that they are in the process of familiarizing their subject matter. It even dampens their eagerness to impart more knowledge and skills to their students considering that these learning resources are important tools to support the teaching-learning process.

According to research conducted by Saunders and Oakes (2002), shortages of textbooks and educational tools, including technology such as computers, printers, software, and Internet access, had a detrimental impact on both teachers and students. The study highlighted the critical importance of providing access to relevant curriculum materials, equipment, and technology that support effective teaching and learning particularly when students are taught by new teachers or those who lack full state certification.

Subtheme 4: Overwhelming clerical work

One of the hurdles in teaching experienced by the participants is the overwhelming clerical work in public schools. This clerical work arose from their task as a teacher and their ancillary tasks assigned by their respective school heads. To mention the reports as coordinator of the school program/s, subject area/s and office reports are assigned by their school heads. Due to this bulk of work in teaching, the participants opted to spend extra time and effort by bringing these works at home. Confirmatory statements related to this are verbalized by these participants. Jans commented that most of the reports and paperwork are brought home because school time or official time to do them is not enough. (“*Laban-laban jud ang mga reports, ang mga paper works gina dala jud sa balay, kay dili jud sya kaya if school time or official time jud ang gamiton.*”). Jelai also agreed, “*Laban mga paper works ang dalon sa balay.*” (All paper works were brought home.)

Marko explained, “*Tungod sa kadaghan, ang work sa school madala na jud sa balay ba. Maka-pulaw ka.*” (Due to the bulk of work in school, you will end up bringing it home. You need to work overtime.)

Len-len reiterated, “*Given naman na ang kapoy, kay naay mga report; kay may time na dili ko maka-klase; dala pa jud na sa balay ang ubra.*” (Exhaustion is already given, because there are reports; there were times that you could not teach; work in school was brought home.)

Undeniably, the struggle is real for all the participants who experienced this kind of difficulty in the public school. Seemingly, this is far away from the expectations of these second-career teachers that in the public school, they are just going to teach, but added to this is the bulk of reports that they need to comply. It appears that this excessive paperwork took time away from these teachers in caring for their families and themselves. It also affects their instructional time with their students, thus making it appear that they are focusing more on complying with this paperwork rather than teaching. Simmons (2016) investigated the experiences of second-career teachers who

took on multiple roles during their transition into teaching. These educators found it crucial to be well-organized to effectively fulfill their various responsibilities. Lesson planning, teaching, parent communication, serving on assignments, and other duties posed challenges for teachers to manage their workload efficiently. Similarly, Canos (2017) discovered that individuals transitioning to teaching from other careers often encountered challenges related to administrative paperwork. These career changers required assistance in managing the administrative tasks that occupied their time between classroom instructions. This was supported by the study of Lopez's (2017) that paperwork, workload and lesson plans, and need for time were among the challenges encountered by the second-career participants. Collazo (2019) and Nielsen (2014) reported that second-career participants expressed that teaching is a difficult job, including busyness, too much work, and lack of time.

Theme 3: Overcoming Public School Realities

As a by-product of the different hurdles experienced in the public school teaching, the second-career teachers have been able to muddle through by doing certain strategies. These strategies aim to address job demands by eliminating their sources and offering temporary solutions for challenging situations. Participants provided examples of ways that they consider helpful as they undertake this new career. There are three themes that emerged through the explication of the participants' responses: (1) gaining wisdom from the older one; (2) shelling-out of personal resources; and (3) tapping first-career experience.

Subtheme 1: Gaining wisdom from the older one

Coming from an industry with a minimum of 18 units in professional education with no direct experience in public school teaching, it is imperative for the second-career teachers to have someone to be their support system along their career transitioning timeline. Study participants stressed the importance and value of having an experienced teacher who guided them throughout their careers. Rose, Jelai, and Renz describe how they sought out an experienced teacher while starting to immerse themselves in the public school teaching.

Jelai reflected, "*Kay bag-uhan ko need nako guidance pud ba sa nia na diha daan. Maayo na lang nakakita ko ug colleagues sila Mam A, sila ni Mam K, sa ilaha ko mag-sige'g pangutana.*". (As a beginner, I really need the guidance of those who are here already in the service. It is good that I have colleagues like Mam A and Mam K whom I can refer to all my queries.)

Rose shared, "*Mangutana ko sa akong mga colleagues unsa-on na sya, ga pangayo ko sa ila advice kung unsa na sya... willing man pud sila mo help.*" (I asked my colleagues on how to do it. I also asked their advice... they are willing to help.)

Renz spoke of asking for assistance from his fellow teachers with expertise in the subject he is teaching. "*Ga-ask pud ko assistance sa mga teachers na may expertise ana, like for example sa Mathematics, mangayo ko assistance.*" (I also asked for assistance from my fellow teachers who have expertise [on the subject], for example in Mathematics.)

Seeking out an experienced teacher is among the most referenced pieces of the second-career teachers to overcome the challenges in their transition. They shared a common perspective on the significance of seeking a mentor who possessed a thorough understanding of the intricacies of public school teaching, particularly in preparing fundamental and essential teaching deliverables. It appears that second-career teachers have benefited from this kind of professional engagement and appreciated the advantage of having this kind of support. According to Ingersol and Strong (2011), providing support and aid to newly hired teachers yields beneficial effects across three main areas: firstly, it enhances teacher commitment and retention; secondly, it improves teachers' instructional techniques within the classroom; and thirdly, it positively influences student achievement. The participants in the study of Sylvia (2017) highlighted that the support they received while transition into teaching, along with the social interactions they engaged in with colleagues, played a significant role in making their

transition to teaching an enjoyable one. Similarly, Lopez (2017) study revealed that in the process of adaptation to the teaching career, second-career teachers got the help and support from their colleagues. Mentors were perceived to be supportive and helpful in many ways. Canos (2017) uncovered those individuals transitioning careers expressed a strong preference for mentorship opportunities upon entering the profession.

Subtheme 2: Shelling-out of personal resources

Considering the escalating demands for instructional accountability, it is imperative that teachers have unrestricted access to essential resources and materials. This access ensures the delivery of high-quality instruction to all students. However, this seems to be a struggle, especially in the public school where there is scarcity of instructional materials and financial support. To overcome this kind of difficulty or problem, second-career teachers have to resort to shell-out their own personal resources, may it be financial, and materials needed in teaching. Confirmatory statements related to this are verbalized by the participants.

According to Len-len, *“Sa public, mo ko-ot jud ka... kay kung dili ka mag ko-ot sa imong pocket, wala pud.”* (In the public [school], you really need to shell out... because if you don't, you will have nothing.)

Rose seemed frustrated in sharing her experience during the EsP contest in the division. She had eight students participating in the contest; however, she did not receive any support for the food and transportation from the school, so she needed to spend from her own pocket. *“Walay support during the EsP contest sa Division. I have 8 participants, but no support for the food, sa plete sa mga bata. On my own pocket, so personal expense.”* (There is no support during the EsP contest in the Division. I have 8 participants, but there is no support for the food and transportation expenses of the students. I must spend it in my own pocket.)

Che-che spoke of spending her own money to pursue a school project, *“Because sa kulang ang support, mo gasto sa ko sa kaugalingon nako na kwarta para gusto nako ma-pursue akong mga project.”* (Because of the dearth of support, I need to spend money on my own to pursue my projects.)

These narratives are unequivocal recognition of the efforts extended by the second-career teachers by spending their own pockets just to acquire the needed instructional materials and equipment at the same time to pursue certain activity and project relevant to students' development. It appears that second-career teachers have the sense of accountability to quality instruction by taking the initiative of acquiring the needed instructional materials. They seem also to value the experiences of their students towards accomplishing a certain project and by attending co-curricular activities despite their scarce financial resources. In the survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education on the public school teacher spending on classroom supplies, it was revealed that 94% of teachers spent any money on classroom supplies. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018), a greater proportion of elementary grade level teachers (95%) allocated personal funds for classroom supplies compared to secondary grade level teachers (93%). Quejada and Orale's (2018) research on the experiences of elementary teachers in remote areas of Samar, Philippines, revealed that their dedication to their profession extends to sacrificing a portion of their modest salary for classroom necessities. One participant noted allocating part of her income to buy classroom supplies to enhance her teaching for the students.

Subtheme 3: Tapping first career experience

Teachers who have transitioned from other careers have leveraged their background knowledge and past experiences in the teaching field. They cited instances where they applied their previous skills and experiences upon becoming classroom teachers, influencing their daily interactions and engagements in the classroom. For instance, Jans talked of being a second-career teacher in this way: *“Kung second-career teacher ka it's also an advantage, why, because you have a background knowledge on your area.”* (If you are a second-career teacher, it is also an advantage, why, because you have a background knowledge on your area.)

Having work at the office, Jelai describes in detail how she connected her previous work experience in the classroom especially on the value of time, *“Daghan jud na tabang ang first career nako sa pagtudlo, kay for example sa mga deliverables be, kami so strict mi sa time, kung unsay need nimo e report, on-time pud ka nga mo-report ba. So murag ako syang na-apply dira. So unsa toy mga kinahanglanon gusto nako on-time jud sya e report, submission.”* (My first career really helped me in my teaching, for example in the deliverables, we are so strict in the time, what is the needed report, you must be on-time in your reporting. So, in this way, I applied for it. So whatever reports are needed, I need to submit it on time.)

Che-che also reflected, *“Big help, ang akoang training in my first working experiences in the private institution, very big help jud sa akoo. In terms of time management and being a responsible teacher.”* (The training I acquired in my first work experience in the private institution is a very big help for me. In terms of time management and being a responsible teacher.)

Renz felt that his prior work experience in IT would greatly benefit his students as this was aligned to his expertise: *“Naka-tabang jud, kay dili na budlay sa akoo. Kay akong ginatudlu-an ron computer system servicing which is install ug mga software, in line ra jud sya, na practice jud nako sya, course jud nako.”* ([My previous work] really helps me a lot. Now I am handling computer system servicing which is installing software and what I am doing is in line with what I had practiced.)

The second-career teachers in this study draw on various aspects of their first career experiences when they are now teaching in the public secondary schools. They consider their prior work knowledge and experiences as an advantage on their part, especially on teaching skills and contents to the students. For some participants, they acknowledge the values they have acquired from their previous work experience, which also helped them in doing their job as a public school teacher. In her research on tradespeople transitioning to vocational technical teaching, Sylvia (2017) discovered that all participants considered their prior life experiences essential in preparing them for teaching roles. They emphasized that working with the content of their trade area in a new context served as a motivating factor for teaching. This allowed them to not only contribute to students' education but also maintain a meaningful connection to their trade area and valued prior work experiences. Furthermore, the data indicated that transferable skills acquired during previous work experiences seamlessly transferred to the classroom and school environment, thereby enhancing their foundation of practical knowledge in the classroom setting.

Second-career teachers bring their acquired knowledge and skills from their previous careers in education. Canos (2017) identified various transferable skills acquired from their previous career that they believed could be utilized in the classroom setting. These skills encompassed organizational abilities like time management, collaboration, and networking, as well as practical competencies such as communication, proficiency with technology, and leadership skills. Similarly, Kahn's (2015) research demonstrated that second-career teachers employed their prior professional skills and experiences to address challenges and handle the academic and administrative demands of their daily responsibilities.

Theme 4: The Gift of Public School Teaching

As the participants reflected on their transitional journeys, their sharing about their reasons for staying in the teaching profession was among the highlights of the interview. While they were discussing their answers, I noticed that there was a change in the tone of their voices and the big smiles on their faces. These seemed to be the clear manifestations of how career transitions impacted their lives. Most of the participants expressed happiness, sense of fulfillment, and satisfaction with their work as teachers in the public schools.

Che-che who worked for 13 years in the office shared her joys in the new career: *“Ganahan ko mag-teach because, karon nga naa nako sa field of teaching, nakita nako nga I am enjoying what I am doing as a teacher.”* (I really love to teach, now that I am in the field of teaching, I felt that I am enjoying what I am doing as a teacher.)

Like Che-che, Rose expressed her happiness in teaching with her colleagues and the school where she was assigned. *“Happiness in my station, nag-enjoy ko sa teaching. I feel comfortable then happy with my colleagues.”* (Happiness in my station, I enjoyed teaching. I feel comfortable and happy with my colleagues.)

Len-len also shared her joys in teaching and expressed to stay in the profession for good: *“Wala problema, bahalag mag-tiguwang ko na Teacher I, okay ra. Sadya ra guid sya”*. (There is no problem, even if I will grow old as Teacher I, it is okay. I really enjoy it [teaching].)

Renz, on the other hand, shared his reason why he stayed in the teaching profession and that because of the challenge of new learning that he could get from teaching: *“Nag-stay ko sa teaching profession kay may challenge man gud. Happy ko.”* (I stayed in the teaching profession because there is challenge. I am happy.)

Having worked in the call center agency, Jelai and Cai expressed their feelings of fulfillment as a public school teacher: *“Still nami japon sa feeling na mo-teach ka, fulfillment nimo sa imong life ba, ang purpose sa Ginoo”* (Still, it is feeling great to teach, it is a fulfillment in your life, the purpose of God.) Cai added, *“Nami jud kaayo mag-maestra, ganahan ra jud ko mag-maestra.”* (It is very good to teach. I really love being a teacher.)

Marko and JJ also expressed their satisfaction in choosing teaching as their second career. Marko shared, *“Wa ko nagmahay, honestly kay na-compensate ra man akoang expectation, being a second-career teacher, for me, I chose the right thing.”* (I did not regret it, honestly my expectation was compensated, being a second-career teacher, for me, I chose the right thing.)

The pleasure and contentment derived from teaching are evident among many second-career educators who regard teaching as their current occupation. Several of them highlight similar factors such as the working environment, compensation package, and prospects for personal growth. For some of the participants, they expressed a desire to continue their teaching careers until retirement. Moreover, they found fulfillment in their work with students.

It appears that career switchers have found their new purpose and personal mission in this new profession, driven by a desire to positively impact the lives of their students. Interestingly, most of them view teaching as a commendable profession and actively encourage others contemplating career changes to pursue teaching. Collazo’s (2019) study on STEM career-changers revealed that most of them expressed having a positive feeling about teaching. They commented that despite the challenges, the teaching profession is worthwhile, and they find it more fulfilling than their previous careers. The participants also mentioned that they benefited from the personal satisfaction that teaching offers. Similarly, in the case study of Sylvia (2017), second-career teachers highlighted intrinsic motivation as a driving force to guide them and the desire to contribute expertise in their chosen field. In the study conducted by Rubalcaba (2018), second-career teachers expressed their satisfaction with teaching. Their comments predominantly centered around student success. These educators found joy in their teaching roles, and the highlight of their day was receiving feedback from students indicating that they were learning and enjoying their classes. The same point is echoed in the study of Bin Omar (2016) that career-switchers find teaching to be highly rewarding. This satisfaction stems from various factors, including the positive rapport between teachers and students, fulfillment derived from student achievements and successes, as well as personal considerations that cater to their individual needs.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study elucidates the lived experiences of second-career teachers in relation to their new professional roles and responsibilities in the public secondary schools. The findings of the study provide an opportunity for the second-career teachers to hear their voices especially on their motivations, challenges, and aspirations in teaching in the public schools. Therefore, it behoves the DepEd Schools Division Offices, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), school administrators, guidance counsellors, and potential second-career teachers to understand the context and meaning these individuals confer to their career transitioning experiences.

The results of the study may be useful in the recruitment and selection process of the Department of Education especially in the Schools Division offices and schools. As shared by the second-career teachers of this study, they have the advantage in terms of teaching the subject because they have the knowledge and skills acquired from their previous careers. The abilities and background they bring to the classroom can significantly improve the quality of teaching especially that DepEd is implementing the Senior High School program which focuses more on equipping students with different knowledge and skills in business, science, engineering, sports, arts and design, and technology and livelihood education. Knowing the potential of these career changers in education may help the personnel selection committee in their decisions in hiring second-career teachers to teach in these different areas of specializations. This will create a diverse group of teaching professionals who can effectively guide dynamic and culturally diverse classrooms.

This study makes clear that second-career teachers are confronted with a different world when they enter the public schools. During their first year in teaching, participants of this study encountered difficulties in lesson planning, test construction and dealing with the students because they were not exposed completely in these teaching preparations when they took their supplemental units in education. Through this awareness, Higher Education Institutions offering teacher education program may further strengthen the transition of these career-changers from their preservice to employment. Likewise, Guidance Counsellors in the HEIs may also assist these career-changers about what is likely to happen in their transitions, especially in dealing with these teaching preparations. The Schools Division Office and the schools through the school administrators, on the other hand, may ensure that support is provided to the second-career teachers during their transition through different professional development activities to address these development needs. Additionally, findings from this study may encourage the Schools Division Office and schools to develop a plan of actions to the plight of the second-career teachers especially on the limited learning support and too much paperwork and reports. Through this information, school administrators may take into consideration in their school improvement planning the provisions of the learning support, such as learning materials, textbooks, facilities, and equipment. Likewise, they may also consider in their planning the distribution of workloads to the teachers to give more focus on their teaching at the same time to promote their well-being.

As the second-career teachers establish themselves as teachers in the public schools, most of them have identified their work as a calling, more than a job that they do, the desire to have a meaningful impact on the lives of their students. They have all attached a deep meaning and a greater sense of satisfaction and fulfilment in the profession. The personal stories of second-career teachers in this study provided valuable experiential learning opportunities and served as inspiration and encouragement for individuals contemplating a significant career transition into public secondary schools.

Drawing from the study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

To the DepEd Schools Division Office. Acknowledging the distinctive skills and experiences of second-career teachers, the Personnel Selection Committee may consider hiring second-career teachers to teach the different areas of specialization in the secondary schools. Participants also revealed their desires for professional development particularly on their teaching preparations, thus it is highly recommended to conduct Learning Action Cell sessions to the identified second-career teachers focusing on the following areas: Daily Lesson Logs (DLL)/ Detailed Lesson Plan (DLP) preparations, Assessment and Evaluation of Learning, Classroom Management and Discipline. Additionally, the research findings revealed that second-career teachers were assigned to various clerical works in school, thus a policy on the assignment of workloads and additional administrative tasks on top of teachers' teaching loads may be developed by the higher officials in the division office. Likewise, monitoring of schoolwork and financial plans may be done to ensure provision of the learning resources such as textbooks, learning materials, facilities, and equipment necessary for the delivery of instruction.

To the School Administrators. The research findings revealed that most second-career teachers of the study expressed that they have not been properly oriented in school, and they relied only on the informal support from

their colleagues. It is recommended that school administrators conduct an orientation for the newly hired second-career teachers on the first day of their official work and introduce them to all teaching and non-teaching personnel including their assigned mentors. They may also develop a mentoring program to help second-career teachers in their transition and conduct differentiated supervision to these teachers considering their level of experience, different teaching needs, and their goals to improve instructional skills. Additionally, school administrators may implement the policy on the assignment of workloads and additional administrative tasks of the teachers. Lastly, they may ensure the availability of necessary learning support such as, textbooks, learning materials, facilities, and equipment to be utilized by teachers and learners.

To the Second-Career Teachers. They may attend the Teacher Induction Program, learning action cell sessions, in-service trainings and other learning and development activities provided by their schools and Schools Division Office for the enhancement of their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in the teaching practice. They may also attend to the coaching and mentoring sessions to close their performance gaps, unlock their potential, and maximize their own performance. Additionally, they may enrol in the graduate studies for the enhancement of professional skills and personal development. Potential second-career teachers may rely on the evidence provided in this study. The satisfaction and fulfilment the participants expressed concerning their choices to change careers and how they approached the different obstacles in the transition process.

To the Higher Education Institutions. Most of the participants revealed that they have not received enough trainings while taking their supplemental units in education in which they attributed to the different struggles they encountered in the public school teaching. Thus, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may include in their teacher education program offering for career-change professionals the experiential learning activities to experience actual classroom teaching and to improve understanding of the teaching roles and responsibilities. Also, they may have in-depth discussions and practice in the areas of lesson planning, test construction, and classroom management to the career-change professionals enrolled in school.

To the Guidance Counsellors/ Career Advocates. In the light of the findings of this study, Guidance Counsellors/ Career Advocates of HEIs may develop a career guidance program for career-change professionals enrolled in the teacher education program of the school to assist them in their transition. They may also provide career counselling as transitional support for career-change professionals. Also, they may conduct research for the pre-service second-career teachers to determine their backgrounds, motivations, and reasons for teaching.

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