



DEEP AND LONG-LASTING CAREER: CONFESSION OF SEASONED TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that have shaped their careers, policymakers, administrators, and fellow educators should examine the various motivators, challenges, and rewards that these experienced teachers encounter. Identifying the elements that contribute to their longevity and success in the profession will help inform the development of strategies aimed at creating a more supportive and sustainable teaching environment. These strategies might include improving access to resources, enhancing professional development opportunities, providing better compensation and benefits, and addressing issues related to teacher burnout. The study adopts a qualitative research approach, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences and perspectives of seasoned teachers. despite challenges. A total of eight (8) participants are considered in this study who will join the in-depth interview and focused group discussion respectively. Four (4) of them will join the in-depth interview (IDI) while the remaining participants will be subjected to the focus group discussion (FGD). All data gathered during IDI and FGD will be recorded and transmuted to summarize the responses of the participants in an orderly manner. As teachers navigate challenges and embrace meaningful experiences, their reflections shed light on the importance of mentorship, collaboration, continuous learning, and community engagement in sustaining their passion for teaching. Understanding these lived experiences provides valuable guidance for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in shaping supportive environments that foster teacher well-being and effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings underscore the need for ongoing dialogue and innovation in teacher development programs to adapt to emerging educational trends. As digital education continues to evolve, future inquiries could explore how seasoned teachers navigate technological integration, and how digital tools influence their pedagogy, collaboration, and engagement with students and communities.

KEYWORDS- Deep and Long Lasting Career, Confession of Seasoned Teachers

INTRODUCTION

In the vast landscape of education, seasoned teachers serve as pillars of wisdom, embodying years of experience, dedication, and unwavering passion for their profession. Their career trajectories, marked by highs and lows, victories and challenges, offer a rich tapestry of insights into the enduring nature of their commitment to teaching.

Seasoned teachers, often characterized by their longevity in the profession, possess a wealth of knowledge and wisdom garnered from years of classroom experience. Their stories are not only a testament to their resilience and perseverance but also a source of inspiration for the next generation of educators. By exploring the career trajectories of seasoned teachers, this qualitative study aims to uncover the underlying motivations, challenges, and rewards that have sustained their passion for teaching over time.

As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the voices of seasoned teachers offer invaluable wisdom and guidance for navigating the complexities of the profession. Their stories serve as a beacon of hope, reminding us of the enduring power of passion, resilience, and dedication in the noble pursuit of education.

Although there has been extensive research on teacher retention and attrition, there is still a notable lack of awareness regarding the career paths of experienced instructors. Although there has been much emphasis on the factors that affect the choices of novice instructors to either join or quit the teaching profession, there is a scarcity of research that investigates the experiences of experienced educators who have remained committed to teaching for an extended period of time. This study seeks to fill a void by examining the professional paths of experienced educators in order to reveal the elements that have maintained their enthusiasm for teaching and their reasons for remaining in the field despite obstacles and evolving circumstances.

Moreover, in Denmark, Bayer (2019) explored the diverse aspects of teachers' careers and work lives, highlighting international themes such as stronger ties between education and the economy, increasing emphasis on student skills' relevance to the labor market, political interference in curriculum goals, and an increasing focus on evaluation. As a generation of teachers retires, the anthology offers insights for educators, policymakers, and current and prospective teachers, while also encouraging research into teachers' working lives.

Also, in Netherlands, the results showed that at the current moment in their career, respondents of this study particularly recognised three issues: teacher–parent interaction, teaching versus other tasks and private life versus work. Teachers seldom talk about their issues, but more often than not they try to find a solution themselves or put up with the situation (Vanderwant, 2019). In Central Luzon, Teacher respondents align their goals with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Department of Education's organizational goals. They aim to improve professional development, community relationships, and student academic achievement. Despite challenges, they show generosity towards their school community. They are aware of the need for better self-improvement in response to technological advancements and changes in the educational system. The LAC



Program will guide school heads in professional and personal development. The researchers recommend using the LAC Program, helping teachers achieve their aspirations, and following DepEd policies and announcements (Michael, 2023).

The significance of examining the career paths of experienced educators lies in the wealth of insights they offer into the complexities and realities of the teaching profession. These seasoned professionals provide invaluable perspectives on the personal and professional factors that contribute to the sustained retention of teachers over time. Having navigated the fluctuations and challenges of their careers, experienced educators possess a depth of knowledge and expertise that is crucial for informing the development of policies, practices, and initiatives aimed at improving teacher support, fostering professional growth, and enhancing job satisfaction.

In the local context, particularly in areas like Digos City Division, where educational resources and infrastructural support may be limited, understanding the career trajectories of long-serving teachers becomes even more critical. Teachers in these settings often face unique challenges, such as inadequate access to teaching materials, large class sizes, and the pressure of balancing administrative duties with instructional time. Despite these barriers, many educators continue to demonstrate resilience and a deep commitment to their students and communities. Their ability to persevere and thrive in these conditions sheds light on the factors that sustain their passion for teaching.

To gain a deeper understanding of the factors that have shaped their careers, policymakers, administrators, and fellow educators should examine the various motivators, challenges, and rewards that these experienced teachers encounter. Identifying the elements that contribute to their longevity and success in the profession will help inform the development of strategies aimed at creating a more supportive and sustainable teaching environment. These strategies might include improving access to resources, enhancing professional development opportunities, providing better compensation and benefits, and addressing issues related to teacher burnout.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Day and Gu (2019) explored the emotional experiences and resilience of seasoned teachers in the face of educational reforms and challenges. They argue that experienced teachers often rely on a strong sense of professional identity and intrinsic motivation, which help them sustain their commitment and navigate the complexities of their careers. The study emphasizes the importance of teacher wellbeing and the role of supportive professional environments.

Moreover, Hargreaves (2020) examined how teachers' experiences of educational change vary across different career stages. He highlights the unique perspectives of seasoned teachers, who often demonstrate emotional resilience, wisdom, and a deep connection to their profession. The study also identifies the challenges experienced teachers face, such as adapting to new policies and balancing their expertise with evolving classroom demands.

On the other hand, a researcher explored the professional self-understanding of career-long teachers through narrative inquiry. The study reveals how seasoned educators reflect on their journeys, maintain their enthusiasm for teaching, and negotiate the evolving demands of the profession. Key themes include the role of professional pride, the importance of positive student relationships, and the influence of mentorship on career satisfaction, (Kelchtermans, 2020).

A career trajectory refers to the course that your employment follows as you progress, regress, or maintain a stable position during your professional life. While certain individuals may have predetermined milestones or objectives in mind from the outset, others may choose to take up a job early on and adapt their career aspirations as possibilities present themselves, continuously refining their goals along the way. Regardless of your position on the spectrum, achieving a career path that matches your personal and professional objectives, values, and ambitions will require deliberate effort (Bennett, 2021).

According to Chen (2020), the critical role of teachers in rural communities and the implications of high teacher turnover rates for student achievement and school effectiveness. They then review existing literature on teacher retention in rural schools, identifying key factors such as geographic isolation, limited resources, lack of professional support, and rural culture and lifestyle considerations. Furthermore, the article examines promising strategies and interventions aimed at improving teacher retention in rural schools, including targeted recruitment efforts, induction and mentoring programs, financial incentives, and community partnerships. The authors emphasize the importance of holistic approaches that address both professional and personal factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay in rural schools.

Also, Maifo (2021) explores the profound impact that passionate teachers have on their students' lives and educational journeys. The author reflects on their personal experiences and interactions with passionate teachers who inspired, encouraged, and empowered them to strive for excellence. He emphasizes the transformative role of passionate teachers in fostering a love for learning, instilling confidence, and unlocking students' potential. They highlight the dedication, enthusiasm, and genuine care that passionate teachers bring to their classrooms, creating nurturing and engaging learning environments where students feel valued and supported.

On the other hand, the findings of Wang & Chen (2022) indicate that teacher emotional support plays a significant role in promoting positive emotional and behavioral adjustment among students in special education. Specifically, higher levels of teacher emotional support were associated with greater improvements in students' emotional regulation, social competence, and behavioral functioning over time. Moreover, the quality of the student-teacher relationship mediated the relationship between teacher emotional support and student socio-emotional adjustment, highlighting the importance of positive teacher-student interactions in fostering students' well-being. The study also underscores the critical role of teachers in providing emotional

support to students with special needs and emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to enhance teacher-student relationships and promote positive socio-emotional outcomes in special education settings.

Research Questions

This study seeks to unravel the narratives of these seasoned educators, delving deep into the intricacies of their professional journeys, and shedding light on the factors that have shaped their enduring dedication to the field of education.

1. What are the experiences of seasoned teachers towards their deep and long lasting career?
2. How do seasoned teachers employ coping mechanisms to navigate the various challenges they encounter throughout their careers?
3. What educational experiences have seasoned teachers identified as particularly significant in sustaining their passion for teaching over the years?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative research approach, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences and perspectives of seasoned teachers. Through interviews, focus groups, and reflective narratives, participants will be invited to share their personal stories, reflecting on pivotal moments, significant milestones, and enduring passions that have defined their careers. By capturing the voices and experiences of seasoned educators, this research seeks to amplify their narratives, honoring their contributions to the field of education and providing valuable insights for future generations of teachers.

Phenomenology places a strong emphasis on understanding participants' subjective experiences and perspectives. In this study, seasoned teachers are invited to share their narratives, reflections, and insights regarding their career trajectories, motivations, challenges, and enduring passions. Through in-depth interviews and reflective activities, researchers aim to capture the essence of teachers' lived experiences, allowing them to express their thoughts, emotions, and beliefs in their own words.

Phenomenological research method, aiming to understand the essence of the experiences and perspectives of public school heads in fostering inclusivity within their schools. Phenomenology offers a valuable framework for understanding the essence of human experiences and the meaning individuals attribute to their interactions within the educational policy landscape (Tindal, 2009).

Research Participants

In this qualitative study focusing on seasoned teachers' career trajectories, the sampling strategy employed is purposeful sampling, aiming to capture a rich array of experiences and perspectives. The selection criteria prioritize seasoned teachers who have dedicated a substantial portion of their professional lives to teaching, typically with ten or more years of experience. By targeting teachers with this level of longevity, the study aims to delve into the complexities and nuances of their career journeys, which may encompass various stages of development, challenges, and reflections.

A total of eight (8) participants are considered in this study who will join the in-depth interview and focused group discussion respectively. Four (4) of them will join the in-depth interview (IDI) while the remaining participants will be subjected to the focus group discussion (FGD). All data gathered during IDI and FGD will be recorded and transmuted to summarize the responses of the participants in an orderly manner.

Research Instrument

To gather comprehensive and meaningful data relevant to the confession of seasoned teachers in their deep and long lasting career, this study employed a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument. This qualitative tool was designed to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, practices, and challenges faced by teachers in upholding their commitment to their job.

Data Analysis

The collected interview data will be analyzed using phenomenological analysis techniques, which involve a systematic exploration of the lived experiences described by participants. Researchers engage in a process of bracketing, setting aside preconceptions and biases, to focus solely on the participants' accounts. Through a process of thematic coding and interpretation, researchers identify common patterns, themes, and essences that emerge from the data, capturing the shared lived experiences of stakeholders.

Creswell (2013) outlines six crucial stages in qualitative data analysis that are necessary for assessing and interpreting published research findings in the realm of education. This approach typically involves a systematic process of analyzing qualitative data, often following steps such as coding, categorizing, and thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the implications derived from the findings of the study and explores potential directions for future research and practice. The insights shared by seasoned teachers highlight the complex interplay between personal growth, professional development, and the evolving demands of the educational landscape. As teachers navigate challenges and embrace meaningful experiences, their reflections shed light on the importance of mentorship, collaboration, continuous learning, and community engagement in sustaining their passion for teaching.



Understanding these lived experiences provides valuable guidance for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in shaping supportive environments that foster teacher well-being and effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings underscore the need for ongoing dialogue and innovation in teacher development programs to adapt to emerging educational trends. The succeeding sections outline the practical and theoretical implications of this research, as well as recommendations for future studies that may build upon its contributions.

Implications

Main Theme 1: Sustained Commitment to the Teaching Profession

The findings highlight that a strong sense of purpose and passion serves as a foundation for teachers' long-term commitment to the profession. This suggests the need for school leaders and policymakers to cultivate environments where teachers are continuously reminded of the value and impact of their work. Recognition programs, storytelling platforms, and opportunities for teachers to reflect on their "why" in teaching can help nurture and preserve this passion.

Teachers' capacity to remain steadfast despite systemic and situational challenges indicates the importance of resilience-building mechanisms within school systems. Professional development programs should include emotional wellness, stress management, and coping strategies to support teachers in handling adversities. Leadership teams should also be trained to provide empathetic and responsive support to sustain teacher morale during difficult times.

The emphasis on lifelong learning underscores the need to provide teachers with regular access to relevant and meaningful training. Institutional support should not only focus on compliance-based seminars but also on personal and professional growth opportunities that align with teachers' evolving roles and responsibilities. Encouraging autonomy and choice in professional learning pathways can enhance teacher engagement and self-efficacy.

Teachers' reflections on adapting their teaching philosophies and methods highlight the importance of embracing change as part of professional growth. Schools and teacher education institutions must foster a culture of innovation, reflective practice, and pedagogical flexibility. Curriculum reforms should also take into account teachers' lived experiences and evolving approaches to make learning more student-centered and contextually relevant.

Main Theme 2: Promoting Growth and Well-being Through Teachers' Fortitude

The data underscore the value of a strong support network—both formally through institutional structures and informally through collegial relationships. School administrators should invest in building a collaborative culture where teachers can regularly exchange ideas, debrief challenges, and share successes. Establishing mentorship programs, peer learning circles, and regular team-building initiatives can strengthen professional bonds and boost morale.

Participants' acknowledgment of self-care and wellness strategies points to the crucial role of personal well-being in sustaining professional performance. Schools and education departments should integrate mental health and wellness initiatives into their institutional plans. These may include wellness days, access to counseling services, mindfulness training, and balanced workloads to prevent burnout and promote long-term teacher retention.

Teachers' coping mechanisms developed through years of experience reveal a deep adaptive capacity that can be intentionally harnessed in professional learning communities. Schools should document and share veteran teachers' insights on navigating stress, classroom management, and work-life balance. These lived experiences can become powerful resources in training newer educators and in fostering a culture of emotional intelligence and resilience.

The persistence of educators despite challenges highlights the need to reaffirm the intrinsic value of teaching. Programs that celebrate teaching success stories, foster teacher-led innovation, and include teachers in school decision-making can enhance their sense of agency and motivation. When educators are seen not just as implementers but as leaders and change agents, their determination and sense of purpose are amplified.

Main Theme 3: Upholding Passion for Teaching through Experiences

Teachers' recollections of small victories and milestones reflect the emotional depth tied to their profession. Institutions should recognize and celebrate these moments through teacher recognition programs, storytelling initiatives, and reflection spaces where educators can share their journeys. This reinforces a positive teaching identity and sustains motivation.

Teachers derive purpose from their roles within the wider community. Strengthening school-community partnerships can help educators see the broader impact of their work. Schools should support initiatives like service-learning projects, community-based education programs, and parental involvement campaigns that allow teachers to engage meaningfully beyond the classroom walls. Passion for teaching is continuously renewed through exposure to new ideas, practices, and technologies. Therefore, professional development must be relevant, sustained, and practitioner-driven. Education leaders should provide opportunities for teachers to attend training, pursue higher education, participate in action research, or engage in collaborative inquiry with peers. Flexible and needs-based training formats will encourage more consistent participation.

Mentorship emerged as both a source of strength and inspiration. Schools should formally institutionalize mentorship by pairing experienced and novice teachers, offering leadership pathways for veteran educators, and encouraging reflective practice. Mentors not only provide guidance but also serve as carriers of school culture, thereby reinforcing professional standards and values.



Future Directions

Department of Education (DepEd)

DepEd must continue to prioritize the creation of supportive and responsive policies that promote teachers' well-being, professional development, and motivation. Programs that address teacher mental health, workload management, and career advancement should be institutionalized and localized to fit regional contexts.

Invest in sustained, research-based, and contextualized training programs that are tailored to the needs of seasoned and new educators alike. Future policies should recognize the value of lifelong learning and provide accessible pathways for upskilling, including incentives for participation.

Create systems for recognizing teachers not just for academic performance outcomes, but also for community engagement, innovation in pedagogy, and mentoring contributions. This enhances teachers' sense of purpose and pride in their work.

School Principals

Principals should promote a culture of shared learning through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), mentoring programs, and regular reflective sessions. These practices strengthen resilience and promote a strong internal support network among staff. School heads are in a unique position to model self-care and work-life balance. Leading by example and institutionalizing wellness initiatives, such as flexible scheduling, mindfulness programs, and peer support groups, will empower teachers to do the same.

Create leadership opportunities within the school that allow experienced teachers to mentor others, spearhead instructional innovations, and contribute to school decision-making processes. Recognizing their expertise will increase engagement and retention.

Teachers

Teachers are encouraged to engage in regular self-reflection to sustain passion and identify growth areas. Journaling, peer coaching, and professional learning dialogues can enhance both teaching practice and emotional resilience.

Being part of networks and collaborative spaces, both online and offline, enables teachers to share experiences, gain fresh perspectives, and draw inspiration from others. These interactions help sustain motivation and innovation.

Teachers should embrace continuous learning not only as a requirement but as a form of professional self-renewal. Whether through formal education, certifications, webinars, or personal research, ongoing development fuels instructional excellence and personal growth.

Future Researchers

Future researchers may explore a broader participant pool, including teachers from different grade levels, subject specializations, and geographic locations, urban, rural, and remote. Doing so can provide comparative insights on how passion, resilience, and professional growth manifest across diverse educational contexts.

They can also consider conducting long-term studies that track the evolving perspectives and practices of teachers over time. Such research can reveal how sustained experiences, institutional changes, or personal life transitions shape their teaching journey, motivation, and career commitment.

As digital education continues to evolve, future inquiries could explore how seasoned teachers navigate technological integration, and how digital tools influence their pedagogy, collaboration, and engagement with students and communities.

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