

Challenges Encountered by Newly-Hired Teachers During First Year of Service

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Abstract

School divisions in the Philippines hire many new teachers to meet the demand of the new education system of the country, the K-12. This study aimed to determine the challenges encountered by the newly-hired teachers in Ozamiz City Division in Misamis Occidental province during their first year of service. A descriptive research design with a validated questionnaire was used. Randomly selected 105 teachers from public secondary schools participated in the study. Findings revealed that workload challenges were regarded serious by the teachers. However, instruction, classroom management and school location challenges were only felt less serious. The findings of this study may be useful for the school administrators in formulating plans that will address some issues that affect the work quality and well-being of new teachers.

Keywords: education, instruction, school, secondary, workload

Introduction

Learning about teaching during initial teacher education is different from learning about teaching while teaching (Larkin et al., 2016). Further distinction can be made between learning to teach and becoming a teacher (Alnahdi, 2014). The first year of teaching is the most challenging part of all newly-hired teachers. After leaving the role of being undergraduate students and taking on the role of teachers, they soon become overwhelmed with the responsibilities of the curricular, diverse student behaviors, student motivation (Salandanan, 2016), classroom management (Agno, 2009; Basturk & Tastepe, 2015), student learning assessment (Agu et al., 2013) and feeling the lack of support from others. These challenges and frustrations are aspects of beginning teaching.

Newly-hired teachers are faced with multiple challenges. They are beset with a multitude of concerns and anxieties. Such feelings are expected but should not be the deterrent to their desire to “learn to teach” (Salandanan, 2005). Newly-hired secondary teachers in Hongkong experienced problems related to teaching and lesson preparation, including dealing with individual differences (Chong, 2011). Lesson plan making, administrators having hard attitude, student’s negative attitude, overwork, overexpecting co-teachers, anxiety due to difficulties encountered with teaching, paperwork and other school activities are the common struggles of new teachers in the Philippines (Llego, 2017). Furthermore, the beginning teachers’ problems were more on classroom management, lack of materials and time mismanagement (Basturk & Tastepe, 2015). Many teachers reported problems in classroom discipline, time management and evaluation of their own teaching effectiveness. Other beginning teachers experienced an unstable teaching environment because of political intervention (Richardson, 2014). Service-delivery issues, student characteristics, school climate, support systems, teacher preparation, paperwork requirements, role ambiguity and student behavioral difficulties may all affect the perceptions and consequent efficacy of teachers during their first year of service (Chakrabarty et al., 2016).

Accepting the tremendous demands of teaching can ease the apprehensions of beginning teachers (Salandanan, 2005). However, attrition of newly-hired teachers has been steadily increasing and many teachers leave their profession even before they are proficient educators who know how to work with colleagues and improve student learning (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2010). Challenging experiences do not only affect the morale and effectiveness of beginning teachers but force large numbers of them to resign from their teaching profession (Chang et al., 2016). Some reasons include insufficient materials and supplies, discipline and classroom management, students' individual differences, parent relations, assessment, organization of class work, lack of material support, communication, understanding procedures and policies, using effective teaching strategies, planning and time management (Chong, 2011).

Ozamiz City is the center of education in Misamis Occidental province in Region 10 with many schools built in the city to provide education to students coming from nearby towns. Hence, the city was chosen as the study area for this research with the goal to identify the challenges of new teachers that might be considered unique in this part of the region. The Ozamiz City Division hires many new teachers to meet the demands of the new education system of the country, the K-12 ("K" stands for Kindergarten and "12" refers to the succeeding 12 years of basic education) which is under the Department of Education (DepEd). Students spend six years of elementary education, four years of junior high school, and two years of senior high school. There is an additional two years in the basic education before any student can enter into college, thus, requires additional pool of teachers. During this transition of the educational system, it is relevant to examine the challenges that these beginning teachers have been dealing with to obtain insights of their situation. Hence, this study aimed to determine the challenges encountered by the newly-hired teachers in Ozamiz City Division during their first year of service. The findings of this study may be useful for the school administrators in Ozamiz City in formulating plans that will address some issues that affect the work quality and well-being of new teachers.

Materials and Methods

The study used a validated researcher-constructed questionnaire administered to 105 newly-hired teachers in Ozamiz City Division in Misamis Occidental province that represent 10% of the entire population of new teachers who are on their first year of service. These newly-hired teachers who are graduates from either public or private institutions do not have any teaching experience. Permission to distribute the questionnaires was sought from the superintendent of the division. Informed consent was also secured from the target respondents. The scope of the study was explained to the target respondents. They were also informed of the confidentiality of their identity and responses. All target respondents gave their consent to participate voluntary in the study.

The questionnaire has four parts consisting of statements that describe the challenges categorized into workload, instructional, classroom management, and school location. The first three categories are based on the findings of Llego (2017) on common struggles of new teachers in the Philippines. The school location is included considering that most DepEd schools in Ozamiz City are situated in barangays far from the city center and this situation may pose a challenge with regard to access. The four-point Likert scale was used with the following responses: Very serious for 4, Serious for 3, Less serious for 2, and Not Serious for 1. The weighted mean was computed per category and interpreted as follows: 3.41-4.20 – Very serious; 2.61-3.40 – Serious; 1.81-2.60 – Less serious; and 1.0-1.80 – Not serious.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the workload challenges encountered by the newly-hired teachers. The overall mean of 2.83 with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.33 shows that the challenges were considered serious by the teachers. Bilbao (2015) claimed that it is not easy to become a teacher. Much is expected of a teacher as teaching is one of the most demanding of all professions (Salandanan, 2005). The non-instructional duties and

extracurricular activities require more time from the teachers (Bilbao, 2015). Preparing administrative paperwork and reports is another tiresome activity. Spending time at home assessing papers and students' writing is another burden of a teacher (Agu et al., 2013). The work of a teacher is not only instruction but also includes both instructional and non-instructional activities (Musah et al., 2015). All these contexts are also true in Ozamiz City.

Table 1. Workload challenges encountered by newly-hired teachers.

Challenges	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Difficulty in getting everything done because of many assignments	2.71	0.72	Serious
2. Becoming tired of non-instructional duties	2.53	0.73	Less serious
3. Preparing administrative paperwork and reports.	2.75	0.91	Serious
4. Requiring too much time for extra-curricular activities.	2.85	0.92	Serious
5. Spending sleepless nights because of time-consuming work.	2.92	1.11	Serious
6. Spending time at home assessing papers and students' writings.	2.91	1.11	Serious
Overall mean	2.83	0.33	Serious

1.0-1.80 (Not serious); 1.81-2.60 (Less Serious); 2.61-3.40 (Serious); 3.41-4.20 (Very serious)

Table 2 shows the instructional challenges encountered by the newly-hired teachers. The overall mean of 2.40 with a standard deviation of 0.54 manifests that the challenges were only regarded less serious by the teachers. The teaching skill of a teacher in the context of a particular lesson is critical. Teaching is a complex activity (Casinto & Cuizon, 2010) and a multi-process (Koloji-Keaikitse, 2017). Sometimes the work means disappointments, heartaches and pains (Bilbao, 2015). There are many facets and aspects that one needs to consider in order to become an effective educator (Larkin et al., 2016). Teaching tremendously demands on the teachers' teaching skills and personal qualities before they can satisfactorily perform the multiple roles and manifold responsibilities it entails (Salandanan, 2015).

However, the beginning teacher may have learned the ability through sharp and incisive observations of how students learn during one's pre-service training. The long convincing pre-service experiences

of a new teacher regarding the factors that influence effective teaching might have been honed to near perfection. Thus, the study revealed that instructional challenges were only felt less serious. Besides, the mentoring program of the schools has supported the teachers' transition from pre-service interns to classroom teachers (Gipson, 2016). The study of Agre (2014) showed that the mentoring and induction program structure had influenced the teaching experience of the new teachers. The findings of Richardson (2014) revealed that beginning teachers were supported through having access to a variety of supports while performing their work in school.

Table 2. Instructional challenges encountered by newly-hired teachers.

Challenges	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Experiencing a curriculum conundrum.	2.60	1.01	Less Serious
2. Cannot decide what is really important to teach.	2.20	0.91	Less Serious
3. Difficulty in determining course objectives.	2.16	0.87	Less Serious
4. Difficulty in choosing appropriate methods and techniques.	2.17	0.94	Less Serious
5. Difficulty in implementing what is planned.	2.27	0.90	Less Serious
6. Insufficient knowledge in the use of teaching strategies.	2.00	0.86	Less Serious
7. Difficulty in drawing attention of the students into the activities of the lesson.	2.02	0.87	Less Serious
8. Hardship in using instructional materials.	1.83	0.86	Less Serious
Overall Mean	2.40	0.54	Less Serious

1.0-1.80 (Not serious); 1.81-2.60 (Less Serious); 2.61-3.40 (Serious); 3.41-4.20 (Very serious)

In Table 3, the classroom management challenges encountered by the newly-hired teachers are shown. With an overall mean of 2.37 and a standard deviation of 0.70, the challenges were felt by the teachers at a less serious level only. In the first year of service, there are many things that teachers do not know or get right especially in classroom management. Sometimes the work is more complex than expected as teachers play a lot of responsibilities (Musah et al., 2015). Classroom management is one of the problems experienced by beginning teachers (Bastürk & Tastepe, 2015). It is regarded as the most important challenge facing the teachers.

The ability of newly-hired teachers to perform the management functions of teaching strongly influence a teacher’s reputation among colleagues, school authorities, and students (Richardson, 2014). As novice as they are, teachers in this study have gained skills in managing classroom routine for order and discipline during their pre-service training. They had gone through the professional preparation which could have equipped them with the essential competence in classroom management. Their four-year formal training capped with a practicum or internship before graduation is an opportunity for them to learn classroom management principles and practices.

Table 3. Classroom management challenges encountered by newly-hired teachers.

Challenges	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Thinking that classroom management is the most challenging part of the profession.	3.02	1.05	Serious
2. Problems in determining class rules.	2.07	0.78	Less Serious
3. Do not know the best way to approach student behaviors	2.05	0.62	Less Serious
4. Cannot use effective classroom management strategies.	1.88	0.81	Less Serious
5. Difficulty in managing unruly classes with discipline problems.	1.88	0.66	Less Serious
6. Insufficient time to undertake leadership or coaching roles in the class.	1.78	0.78	Not Serious
Overall Mean	2.37	0.70	Less Serious

1.0-1.80 (Not serious); 1.81-2.60 (Less Serious); 2.61-3.40 (Serious); 3.41-4.20 (Very serious)

Table 4 presents the school location adjustment challenges encountered by the newly-hired teachers. The overall mean of 1.74 and a standard deviation of 0.92 implies that the challenges are not serious for the teachers. The study disclosed that teachers did not experience difficulty in culture adjustment, transportation, connecting previous school atmosphere with that of the current school assignment, and feeling not accepted in the school community.

In order to ensure a smooth start in a new teachers’ educational journey, most schools undertake an induction program which in effect would benefit the new teacher. The induction program provides the

teacher the needed information and guidance on how to adjust to school assignment. Teacher is taught how to relate with the administrator, co-interns and students for a smooth and orderly performance of duties and responsibilities. How to deal with parents and other members of the community is likewise taken up in the program. Inducting the new teachers into a group's culture may situate learning in social practice (Luft & Dubois, 2015). Hence, supporting newly hired teachers may help attain teacher professional standards (Luft et al., 2015).

Table 4. School Location challenges encountered by newly-hired teachers.

Challenges	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Inability to adapt to the culture of the school.	1.76	0.87	Not Serious
2. Inability to connect ex-environment with the current atmosphere of the school.	1.73	0.82	Not Serious
3. Difficulty in finding transportation.	2.04	1.15	Less Serious
4. Experiencing fear in the remote assignment.	1.66	0.84	Not Serious
5. Feeling not accepted in the school community.	1.54	0.82	Not Serious
Overall Mean	1.74	0.92	Not Serious

1.0-1.80 (Not serious); 1.81-2.60 (Less Serious); 2.61-3.40 (Serious); 3.41-4.20 (Very serious)

Conclusion and Recommendations

The newly-hired teachers found workload challenges to be serious, which could mean that the challenges gave them a considerable amount of stress and trouble. School heads should assign adequate administrative paper work to newly hired teachers. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities have to be assigned to more experienced teachers, and make newly hired teachers learn gradually the work from their more experienced colleagues. Teachers have to be made fully aware of the demanding nature of teaching and proper time management can help the work done.

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