

The DepEd exodus: input to human resource management

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Abstract: Teachers moving from one educational institution to another has been a growing concern in the education sector. This research aimed to determine the factors that have influenced DepEd teachers to transfer to state universities, colleges, and educational institutions abroad in the province of Capiz. The study adopts a qualitative approach, using narrative inquiry to record the lived experiences of the teacher exodus. Through a focus group discussion and data gathering through Google Forms, the research uncovered the multifaceted reasons for their decision to leave the profession, including work-life balance, struggle with promotion, geographical or personal advantage, and self-development. Teachers expressed a desire for a more manageable workload and the opportunity to prioritize personal and family life. They perceived limited opportunities for professional growth and advancement, leading them to seek alternative paths to develop their careers. Furthermore, the research examined the differences between DepEd's work environment and the teacher's new working station. Significant differences existed, revealing challenges within DepEd in terms of administrative policies, administrative supervision, salary and benefits, physical working conditions, and job security. Overall, the findings suggested a more favorable work environment outside of DepEd, marked by greater support, resources, and opportunities for professional growth. The findings of this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding teacher attrition and provide valuable insights for policymakers, school administrators, and educational stakeholders.

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INTRODUCTION

Schools, as an educational institution, are tasked with equipping learners with the knowledge and skills necessary for life. Schools are highly dependent on their human resources to deliver and execute their chores. For this reason, competent teachers must be retained in order to realize the mission, vision, and goals of the Department of Education.

Teacher exodus is the term representing the number of teachers who move into other educational institutions. According to Education Counts 2023, teachers' leaving the profession has increased from 15.4% in 2020 to 18.8% in 2021. All components exhibit this pattern, with higher rates of teachers switching schools, transitioning to day relief, and quitting teaching in 2021 compared to 2020 (Education Counts, 2023).

The Department of Education in the Philippines, on the other hand, has failed to reach its target number of hired teachers from 2019 to 2021, the same three years where teachers' pay consistently rose above price inflation. DepEd previously set a target of hiring 9650 new teachers in 2023, which is just a third of what the Alliance of Concerned Teachers proposed (COA, 2023).

With the shortage of teachers in the Philippines, the government generally tries to keep the entry level of a teacher's annual salary attractive to attract qualified teachers. But despite these efforts, a group of education workers reported that over 100 teachers resigned to search for better job opportunities in other schools and outside the country (ACT, 2022). As for Gaspar, San Mateo and Arias (2016) faculty members must be well taken care of. They added

that if the teaching faculty is not treated carefully, they will abandon the institution abruptly without notice and leave pending jobs. If the management does not develop sound maintenance and preservation programs to retain old teaching personnel, the cycle will continue, and in the long run, the employer and the students will always be at the losing edge (Gaspar et. al., 2016).

The effectiveness of education depends on retaining teachers. The departure of teachers from the teaching profession is a concern. Those leaving for teaching jobs generally have better credentials. Finding a suitable replacement for them is not an easy task. (Thet, 2014). Less experienced teachers are replacing the departing tenured teachers in the profession. Research shows that less experienced teachers may also decide to leave at a higher rate than those who have taught longer (Pogodzinski, 2013).

This led the researcher to look into the factors explaining why DepEd teachers leave their permanent posts. This study will seek an explanation as to the reasons why they opt to leave DepEd and transfer to other educational institutions locally and internationally, with the hope that this study will provide information to the human resources department to formulate and implement programs that will help retain teachers.

Statement of the problem

This study was conducted to determine the factors that have influenced DepEd teachers to leave their permanent positions, specifically in the province of Capiz.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors of teacher's turnover

Professional development

The lack of upward mobility or adding responsibility is another critical flaw in schools' ability to retain teachers. The need for self-improvement is critical for the well-being of teacher's outlooks on themselves and their profession. Organized professional development has been found to be directly related to the retention of teachers (Räsänen et. al., 2020; Lindsay et al., 2021). Huguet (2017) found that when the administration make common goals for a school and uses professional development to support these goals; it not only helps the school outcomes, but also teacher retention.

Also, a proponent of distributed leadership, Huguet (2017) mentioned the use of professional development to create "experts" in schools. This will help reduce the cost of professional development because fewer staff will need it, as well as create a feeling of ownership for the teacher leader who can then instruct other teachers in the school. New skills and knowledge are obtained through professional development and create a new sense of excitement for teachers (Doherty, 2020). Included in forms of professional development could be mentoring and building communities for teachers at any stage of their career to help with retention (Doherty, 2020).

Working conditions

The working conditions for teachers in schools are associated with high turnover and is supported internationally (Simon and Johnson 2015). Teachers stay in schools they like and where conditions suit them. Under these conditions, schools are supportive and stable places. Cultures of mutual trust and respect in strong learning environments are essential for retention (Bryk et al., 2010). Scutt (2019) has recently argued that a positive learning environment is one where there is respect and openness; where there are opportunities for peer collaboration and where teacher evaluation is focused on improving teaching quality.

The stresses of teaching are increased considerably in less positive cultures where there is poor pupil behavior, relationships with colleagues are strained, there is less investment in the development of staff or there is a 'micro-managing' culture.

Teachers need to feel professionally valued in the work and to have professional autonomy. Building recognition for their work and giving them greater autonomy is essential to retain them. Conversely, when teachers do not feel valued, it leads to feelings of disillusionment and dissatisfaction and them leaving the profession (Valtierra and Michalec, 2017). Findings from a large-scale quantitative study on teacher autonomy by Worth and Van den Brande (2020) indicate that autonomy is an important influence on teachers' job satisfaction and retention. Compared with other professions, teachers report having minimal control over their job. Teachers report lower levels of autonomy over what tasks they do, the order in which they carry out tasks, the pace at which they work and their working hours, compared to similar professionals. They reported low autonomy over assessment and feedback, pupil data collection and curriculum content in their phase or subject. Too many new teachers feel that they are unsupported in the profession and cite this as their reason for leaving (Gallant and Ripley, 2014). In contrast, those who received good mentoring during training felt more supported and more able to meet the challenges of teaching. Good mentoring in schools has shown a strong correlation with increased retention and is explicit in the Early Career Framework (Struyven, 2019).

The quality of teaching and learning is determined not just by the quality of teachers, but also by the environment in which teachers work. Together with the intrinsic benefits of teaching, working conditions, which are shaped by factors such as salary range, compensation, bonuses and rewards; working time, staff-student ratios, good school leadership, infrastructure and facilities, influence teachers' satisfaction with the workplace, their tasks and the nature of the job as well as teachers' ability to do their work well and engage with students. Working conditions also play a crucial role for attracting teachers and for retaining effective teachers. In various countries, there are concerns about the impact of uncompetitive salaries, high workload, levels of stress, and poor working environments. While a certain level of staff attrition is inevitable, and it may be positive for institutions if ineffective teachers leave the profession, high rates of teachers leaving their position may compound staffing problems and lead to a loss of expertise. High rates of staff turnover can also disrupt institutions and adversely affect the quality of teaching and learning (TALIS 2018).

Salary and benefits

Economic trends related to the labor market and recession have also affected teacher retention (Fraser & Lefty, 2018). School budgets fluctuated considerably in response to the fiscal conditions prevalent in the country. Economic conditions influenced teachers' salaries, professional development programs, and financial incentives. These factors, in turn, influenced the labor market in terms of the available opportunities for gainful employment. Arnup and Bowles (2016) reported a direct relationship between teacher retention rates and the labor market. When the labor market supported lucrative teaching jobs, teachers found those jobs more appealing, and higher rates of retention resulted.

Compensation and benefits have been acknowledged as a major influence in keeping teachers in their positions. If teachers don't think they're getting paid fairly or if they don't have enough perks, they might be more likely to go elsewhere for work (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Similarly, if teachers don't believe they have enough resources or support, they can decide to leave their current position (Agormedah et al., 2020).

Teachers' salaries and perks play a major role in determining whether or not they stay in the profession (Carroll et al., 2020). Teachers, like all employees, deserve to be paid

appropriately for the work that they do. When teachers believe that they are not receiving a fair compensation or that their benefits are insufficient, they may be more prone to go elsewhere for employment (Salin et al., 2020).

Benefits, in addition to compensation, may be a factor in whether or not a teacher stays in their position (Khan et al., 2020). If teachers do not have access to the healthcare, retirement, or other benefits they need, they may be more likely to leave their current teaching post (Coman et al., 2020). However, if they have sufficient perks, instructors may feel supported by their employer and be more inclined to remain in their current teaching post. Overall, teachers' salaries and benefits are significant elements that might affect retention and turnover; thus, these should be considered when schools and districts work to increase teacher retention (Soares et al., 2021).

Job security

Unemployment and job security remain issues of vital interest to many nations and workers are very concerned about unemployment when they lose a job (Artz, B., & Kaya, I. 2014). Every employee's desire is to have a secure job and every employer's desire is to retain or find new employees. Whenever there is a reduction in job openings, there is a relative upsurge in job loss (Artz, B., & Kaya, I. 2014).

Job security is the hope an employee has concerning the continuity and stability of their employment. It concerns the employees' emotions regarding the loss of a job or desired aspects of a job such as good working conditions, promotions, or desired long-term career prospects (Akpan, C. P. 2013). Herzberg viewed job security as the extent of satisfaction a worker experiences in his/her employment. Recently, in most countries, job security has been falling at an increasing rate owing to technological advancements, demographic variations, and government strategies.

Many studies regarding employee motivation state that the best motivation for an employee is his/her salary. However, we can deduce that, without job security, an employee may not continue to receive pay in the long run. Job security is seen as the extrinsic part of commitment. Thus, employees tend to show only partial commitment to an organization whenever their job security is at stake.

Most workers perceive job security as an indispensable right and the most influential means of motivating them. Additionally, job security allows employees to be certain about their future, reduces labor agitations, increases productivity, helps to protect the social balance and values, and reduces employees' intention to quit (Artz, B., & Kaya, I. 2014). This indicates that the concept of job security is pivotal in today's competitive business environment.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study was conducted as qualitative research, specifically using narrative inquiry. According to Korstjens (2017), qualitative research is a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. It gathered participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviour. It implied that qualitative research was less concentrated on testing hypotheses than on describing, analyzing, and interpreting a given phenomenon.

Locale of the study and respondents

This study was conducted in the province of Capiz. The researcher conducted a focus group discussion for the 9 identified teachers who exited DepEd and are now employed locally in

SUC's and HEI's, while 4 teachers answered online. To gather data from 10 teachers currently employed internationally, the researcher sends a questionnaire online.

The participants were 23 identified teachers who exited DepEd in the province of Capiz, in which 13 of it were employed locally in state universities and colleges or in any higher educational institutions and the ten 10 were internationally employed.

Research instruments

The researcher conducted a focus group discussion for those employed locally and online interview through google forms for those employed internationally to gather data. The interview guide questions used were checked and validated by the advisory committee, examining committee and language expert. The researcher adapted and incorporate whatever the suggestions and corrections of the panel. Open-ended questions were utilized to collect the needed data. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Data analyses procedure

The information gathered during the interview were analyzed using thematic analysis, a process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. In contrast to many qualitative techniques, it was not constrained by a certain theoretical or epistemological stance, claim Braun & Clarke (2013). The variety of tasks in learning and teaching makes it a very flexible strategy.

The thematic analysis aimed to find themes that were significant or intriguing patterns in the data—and then utilize these themes to discuss the research or make a point. A strong thematic analysis does more than summarize the data; it explains and clarifies it.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Factors that influenced teachers to leave the Department of Education

The findings present the factors that influenced teachers to leave the Department of Education and move to other local institutions, like state universities and colleges. Based on the thematic analysis, it was revealed that the factors affecting their decision to transfer employer includes work life balance, struggle with professional advancement, and better working conditions.

Work-life balance

Teachers' decisions to leave the Department of Education (DepEd) are often influenced by factors related to work-life balance, a critical aspect of job satisfaction and overall well-being. Within this context, two subthemes emerged: overloaded work in DepEd and better working environment in the SUC.

One subtheme on work-life balance was work overload in DepEd. The feeling overloaded within the Department of Education (DepEd) and seeking a better work environment in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and abroad underscores the significant challenges faced by DepEd teachers in managing their workload and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

As discussed by Local Participants 2, 4, 5 and 13, it is due to how it affects their work-life balance as participant exclaimed that it is due to overloaded paper works and seeking a better work environment in state universities and colleges. As Local Participant 2 shared: "In DepEd, I face a lot of challenging, lots of ancillary works aside from teaching. I used to work long hours and even bring home my work."

Teachers frequently report experiencing heavy workloads and administrative burdens within DepEd, often compounded by the pressure to meet academic standards and fulfill

various responsibilities. These results in long hours spent on work-related tasks, including planning, grading, and administrative duties, with many teachers finding it difficult to establish clear boundaries between their professional and personal lives.

This also encapsulates the sentiments expressed by many teachers regarding the demanding nature of their roles within DepEd. It highlights the pervasive culture of overwork and the challenges faced by teachers in managing their time effectively. The expectation to work long hours and bring work home reflects the heavy workload and the persistent pressure to meet the demands of the education system. Respondent 13 shared: "With the workloads and loads of paperwork, the compensation doesn't equate my responsibilities and work. I have a growing family and I thought it is time to venture to other workplaces for my growth as well."

Hence, Local Participants 11 and 12 shared their sentiments that the agency should unload their teachers with burdens that are not part of their role as teachers. Local Participant 11 mentioned: "Unload teachers of so much paperwork aside from teaching." Local Participant 12 further shared: "Give teachers enough time for family affairs... school activities/ meetings should not be done on weekends!"

International Participants 3, 6, and 2 also shared accounts on the detrimental effects of overwork on educators, resulting in less time for personal and family activities.

International Participant 3 said she was always tired and exhausted, on top of the fact that she already had less family time because of overwork. This experience of feeling constantly tired and exhausted highlights the physical and emotional toll of overwork, which not only affects job performance but also spills over into personal life, leaving little energy or time for family and leisure activities.

International Participant 6's description of spending weekends on additional work-related tasks like paperwork, seminars, and training further emphasizes the pervasive nature of overwork in the education sector. Despite weekends traditionally being a time for relaxation and rejuvenation, educators often find themselves caught up in work-related responsibilities, eroding the boundaries between work and personal life and contributing to burnout.

International Participant 6 also shared that:

"We spent their weekends doing paperwork seminars and Training during weekends" that it exhausts them already." This comparison between their experiences in a DepEd school and a US school provides valuable insights into the structural and organizational factors that contribute to overwork and its impact on work-life balance. The disparity in working conditions between the two settings, particularly in terms of resources, facilities, and support systems, underscores how systemic issues can exacerbate the burden of overwork on educators.

Furthermore, International Participant 2 said: "In DepEd, work schedule is from 7:30-5PM. Sometimes, teachers would stay more to finish tasks without overtime pay. Not all rooms are ventilated, and student and teaching materials are scarce. US School- I am teaching in a 21st Century School building. Air condition is centralized. Doors are automated Laptops and other materials needed to teach are provided by the school district. Each student has laptops. Breakfast and lunch are provided for students as well."

With this, the participant tried to explain that in the DepEd setting, teachers face challenges such as long working hours, inadequate ventilation, and limited access to teaching materials, all of which can contribute to increased stress and fatigue. In contrast, the US school offers modern facilities, centralized resources, and additional support services, which may help alleviate some of the pressures associated with overwork and improve work-life balance for educators.

These narratives emphasize the need for systemic changes to address overwork and promote better work-life balance in the education sector. This includes implementing policies to regulate working hours, providing adequate resources and support systems for educators, and fostering a culture that values the well-being of teachers. By addressing these underlying issues, educational institutions can create environments that support the health, happiness, and productivity of educators, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

These findings are supported by Lazarus & Folkman (2014) and Maslach (2021) who discussed the importance of addressing systemic issues related to working conditions and promoting better work-life balance in the education profession. By implementing policies to regulate working hours, provide adequate resources and support systems, and foster a culture that values educators' well-being, educational institutions can create environments that support the health, happiness, and productivity of educators, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

The sub-theme also suggests that teachers perceive SUCs as offering a more conducive work environment, potentially characterized by lighter workloads, fewer administrative burdens, and greater flexibility in managing responsibilities. This perception may stem from factors such as smaller class sizes, reduced administrative tasks, or a supportive organizational culture that prioritizes work-life balance.

The sub-theme of feeling overloaded within DepEd and seeking a better work environment in SUCs underscores the need for DepEd to address systemic issues related to workload management, administrative processes, and teacher support. Strategies aimed at reducing administrative burdens, providing resources for lesson planning and curriculum development, and promoting a culture of work-life balance are essential to support teachers in managing their workload effectively and maintaining their well-being.

These findings imply the importance of addressing workload-related stress and promoting work-life balance within DepEd. By prioritizing teacher well-being and creating a supportive work environment, educational institutions can improve teacher satisfaction, retention, and ultimately, student outcomes.

Likewise, it is implied that significant challenges faced by teachers within the Department of Education (DepEd) in managing their workload and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Teachers often report feeling overloaded with heavy workloads and administrative tasks, leading to long hours and a blurring of professional and personal boundaries. The sentiment expressed by respondents emphasizes the negative impact of these challenges on their well-being and their decision to seek a better work environment in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). This underscores the importance of addressing systemic issues within DepEd to support teachers in managing their workload effectively and promoting a culture of work-life balance.

These findings are supported by the studies of Kyriacou (2021) and Johnson & Birkeland (2023), who explained that teachers who experience high levels of stress and overwork are more likely to report symptoms of burnout, including emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Maslach, et al., 2021). Additionally, inadequate compensation and perceived lack of recognition for their contributions can further contribute to feelings of dissatisfaction and disillusionment among teachers (Chang et al., 2019). Furthermore, the discussion aligns with existing literature, highlighting the pervasive nature of workload-related stress and the desire for a more supportive work environment among teachers. The perception that SUCs offer a better work environment with lighter workloads and greater flexibility reflects broader concerns within the teaching profession regarding workload management and work-life balance (Oplatka & Lapidot-Lefler, 2019). Addressing these issues requires systemic changes within educational institutions, including implementing policies to

reduce administrative burdens, providing adequate resources and support for teachers, and promoting a culture that values work-life balance (Hakanen et al., 2016).

The second subtheme on work-life balance was better working conditions in SUC's/HEI's and abroad. Another subtheme that was noted was that those who transferred in state universities and colleges experienced better working conditions than they were in DepEd. As Local Participant 12 said: "Leaving my post in DepEd has something to do with my intention to change my work environment. My new workplace is very near my residence!" Participant 9 also shares "SUC's has flexible time frame which advantage me that I can have more family time especially that my eldest was diagnosed to have ASD."

Teachers may perceive SUCs as offering a more supportive and manageable work environment, characterized by smaller class sizes, fewer administrative tasks, and a collaborative work culture that prioritizes teacher well-being. This perception may contribute to their decision to leave DepEd in pursuit of better work-life balance. Furthermore, efforts to improve working conditions and support teacher well-being within DepEd are critical for retaining talent and fostering a positive organizational culture. By addressing the root causes of workload-related stress and promoting a healthy work-life balance, DepEd can enhance teacher satisfaction and create an environment conducive to professional growth and development.

The narratives shared by International Participants 6, 7, and 10 further enlighten the diverse working conditions experienced by educators and the significant impact these conditions can have on job satisfaction and overall well-being.

International Participant 6 said, "Physical working condition, teaching materials are available, technology and internet is widely available all over the school, teachers and students doesn't need to clean after classes because there are maintenance. There are police officers on duty for whole day to monitor school area meanwhile in the Philippine the teachers need to provide mostly all the things inside her classroom or may ask for help on the parents, students either will do the cleaning or not and lastly there are no officers to monitor schools."

This highlights the stark contrast between working conditions in different educational settings. In the scenario described, the physical working conditions are favorable, with ample teaching materials, access to technology and the internet, and maintenance staff to handle cleaning tasks. Additionally, the presence of police officers to monitor the school area contributes to a sense of safety and security. This stands in contrast to the situation described in the Philippines, where teachers often have to provide their own materials and may face challenges with cleanliness and security.

International Participant 7 discussed: "My present job is a way better compare to my work at DepEd." The comparison between their present job and their previous experience at DepEd underscores the significant improvement in working conditions. While specific details are not provided, it can be inferred that the current job offers better support, resources, and overall working environment compared to the previous role at DepEd. This suggests that addressing issues related to working conditions can lead to positive outcomes for educators, such as increased job satisfaction and retention.

Also, International Participant 10 explained: "Teacher-friendly policies, supportive admin, conducive classrooms, way better compensation, secured job and more supportive colleagues compared to DepEd." This emphasizes the importance of supportive working conditions by highlighting specific factors such as teacher-friendly policies, supportive administration, conducive classrooms, better compensation, job security, and supportive colleagues. These elements contribute to a more positive and fulfilling work experience, enabling educators to perform their roles effectively and thrive in their careers.

These testimonies highlight how crucially working circumstances influence educators' perspectives. Educational institutions may establish settings that support teachers' well-being and professional progress by addressing problems including resource availability, safety and security, administrative assistance, and colleague relationships. This will eventually benefit both instructors and students.

These testimonies align with existing literature on the importance of supportive working conditions in fostering educator well-being and professional growth (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). Addressing issues such as resource availability, safety, administrative support, and colleague relationships is crucial for creating environments that support the needs and aspirations of educators, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

Literature corroborates the significance of work-life balance in teacher retention and turnover. Research by Richardson and Watt (2019) found that workload, job demands, and lack of support were key factors contributing to teachers' decisions to leave the profession. Similarly, study by Johnson et al. (2017) highlighted the detrimental effects of high workload and job stress on teacher job satisfaction and retention. Moreover, research by Jones et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of a supportive work environment, including manageable workloads and collaborative culture, in promoting teacher well-being and retention. These findings underscore the relevance of addressing work-life balance issues within educational institutions to improve teacher retention rates and foster a positive work environment conducive to both professional growth and personal well-being.

The sub-theme of feeling overloaded within DepEd and seeking a better work environment in SUCs sheds light on the significant role of work-life balance in teachers' decisions to leave the department. Addressing workload issues, promoting supportive work cultures, and prioritizing teacher well-being are essential steps in enhancing teacher retention and creating sustainable work environments within educational institutions.

Struggle with professional advancement

Another major theme that was uncovered during the interview was the struggle with professional advancement. The struggle with professional advancement is a pervasive theme that underscores the challenges and aspirations of individuals across various industries and career paths. At its core lies the recognition of barriers and hurdles that impede progress towards higher-level roles, recognition, and fulfillment in one's career. For many professionals, the journey towards advancement is marked by a sense of frustration stemming from limited opportunities within their current organizational context or industry landscape. Whether due to organizational structure, economic conditions, or industry trends, the scarcity of growth opportunities can leave individuals feeling stuck or stagnant in their career trajectories. Furthermore, two subthemes were identified here: salary and unrecognized capabilities, and struggle with professional development.

Local Participant 10 said: "Probably one of which is the promotion which leads to salary increase. Its very difficult in the DepEd to be promoted even if you are indeed qualified to the position since your credentials cannot speak for yourself.

Sometimes those who were promoted are not worthy of their position".

Local Participant 3 likewise shared: "I search for greener pasture. I wanted a better opportunity outside DepEd."

Local Participant 4 also expressed that they received better pay in the SUC than in DepEd. "More or less three steps higher with previous salary grades. More benefits CNA, overtime pay, graduate school loading etc. In terms of job security, same in job security but you can exercise your expertise. I enjoyed the job security in SUC."

SUC's pay teachers better than can compensate for the work they perform. Aside from their salary, they have overtime pay and other loads in the graduate studies in which will add to their basic pay. The salary and other benefits teachers can get from SUC's have influenced their decision to leave public schools. Inadequate compensation can make teaching profession less attractive, leading to difficulties in retaining competent teachers. By offering a reasonable salary and better benefit packages, DepEd can retain teachers.

The same sentiment was shared by teachers from DepEd who moved abroad in order to teach. Moreover, financially wise, it seems that the decision to move abroad was a rewarding experience, particularly when salary is considered.

International Participant 1 shared, "The salary is much higher than DepEd, but the company doesn't offer same sort of benefits in DepEd." This narrative draws attention to the difference in pay between the two environments, pointing out that while their present work pays more than the Department of Education (DepEd), the benefits package may not be as extensive. This implies that while the new position's financial pay may be more alluring, educators may also need to take other benefits like healthcare, retirement plans, and other perks that are often provided by public sector employers like DepEd into account.

International Participant 2 likewise explained: "The salary in DepEd is never enough that is why I decided to go to the US. In US School, salary is based on teaching experience and academic level. You also get to have a salary increase whenever you attend trainings with Achievement Units (AUs) and you get to have stipends whenever you attend classes/trainings. Again, the school/district PAYS teachers to attend and not the other way around. We have a salary increase yearly."

The choice made International by Participant 2 to relocate to the US in search of better employment opportunities highlights the financial difficulties that Filipino educators confront. In the United States, pay is determined by academic credentials and teaching experience, and prospects for pay rises are contingent upon participation in professional development activities like training sessions. This demonstrates a better organized and perhaps fulfilling pay structure that encourages continuous learning and development.

Furthermore, International Participant 6 explained, "The salary received here in the US is already decent to provide all the needs and wants of teacher, there are also bonus (one time only) unlike in the Philippines there a lot of bonuses and incentives. Job security is much more stable in the Philippines unlike here that you have only a one-year contract for every school year you need to be renewed each school year. For interpersonal relations teaching here in US and in Philippines are the same you really need to effectively interact and establish a strong social emotional principles and practices with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators. To understand and respect cultural differences, incorporating diverse perspectives in the curriculum, and creating an inclusive classroom environment to meet the needs of students."

International Participant 6 goes into greater detail on the financial elements, highlighting how salaries in the US are more stable than in the Philippines, where job security is less certain despite a higher prevalence of bonuses and incentives. In contrast to the more permanent job arrangements in the Philippines, where teachers often have longer-term contracts or tenure, the US system of one-year contracts is in place. Furthermore, Participant 6 talks on how the two nations' interpersonal relationships and educational approaches are comparable, emphasizing the value of inclusive teaching methods, cultural competency, and successful communication in any setting. This implies that although there may be differences in the financial elements, there are still universal teaching concepts.

All things considered, these narratives highlight the nuanced choices educators have to make when assessing their career options in various settings. While pay and benefits are important considerations, educators also heavily consider other elements including job stability, chances for professional growth, and the general work environment when making decisions. Teachers' needs and goals may be better met, and their professional development and satisfaction can be supported, if educational institutions and legislators have a greater knowledge of these dynamics.

These narratives align with existing literature on the comparative experiences of educators in different countries. Studies by Rizvi and Rahman (2016) and Kim and Lee (2019) have highlighted disparities in salary levels, benefits packages, and job stability between educational settings, echoing the observations made by the participants. Furthermore, Guo and Beckett (2019) emphasize the importance of cultural competence and inclusive teaching practices across diverse contexts, resonating with Participant 6's discussion on interpersonal relations in education. Collectively, these narratives and scholarly works underscore the multifaceted nature of educators' career choices and the need for comprehensive support systems to address their diverse needs and aspirations.

Research by Hargreaves and Fullan (2014) and Leithwood et al. (2014) emphasizes the importance of transparent and merit-based promotion processes in fostering educator motivation and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, studies by Day and Gu (2017) and Glickman et al. (2014) highlight the significance of equitable compensation and job security in attracting and retaining talented educators within educational organizations.

Another subtheme of struggle in professional advancement is the struggle with professional development. Teachers express frustration over the challenges associated with career progression within DepEd, particularly in terms of salary increments and promotions. The quote provided highlights the perceived difficulty in being promoted despite possessing the requisite qualifications, with concerns raised about the fairness and transparency of the promotion process. This subtheme underscores the importance of equitable opportunities for career advancement and the need for DepEd to address systemic barriers hindering professional growth.

As Local Participant 1 discussed:

"Every year you need to undergo hiring process because I felt that I have no progress. I am stagnant. I am obliged to teach the subjects I don't specialize. I left DepEd without creating conflicts with my students, parents, co-workers and superiors."

Likewise, the sentiment of Local Participant 2 was: "The Jurassic and roller coaster experience is not actually a factor. It was actually the opportunity that calls. I love being busy in DepEd, but I feel bored repeating same topics and content to be discussed."

Furthermore, Local Participant 9 shared: "CapSU is a great opportunity for greener pasture and it help me with the needs of my family. CapSU have flexible time frame in compared with the DepEd."

These sentiments made by educators are consistent with the body of research on organizational dynamics and career development for educators. Empirical studies conducted by Darling-Hammond (2021) and Smylie (2015) highlight the importance of fair career progression possibilities in promoting teacher motivation and work satisfaction. Similar to this, research by Leithwood and Louis (2022) and Hattie and Marsh (2016) highlights how crucial fair and transparent promotion procedures are to fostering morale and confidence in educational institutions.

These thoughts underscore the need for DepEd to remove structural impediments impeding professional progress and to provide career advancement options that are in line with educators' abilities and goals. DepEd can foster a culture of ongoing growth and development that will eventually benefit educators and children by placing a high priority on

clear promotion procedures, providing opportunities for meaningful professional development, and supporting educators' career goals.

Geographical and Personal Advantage

Geographic and Personal Advantage was also identified as a theme that emerged during the interview with the teachers. In terms of this theme, they moved out from DepEd and into SUC because of workplace advantage as well as better opportunities. Two sub-themes was identified: workplace advantage and better opportunities.

Workplace Advantage reflects teachers' motivations to seek opportunities beyond DepEd based on considerations of workplace advantage and the availability of more opportunities elsewhere. As Participant 2 and 3 conveyed that the reason why they left is due to geographical and personal advantages such as their new workplace being closer to their house which is convenient and they seek more opportunities in other areas. As Respondent 3 said: "Greener pastures and professional advancement".

The discussions about this subtheme are supported by existing literature on educator career decisions and organizational behavior. Research by Ingersoll (2013) and Hargreaves (2020) underscores the significance of workplace conditions, including resources, support systems, and organizational culture, in influencing educators' job satisfaction and retention. Similarly, studies by Møller and Klette (2016) and Day and Gu (2017) emphasize the importance of professional development opportunities and career advancement pathways in shaping educators' career trajectories. These findings highlight the need for educational institutions like DepEd to address concerns related to working conditions, salaries, and professional growth to retain talented educators and foster a supportive and empowering work environment.

Better Opportunities as another sub-theme of geographical and personal advantage reveals teachers' motivations to explore opportunities beyond DepEd based on considerations of workplace advantage and the availability of more opportunities elsewhere.

Within the subtheme of "Better Opportunities," teachers express perceptions that alternative workplaces offer distinct advantages over DepEd. These advantages may include better resources, support systems, or working conditions, as well as a more conducive environment for professional growth and development. The notion of "greener pastures" suggests that teachers perceive other organizations or sectors as offering a more favorable landscape for their careers to thrive. This perception may stem from factors such as higher salaries, improved work-life balance, or a more supportive organizational culture.

Additionally, the subtheme of "More Opportunities" underscores teachers' aspirations for broader career advancement beyond the confines of DepEd. Teachers may seek employment outside DepEd to access a wider range of professional development opportunities, career pathways, or geographical locations that align with their personal and professional goals. The desire for professional advancement reflects a universal aspiration among educators to continually enhance their skills, knowledge, and expertise in pursuit of fulfilling careers.

The thematic analysis highlights the complexity of factors influencing teachers' decisions regarding their career trajectories. While workplace advantages and the allure of more opportunities elsewhere may attract teachers to explore alternative career paths, it is essential for DepEd to address these concerns to retain talented educators within the organization. Strategies aimed at improving working conditions, offering competitive salaries, and providing avenues for professional growth and advancement can help DepEd retain its workforce and foster a supportive and empowering work environment.

The theme of "Geographical and Personal Advantage," with its subthemes of "Workplace Advantage" and "More Opportunities," underscores the multifaceted nature of

teachers' career decisions. By understanding and addressing the factors driving teachers to seek greener pastures, DepEd can better retain its workforce and cultivate a culture of continuous growth and development.

These findings align with existing literature on educator career decisions and organizational behavior. Research by Ingersoll (2013) and Hargreaves (2020) underscores the significance of workplace conditions, including resources, support systems, and organizational culture, in influencing educators' job satisfaction and retention. Similarly, studies by Møller and Klette (2016) and Day and Gu (2017) emphasize the importance of professional development opportunities and career advancement pathways in shaping educators' career trajectories. These findings highlight the need for educational institutions like DepEd to address concerns related to working conditions, salaries, and professional growth to retain talented educators and foster a supportive and empowering work environment.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Teachers leaving DepEd to transfer to state universities and colleges suggests potential challenges within the DepEd system that need to be addressed. If teachers are leaving due to issues related to work-life balance, promotion opportunities, and geographic/personal advantages, it indicates areas where DepEd may need to improve to retain its workforce.

Teachers leaving the Philippines to teach abroad emphasizes several underpinnings. Firstly, the emphasis on work-life balance suggests that educators prioritize environments where they can maintain a healthy equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal well-being. Secondly, the mention of self-development indicates that teachers seek opportunities for growth and advancement in their careers. Lastly, the struggle with promotion suggests that there may be barriers to career advancement within the education system.

Stark differences between the work environments of DepEd and new working stations exist, particularly in the United States, revealing challenges within DepEd such as high expectations for teachers, limited resources, and concerns about job security. In contrast, new working stations offer more supportive administrative policies, supervision, and physical working conditions, along with better salary and benefits packages. While DepEd provides greater job security due to government backing, there are concerns about career advancement opportunities. Positive interpersonal relations are evident in both settings, emphasizing the importance of fostering supportive work cultures. These findings highlight the urgent need for improvement within DepEd to address the identified challenges, enhance teacher satisfaction and retention, and ultimately improve educational outcomes.

Based on the aforementioned findings, there is a need for Human Resource of DepEd to reassess its policies and practices to better support its teachers, such as implementing measures to improve work-life balance, providing clearer pathways for career advancement, and addressing disparities in resources and opportunities across different geographic locations. Failure to address these issues could lead to continued attrition of experienced educators, impacting the quality of education and stability of the DepEd workforce. Therefore, it is essential for DepEd to take proactive steps to address the underlying reasons for teacher turnover and create a more conducive and supportive work environment for its educators.

The Department of Education may foster supportive work cultures and implementing policies that promote work-life balance within educational institutions. School heads and Division heads may provide avenues for ongoing professional development, mentorship programs, and opportunities for career progression to retain talented educators and support

their continuous learning. They also need to evaluate their promotion policies and practices to ensure fairness, transparency, and opportunities for merit-based advancement.

The Department of Education may benefit from adopting practices observed in more supportive environments to foster a positive and conducive work atmosphere. The disparity in physical working conditions and compensation highlights the need for investment in infrastructure, resources, and competitive salary and benefits packages within DepEd. Improving these aspects could help attract and retain qualified educators and improve overall morale and productivity. While DepEd offers more stability in terms of job security due to government backing, it is essential to address concerns about career advancement and growth opportunities. Providing pathways for professional development, advancement, and recognition could help retain talent and foster a sense of commitment and loyalty among educators.

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