



PONDERING THE PHENOMENON OF CHOOSING NON-TEACHING JOBS AMONG TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study on the alumni employability of teacher education graduates focused on pondering the phenomenon of choosing non-teaching jobs among the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) alumni from 2016 to 2020. An interpretive phenomenology was employed to describe the current non-teaching jobs, explain why they chose a non-teaching career, discover the skills and competencies beneficial to their present work, and express their thoughts and feelings about their non-teaching occupation. The qualitative data were gathered using one-on-one interviews, transcribed, and validated the reliability using the Four-Dimensions Criteria (FDC). The obtained data were manually coded utilizing the QDR Miner lite software and the English transcriptions were examined using thematic three-phase analysis. In qualitative data analysis, significant statements for coding were identified first. Multiple coding was employed to generate themes, which means some selected statements were coded more than once. There were 34 open codes generated in the first cycle using descriptive English while 4 categories in the second cycle to answer the specific research problems. This study discovered that the current non-teaching jobs of teacher education graduates are grouped into four: education-related non-teacher jobs, non-education-related training jobs, office work, and service and management. After thorough exploration, it was also revealed that graduates' non-commitment to the teaching profession, circumstantial influence, competitive income, support for passion and growth, and flexibility and balanced life were the reasons why they opted for non-teaching jobs. In addition, the beneficial competencies to their present non-teaching job were professional values and attitudes, transversal skills, learning skills, paperwork, and teaching skills. Teacher education graduates with non-teaching careers feel contented, fulfilled, and open to changes. Based on the findings, core competencies acquired in the Teacher Education Program offer multiple skills that greatly contribute to being versatile, adaptable, and productive non-teaching workers.

Keywords: *Employability, Teacher Education Graduates, Non-teaching Jobs, Transversal Skills*

INTRODUCTION

Graduates' employability in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) identifies the effectiveness of the program curriculum and the quality of instruction and students. It is expected that once the students complete the program, they will apply what they have learned in the industries. This is why a tracer study is regularly conducted to

determine if the student's skills and competencies are functional and relevant to their present work.

Soft skills are viewed as more important in the 21st-century workplace. Workers with professionalism or work ethics, communication skills, teamwork, collaboration, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills are aspired by employers. Similarly, Deming (2017) reported the significance of soft skills in a company. He



mentioned the highly valuable competencies yet difficult to find for a newly hired worker like teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and analytical/quantitative skills.

Among other professions, several investigations have identified that teacher education skills and competencies are transferable to other non-teaching careers. Communication, the ability to work independently, and the training of others the useful competencies in obtaining other employment (Martin, 2006). Several transferable teaching skills are identified that are beneficial to non-teaching jobs like the willingness to learn and listen, and other skills such as complex problem-solving, coordination, critical thinking, mentoring, and decision-making. In addition, managing time, monitoring, multi-tasking, negotiating, speaking, understanding individuality, analyzing and evaluating systems, reading, and writing skills, and being service-oriented are the competencies usable in other non-teaching careers.

State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) offer free tertiary education through the Republic Act 10931 or the “Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act” which was signed into law in August 2017 by President Rodrigo Duterte. Underprivileged Filipino students are given opportunities to pursue college degrees through free tuition and other fees enrolled in SUCs. The government spent a budget for 1.6 M Filipino students for their free tertiary education to meet the demands of human resources in the country (Rocamoro, 2021). Unfortunately, not all graduates landed a job related to their completed program. This is also true in teacher education wherein a significant portion of government investments are wasted as reflected in low performance in the licensure examination and some education students after their graduation leaving the profession and switching to other careers (Abulon et.al, 2014).

Tracing teacher education graduates who are working not aligned to the completed program is uncommon for educational institutions because of institutional and program assessments that require alignment of the program completed to the present work of graduates. For this reason, the researchers would like to hear the stories of teacher education graduates of BPSU-DC who are

successful in their non-teaching jobs outside education like entrepreneurs, sales agents, police officers, etc. This study would like to ponder the phenomenon of choosing non-teaching jobs among teacher education graduates. Specifically, it aims to discover the core competencies learned from the university beneficial in their present employment and unveil the reasons, thoughts, and feelings for choosing non-teaching careers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study aimed to ponder the phenomenon of choosing non-teaching jobs among teacher education graduates from 2016-2020.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. Describe participants’ current non-teaching jobs.
2. Explain why they choose non-teaching jobs.
3. Discover the skills and competencies acquired in the completed program that are beneficial to their present work.
4. Express the thoughts and feelings of the participants regarding their non-teaching work.
5. Propose an action plan to minimize irrelevant employment of teacher education graduates.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research utilized interpretive phenomenology to describe the phenomenon of choosing non-teaching jobs among teacher education graduates. An interpretive phenomenology focuses on giving a detailed analysis of personal lived experiences (Smith, 2015).

The 12 participants are graduates of Bataan Peninsula State University Dinalupihan Campus (BPSU-DC) under the BEEd and BSEd with 7 and 5 participants, respectively from batches 2016 to 2022 who are not teaching and are working in other industries or outside education. Graduates who have non-teaching jobs in education like administrator/principal, curriculum specialist,

school counselor, standardized test developer, curriculum planner, etc. were excluded from the study.

First, the participants who have non-teaching jobs were asked if their present work is their choice. Only graduates who opted for non-teaching jobs by choice will be the respondents. After that, the researchers asked for consent using Informed Consent from participants to start the interview.

The one-on-one interview was utilized in the study. The collected qualitative data were transcribed and validated the reliability using the Four-Dimensions Criteria (FDC), known as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. This was created by Lincoln and Guba to establish the trustworthiness of the research. In addition, the Consolidated Criteria of Reporting Qualitative Design (COREQ) (Tong et.al, 2007) was used as a guideline in writing the important details.

Manual coding of qualitative data was employed using QDR Miner lite software. Transcripts were analyzed in English using thematic analysis. Significant statements for manual coding were identified first and some selected statements were coded more than once. There were 34 open codes generated using open descriptive English. In the second cycle analysis, 4 categories were created: (1) non-teaching job; (2) reasons for choosing the non-teaching job; (3) beneficial competencies; and (4) feelings and thoughts. The four classifications would answer the statement of the problem of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Non-Teaching Jobs of the Teacher Education Graduates

Four themes were generated as the current non-teaching jobs of teacher education graduates: education-related non-teacher jobs, non-education-related training jobs, office work, and service and management.

1.1. In terms of Education-related non-teacher jobs

Some participants are engaged in non-teaching jobs in the education sector or schools. They serve as administrative assistants or administrative officers.

"I am currently Administrative Officer II at DepEd Bataan and manage personnel records." (Case 1)

"I am an Administrative Officer II at Anon Elementary School, Floridablanca East District. The main role of my job is all about the loans, absences, salary, the budget of the school, and also being the property custodian of the school.." (Case 5)

1.2. In terms of Non-education-related training jobs

Even if some participants are in other fields outside of the education sector, they are assigned or tasked that involve training and lecturing. For instance, fire officers are providing lectures on fire safety.

"I was able to apply teaching strategies and techniques that I learned when I was promoted as a trainer". (Case 10)

"..lecturing Fire Prevention to different barangays in Orani Bataan.." (Case 11)

1.3. In terms of Office work.

Most of the participants are involved in office-related tasks. This includes participants who are in administrative office duties and those who are among the uniformed personnel (e.g. BFP).

"As a firefighter, I also work as an admin staff, my work usually processing payrolls, making reports, office work". (Case 3)

"My daily activities in our work are the following: receiving calls, and emails from different offices and to our clients, receiving emergency calls, doing paper works as an operations clerk in the station...."(Case 11)

1.4. In terms of Service and Management

Some participants are engaged in the service industry as account managers or BPO workers. There is also a participant who ventures into an online business.

“Business Process Outsourcing job. This includes data analyzing and supervising quality analysts under my team.”(Case 10)

“As an online seller, my daily tasks are to keep active every day on posting/promoting my products so that our target market will discover or see how and what are products for.” (Case 2)

The findings support the claims that teachers’ competencies are transferable to non-teaching careers (Martin, 2006). Teacher graduates are knowledgeable in performing administrative functions, and office work including managing personnel records and preparing reports. Similarly, teacher graduates employed as police officers/uniformed personnel who are in non-education-related training jobs can utilize the teaching methods and strategies in providing lectures, facilitating seminars, and training for an awareness campaign. Other teacher training in college days particularly on how to become a teacher leader, class manager, and prime motivator have great contributions to their present non-teaching jobs.

2. Reasons for Choosing Non-Teaching Jobs

The teacher education graduates stated their reasons for choosing non-teaching jobs. There were five themes generated: non-commitment to the teaching profession, circumstantial influence, competitive income, support for passion and growth, and flexibility and balanced life.

2.1. Non-commitment to the Teaching Profession

Some respondents are not committed to teaching jobs. Some were simply influenced by their parents to take the degree. Some are merely concerned about having a degree as a “backup.” Some are focused on getting the job, regardless of whether or not it involves teaching.

“My mom wants me to take education.” (Case 2)

“Teaching was not my first choice of the program but in the long run, I enjoyed the curriculum.” (Case 3)

Graduates uninterested in the teaching profession are those who took advantage of the free education in SUCs. They were the applicants who were not included in the quota set in their chosen program during admission. Instead of enrolling in private HEI and paying matriculation fees, they opted to take up a teacher education program which was still open at that time. They are not dedicated to the profession because it is not their personal choice and they lack career guidance and counseling. Commitment to the teaching profession is shown to those who have the initial motivation to enter the program. (Rots et. al, 2013).

2.2. In terms of Circumstantial Influence

Sometimes, circumstances push participants to look for non-teacher jobs. This includes failure to pass the board examination and an urgent need for income.

“I did not pass the board exam”. (Case 7)

“Last May 28, 2021, my father died, and because of that I needed to find a job as soon as I could, so I decided to apply for this position, then luckily, I passed all the requirements and interviews, and with this, I can give all the needs of my family, especially my mother and my 3 sisters.” (Case 5)

Circumstances like being unable to pass the board and the immediate need to earn money

force the graduates to look for jobs not related to the completed program. After graduation, they seek employment to provide for their physiological needs and have a sense of self-efficacy despite the roadblocks they encounter. Khush (2021) cited self-efficacy as the belief we can meet challenges and complete a task successfully (Akhtar, 2008).

2.3. In terms of Competitive Income

Participants shared that one of the reasons they chose a non-teacher job is the competitive income.

“In sales, there are unlimited chances to earn.” (Case 4)

“I choose to work in a BPO company as they offer a competitive salary.” (Case 10)

A competitive salary is also the reason why they prefer non-teaching careers, especially during this time of economic crisis. Due to the economic recession, some teachers leave teaching jobs (Wulandari, 2020) and look for non-teaching jobs with high-paying salaries. Perception of insufficient salary is also the reason why graduates turn back from teaching (Abulon et. al, 2015). According to Sen Gatchalian, teachers' salaries in the Philippines are way below as compared to average teachers' salaries in South East Asia (Romero, 2019).

2.4. Supports Passion and Growth

Participants choose non-teacher jobs because they support their professional and career growth. It provides them with continuous and clear opportunities for advancement. Another reason is that their non-teacher job allows them to practice their interest and passion.

“This is my hobby..I am doing business since college.” (Case 2)

“It is my passion and happiness. Aside from being a passion, writing has always been a part of me since I have enjoyed reading detective novels since I was a kid. It

felt like something was leading me towards this career so I took the chance and walked through this path.” (Case 6)

“Fast career growth.. I just started as a call center agent and every 6 mos. is a call for me to level up. With this being said, my salary levels up as well.” (Case 10).

Participants entered non-teaching careers related to their hobbies and interests. Since they love their job, they enjoy what they are doing. The passion and career growth opportunities made the participants happy and satisfied. When interests fit with the job, it predicts job satisfaction. (Hoff, 2020).

3. Flexibility and Balanced Life.

Another reason for going to non-teacher jobs is the lighter workload and schedule that allows them to live a more balanced life.

“The advantage of having your own business is that you can work any time you want. At present, I am in Ilocos until Christmas and the business is operating continuously because I have staff who are one call away when I needed them. I have admins for promoting the page.” (Case 2)

“Yes, I am doing my job I also enjoyed other things such as traveling as well and I have more time with my family as well as myself. In my present work, I have more time, freedom, and work balance.” (Case 3)

“There are minimal paper works and there is a lot of interaction with different types of people...less stress, less workload, more income..” (Case 4)

Participants' manageable workloads and balanced lives are also reasons for choosing non-teaching jobs. Workloads have a significant effect on the level of burnout of teachers. Lighter work assignments provide more time for the self, family, and leisure. The non-teaching careers provide job



and life satisfaction which means that they enjoy Work-Life Balance (WLB) (Haar et. al, 2014).

3. Beneficial Skills and Competencies to Non-Teaching Work

The skills and competencies obtained by the participants that are beneficial to their present non-teaching job were professional values and attitudes, transversal skills, learning skills, paperwork, and teaching skills.

3.1. In terms of Professional values and attitudes

Participants recognized that the professional values and attitude that they learned in the TEP helped them do well in their non-teacher jobs.

“Because a teacher needs more patience when it comes to students, in business as well you need more patience when it comes to buyers/customers.” (Case 2)

“My teachers in my college years taught us how to value everything, how to value your work so that I apply this in my job.” (Case 5)

Participants show professional ethics in performing their non-teaching jobs for they are grounded in professional values and attitudes learned from the curriculum of the teacher education program. The present study affirms the previous study that teachers have favorable attitudes and ethical values, such as love and respect for work, teaching or non-teaching, and this contributes to their work performance (Aktan et. al, 2020).

3.2. In terms of Transversal Skills

Participants recognized the value of the transversal skills that they have learned in TEP such as flexibility, interpersonal skills, management, and organizational skills.

“..The ability to interact with other people...as a former president of a student council, I was able to manage time for both studies and leadership functions.” (Case 8)

“..being flexible in any form or kind of work are the skills useful in my present work.” (Case 9)

“Organizing skills that I learned and applied with my job right now which leveled up my professionalism as I was able to organize the task from top priority to the least one.” (Case 10)

Transversal skills like flexibility, interpersonal skills, management, and organizational skills are some of the soft skills that are identified as important by employers that graduates must possess in the workplace (Robles, 2012). The said transferable skills are developed through cooperative learning using active methodologies during teacher training (Larraz et. al, 2017) and through Collaboration Problem Solving was found as critical and necessary both in schools and workplaces (Argyri, 2019).

3.4. In terms of Learning Skills

Participants recognized the application of learning skills that they have developed in the Teacher Education Program (TEP). This includes creative and communication skills and critical thinking.

“We are interacting with our client and we are conversing with them.” (Case 4)

“Since I manage different personnel data critical thinking helps me to be organized in my work.” (Case 1)

“Super helpful for me because even in the field of business you need to educate yourself well, you need to study every single decision you will make in business.” (Case 2)

Creativity, communication, and critical thinking are learning skills found beneficial to non-teaching careers. These are developed together with 21st-century skills during their college days when teachers utilize problem-based and inquiry-

based learning approaches (Birgili, 2015; Dokme, 2016; Suarta et. al, 2017).

3.5. In terms of Paper Works.

It has been observed that most of the non-teacher jobs of the participants require some paperwork. They believe that the training in management and preparation of reports prepared them for these tasks.

“In the teaching education program, we were trained to perform different tasks, which includes paper works and preparation of reports..” (Case 1)

“Do some paper works like narrative/accomplishments reports for our training/activity.” (Case 12)

Part of the teachers’ training in the education program is the preparation and management of records. Preparing reports and record keeping are essential roles of the teacher for evaluation, monitoring students’ academic achievement, and enhancing the instruction and learning process. This study supports that the ability to prepare narrative and accomplishment reports is essential in all occupations.

3.6. In terms of Teaching Skills

It has also been observed that most of the jobs require educating others through training (e.g. Fire safety training; and training of other employees). Participants were able to use the learnings they had about teaching and motivational strategies.

“I was able to apply teaching strategies and techniques that I learned when I was promoted as a trainer.” (Case 10)

“Teaching is not an easy task in our work, as being a lecturer in our station (Orani Fire Station) I am very thankful and proud to share that I am using teaching techniques that I acquired in our school. It is very useful to me, it gives confidence when we are visiting different barangays and discussing different topics regarding

Fire Prevention, Calamities, and other Emergencies.” (Case 11)

Participants possess the teaching skills valuable for their chosen non-teaching jobs. They are equipped with confidence, motivational and teaching strategies, and techniques that help them perform their jobs.

4. Thoughts and Feelings of the Teacher Education Graduates Regarding Their Non-Teaching Work

The teacher education graduates with non-teaching work feel contentment fulfilled, and open to changes.

4.1. In terms of Contentment and Fulfillment

Participants generally shared a feeling of contentment with the jobs that they have. They derive fulfillment and contentment for various reasons such as the opportunity to practice their interest and passion, compensation, light workload, or flexible schedule.

“I feel happiness and contentment especially when the workplace is like a second home.” (Case 1)

“I consider myself a successful graduate with a non-teaching job because I provided for the needs and wants of my family. I can do whatever I wanted in life.” (Case 2)

“Yes... absolutely, or even more than the words happy and contented. It was as if my childhood dream was fulfilled. Yes. The word successful is a deep word but for me, for a person to be called successful, he/she has to be genuinely happy in her/his chosen field. No matter how high your salary is, if you feel too much emptiness towards your job, you can never call yourself successful, and it also goes with... no matter how low your salary is, if you feel like you are above the sky” (Case 6)

“I am very happy and grateful to teach our farmers to enhance their knowledge in farming to improve their lives and to improve



our agriculture sector in the Philippines.”
(Case 12)

This means that the participants are satisfied with their present work and/or with the organization to which they belonged because of the opportunities given to them to practice their interest and passion, the right compensation, a light workload, or a flexible schedule. In addition, they feel a sense of fulfillment and happiness at the same time when they extend services to the needy. Based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, participants’ needs are met which is why they are contented at present.

4.2. In terms of Openness to Change

Some participants are open to changes in their current work. Even if they express contentment, they are also open to other opportunities. However, this future change may or may not involve a teacher's job.

“The important thing about being a graduate of a four-year course is you can have a lot of options. I can still apply to other companies or give a chance to a teaching career later on. But for now, I am still happy with my current job.” (Case 4)

“I love my job I see it on my way in the near future. I'm so happy with my job and contented but seeking to see a better opportunity for my career. To be more competitive and more skills to achieve.” (Case 9)

Based on the responses of the participants, they are still open to a career change in the future. They feel contented during the time of interview and this may vary according to their needs.

5. Proposed Action Plan to Minimize the Irrelevant Employment of Teacher Education Graduates

As shown in Table 1, there are two Key Results Areas (KRAs) such as increasing graduates’ commitment to the teaching profession and

minimizing irrelevant employment of teacher education graduates. One of the challenges that appeared in the research findings is the non-commitment of the graduates in the teaching profession. There is a need to conduct comparative studies (entrance and exit interviews) among college students to determine the changes in the commitment level to teacher education.

Table 2
Action Plan to Minimize Irrelevant Employment of Teacher Education Graduates

Key Result Area	Proposed Program/Activities	Challenges	Persons Involved	Source of Fund	Major Final Output
1. Increasing graduates’ commitment to the teaching profession	Conduct entrance and exit interviews or comparative studies among college students to determine the changes in the commitment level	Non-commitment to the teaching profession			
2. Minimizing Irrelevant Employment of Teacher Education Graduates	Encourage students to teach after graduation. Regularly conduct an orientation on becoming a professional teacher and invite successful alumni to share experiences with all graduating students.	Irrelevant employment of teacher education graduates	Dean Program Head Faculty Students	GAA	Increased Relevant Employment of Teacher Education Graduates

Another concern to be addressed is the irrelevant employment of teacher education graduates. To overcome this, encouraging graduating students to practice the teaching profession after graduation and regularly conducting seminars on becoming professional teachers to hear success stories from alumni are the most feasible. This will be made possible thru the joint efforts of the dean, program head, faculty members, and students. With this, increased relevant employment of teacher education graduates will be achieved.

CONCLUSIONS

The Teacher Education Program offers multiple skills that greatly contribute to being versatile, adaptable, and productive non-teaching workers. Therefore, professional values and attitudes, transversal skills, learning skills, paper works, and teaching skills are the core competencies acquired by teacher education graduates that are transferable and beneficial to non-teaching careers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

1. The university may conduct a needs analysis to offer extension programs on how to capacitate the graduates who are in the non-teaching field.
2. Strengthen the linkages to assist the graduates who are looking for jobs based on their interests or passion in partnership with the alumni association and placement office.
3. The curriculum and instruction of the Teacher Education Program should offer more teaching and learning experiences using both individual and collaborative works to enhance 21st-century skills and the identified transferable competencies.
4. The university may conduct a study on job satisfaction and productivity of the graduates to validate the functionality of the program even for those who have non-teaching jobs.

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