

Preparedness and Emotional Struggles of Public Elementary School Teaching Applicants

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the preparedness and emotional struggles of the public elementary school teacher-applicants in Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, Ilocos Sur Division. There were 35 respondents selected through a total population sampling from 16 Public Elementary Schools in Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, Ilocos Sur Division. The study is a mixed quantitative-qualitative type of research that utilized the descriptive-correlational method using a content-validated questionnaire to determine the profile and the level of preparedness of the respondents, whereas an interview was employed to recognize the emotional struggles of the teacher-applicants in applying to a public elementary school. Thematic Analysis was used in putting together the responses. Moreover, the significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the level of preparedness of the public elementary school teachers in was identified. The findings of the study revealed that the respondents have a “very high” level of preparedness, however, it was also found that the respondents experienced serious emotional struggles in the application process. Correlation analysis showed that gender identity is significantly related to teaching experience and specialized training and skills, while the type of school graduated is negatively significant to the teaching experience. Based on the findings, the following conclusions are represented: (1) The public elementary school teacher-applicants were prepared in the application process; (2) emotional struggles were part of the experiences in applying to a public elementary school; and (3) career orientation plan is developed based on the findings of the study.

Keywords: Preparedness; Emotional struggles; Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants

Introduction

The fundamental purpose of the educational system is to select competent teachers who can deliver quality education to young boys and girls. Hiring for a public elementary school Teacher I position happens each year. The Department of Education hiring team has a vested interest in implementing effective hiring strategies to increase the chances of improving students' success with the use of DepEd Order No. 7, s. 2015. It is observable that teacher-applicants prepare themselves in this hiring process. They prepare all the documents needed, the skills to be presented, their knowledge of teaching young boys and girls, and the amount of money they need to use for the application process. Teacher effectiveness is a multi-dimensional term that includes everything from personality to professional knowledge to technical skills (Stronge 2007 & 2018). Identifying excellent teachers throughout the hiring process is made even more complicated if the procedure is not carried out correctly.

The university or college from which the public elementary school teacher-applicants graduated has already prepared them for their application to a public elementary school. Alongside the teaching strategies and skills, they have taught while studying in teacher education for four (4) years, they have also established in them how to get along well

with the people in their position, especially the officials in the Department of Education. The study supports the Legitimation Code Theory by Karl Maton (Maton, 2014) used and is related to the work-readiness or preparedness of the public elementary school teacher-applicants in the application process.

The public elementary school teacher-applicants undergo various emotional struggles before they can be absorbed. The bulky documents and the long screening process are just material things done through preparations. The pressure they can get from their environment, especially if they have been applying for a very long period and some of the people they know are already in the service for years, can contribute to the emotional struggles. The struggles in the application process are never in the physical aspect; the challenges they experience in emotional are a serious matter for the public elementary school teacher-applicants. Further, the study supports the Concern Stage Theory of Fuller. This theory relates to teachers' career stages, during which teachers also experience various phases of the application process, ranging from submitting requirements to waiting for an available teaching position.

This study aimed to determine the level of preparedness and the emotional struggles of the public elementary school teacher-applicants in Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, and the career orientation plan that can help the public school elementary school teacher-applicants.

This study is significant because the findings are of great help in identifying the level of preparedness and emotional struggles the public elementary school teacher-applicants face before they get employed. In this case, solutions can be drawn to help the public elementary school teacher-applicants cope with their emotional struggles.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed quantitative-qualitative method of research. The descriptive-correlational design was used to describe the profile of the respondents and the level of preparedness of the public elementary school teachers in Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, Division of Ilocos Sur in the application process. The qualitative method utilized an interview. It explored the experiences, struggles, and emotions of the public elementary school teacher-applicants. To elicit qualitative data on the emotional struggles of the respondents, the researcher interviewed the respondents using guide questions. The researcher conducted an online interview with the respondents on their preferred date and time.

Population and Sample

The respondents of this study were the public elementary school teacher-applicants of Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, Division of Ilocos Sur within the School Year 2021-2022, composed of seven (7) male and 28 female public elementary school teacher-applicants.

Data Gathering Instrument

To address the preparedness and emotional struggles of the public elementary school teacher-applicants of Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, Division of Ilocos Sur, a survey questionnaire was employed. Knowledgeable teachers in the field validated the checklist questionnaire created by the researcher. Part I pertains to the information of the respondents, including their age, gender identity, civil status, type of school graduated, qualifications, the highest educational attainment, the number of years applying for a teaching position, and employment status of the public elementary school teacher-applicants of Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, Division of Ilocos Sur. Part II dealt with the level of preparedness in the application processes of the public elementary school teacher-applicants in Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District, Division of Ilocos Sur. The researcher utilized Part III to gather information about the emotional struggles of the public elementary school teacher-applicants. This information served as support for the survey results on their pre-employment struggles.

Data Gathering Procedure

In pursuing the study, the researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Ilocos Sur, Public Schools District Supervisors, and Principal/Head Teachers of 16 public schools for their approval in administering the questionnaires to the teacher-applicants. When permission was granted, the researcher contacted the respondents through a Messenger due to Covid-19 pandemic. Afterward, the respondents answered the survey questionnaire sent via Google Form. The online interview was also conducted through Messenger to determine the experiences and emotional struggles of the public elementary school teacher-applicants.

Ethical Considerations

Privacy and Confidentiality

The respondents of the study were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses. To ensure this, the researcher removed the respondents' information that required the identification of names and other identities.

Vulnerability

The respondents of this research were considered vulnerable because they are presently public elementary school teacher-applicants. Thus, the data collected are kept and remain confidential.

Recruitment of Subjects

The respondents of this study were the Public Elementary School teacher-applicants of Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District. Participation in this research was highly voluntary. Thus, the respondents have the right to withdraw participation.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the profile of the public school elementary teacher-applicants. As revealed in the table, a great number (8 or 22.9%) of the respondents belong to the age of 24, while there are one (1 or 2.9%) of respondents each belonging to the ages of 28, 29, 30, 31, and 34. A glimpse of the table manifests that a great majority (28 or 80%) of respondents are female, while there are two (2 or 5.7%) who are LGBTQ+. On the other hand, most (33 or 94%) of the respondents are single, while two (5.7%) are married. On the table, a majority (26 or 74.3%) of the respondents are graduates of public schools, while nine (25.7%) are private school graduates. Moreover, a majority (26 or 74.3%) of the respondents graduated without honors, while nine (25.7%) graduated with honors. The majority (19 or 54.3%) of the respondents are bachelor's degree graduates, while one (2.9%) holds a master's degree. Moreover, a great percentage (12 or 34.3%) of the respondents have been applying for two (2) years, while three (8.6%) of the respondents have been applying for three years. Finally, the majority of the respondents (18 or 51.4%) of the respondents are not yet hired, while two (5.7%) are permanent.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Profile	f	%
Age		
22	4	11.4
23	6	17.1
24	8	22.9
25	6	17.1
26	4	11.4
27	2	5.7
28	1	2.9
29	1	2.9
30	1	2.9
31	1	2.9
34	1	2.9
Gender Identity		
Male	5	14.3
Female	28	80.0
LGBTQIA+	2	5.7
Civil Status		
Single	33	94.3
Married	2	5.7
Type of School Graduated		
Public	26	74.3
Private	9	25.7
Qualifications		
Graduated with Honor	9	25.7
Graduated without Honor	26	74.3
Highest Educational Attainment		
BEEd Graduate	19	54.3

with MA Units	15	42.9
MA Graduate	1	2.9
Number of Years Applying for a Teaching Position		
1	8	22.9
2	12	34.3
3	3	8.6
4	7	20.0
5	5	14.3
Employment Status		
Permanent	2	5.7
Contractual	15	42.9
Not yet hired	18	51.4

Level of Preparedness of the Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants

The level of preparedness of the public elementary school teacher-applicants of Sto. Domingo – San Ildefonso District, Division of Ilocos Sur in the application process in terms of (a) Teaching Experience, (b) Specialized Training and Skills, (c) Interview, (d) Demonstration Teaching, (e) Communication Skills or English Proficiency Test, (f) Social Relation, and (g) Financial Adequacy.

In terms of teaching experience (see Table 2), respondents have a very high level of preparedness ($\bar{x}=4.68$).

Table 2: Level of Preparedness of Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants on Teaching Experience

Statements	Mean	DR
1. I have practiced all the strategies in teaching that I used in my teaching career.	4.45	VH
2. I am trained in handling learners' behavior inside and outside the classroom.	4.68	VH
3. I am trained in preparing Lesson Plans, Instructional Materials, Reports, and other documents regarding the progress of my learners.	4.77	VH
4. I am confident with the subject matter and grade level I am going to handle.	4.59	VH
5. I am taught to communicate well with the parents and other stakeholders regarding the needs of my learners and the improvement of the school.	4.73	VH
6. I am trained in making different activities to cater individual differences of my learners.	4.68	VH
7. I have learned experiences from my previous employment (such as tutoring, private schools, etc.)	4.82	VH
Mean	4.68	VH

The statement “I have learned experiences from my previous employment (such as tutoring, private schools, etc.)” got the highest mean of 4.82. In contrast, “I have practiced all the strategies in teaching which I used in my teaching career” got the lowest mean of 4.45 described as “Very High” respectively. It implies that having teaching experience as a tutor in private schools and others can be a great help in gaining experiences that can be used in teaching in a public elementary school. However, the teaching strategies, the respondents know are not always practiced because some do not practice their teaching profession, while others teach high school or college education.

Reed (2021) stated in the study of the Highfliers' recent survey that graduates with no prior work experience have a tiny chance of getting a job. This study stated the importance of having prior experience before applying for a particular job. However, the result also showed that “I have practiced all the strategies in teaching which I used in my teaching career” is the lowest among the statements because some respondents did not use what they had learned during their baccalaureate degree. Respondent 16 mentioned, “Half of my six years in the teaching profession were in higher education. The first three years had been a struggle. It didn't help me grow or improve my skills...”. This agrees with the result of the data. The respondent might be teaching, but not practicing strategies learned at the baccalaureate level.

In terms of specialized training and skills, it is depicted in Table 3 that teacher-applicants have a very high ($\bar{x}=4.33$) level of preparedness. The statement “The training seminars I attended are in line with my career.” has the highest mean of 4.46, which is described as “Very High”, while “The training seminars I attended helped me to be equipped with the skills needed in some learning areas (like Music, EPP, etc.)” has the lowest mean of 4.17 with a descriptive rating of “High”. This suggests that respondents mastered, delivered, and were well-trained in their skills while undergoing this phase of their application. However, it also implies that some of the training seminars they attended do not agree with the requirements of the Division Memorandum. Respondent 4 mentioned, “With regards to specialized training and skills, I underwent special training to develop and acquire new skills which I can use in my succeeding endeavor.”

Table 3: Level of preparedness of the public elementary school teacher-applicants in terms of specialized training and skills.

Statements	Mean	DR
1. I am trained in my training seminars. I learned how to handle situations inside the classroom.	4.43	VH
2. The training-seminars I attended helped me to identify things to consider in teaching elementary school learners.	4.29	VH
3. I attended training-seminars that gave me more wisdom in different teaching strategies in techniques in handling elementary school learners.	4.26	VH
4. The training-seminars I attended helped me to be more equipped and with the skills to be needed in teaching elementary school learners.	4.31	VH
5. The training-seminars I attended helped me to be equipped with the skills needed in some learning areas (like Music, EPP, etc.).	4.17	H
6. The training-seminars I attended are in line with my career.	4.46	VH
7. I demonstrated the skills I learned during training seminars I attended in the skills demonstration.	4.37	VH
Mean	4.33	VH

Respondent 30 stated, "I learned how to fold different table napkins which are connected to my NC2." This statement approved the result of the data that the training seminars attended helped them equipped with the skills needed in some learning areas like Music, and EPP, while others have a "High" level of preparedness because the public elementary school teacher applicants just enrolled in an NCII training-seminars is that this is the only program that offers 10-day training-seminars.

In terms of the interview, it is indicated in Table 4 that the respondents have a very high level of preparedness ($\bar{x}=4.81$).

Table 4: Level of Preparedness of Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants on Interview

Statements	Mean	DR
1. I see to it that I am well-prepared for my interview.	4.74	VH
2. I answered the questions honestly with all my might.	4.91	VH
3. I expressed myself in a way my interviewer could understand me well.	4.83	VH
4. I showed good articulation in answering the questions given to me by the interviewers.	4.49	VH
5. I was consistent with my answers in the interview.	4.80	VH
6. I am well-groomed in facing the interviewer.	4.94	VH
7. I give my utmost respect to the interviewers who are conducting the interview.	4.94	VH
Mean	4.81	VH

With a mean of 4.94, "I am well-groomed in facing the interviewer", and "I give my utmost respect to the interviewers that are conducting the interview" has the highest mean. At the same time "I showed good articulation in answering the questions given to me by the interviewers." have the lowest mean of 4.49 which are all described as "Very High" individually. It suggests that the respondents respond well to the questions and prepare themselves during the interview. It also indicates that the respondents were well prepared during the interview, and they showed respect to the interviewers. However, the respondents are weak in articulation; this may be caused by nervousness and anxiousness while having the interview.

Even though the statement "I showed good articulation in answering the questions given to me by the interviewers." is described as "Very High" in the level of preparedness, it still got the lowest mean because of what the public elementary school teacher-applicants felt during their interview. "I felt conscious and nervous at the same time. As a result, I cannot utter the words properly and I cannot express my thoughts properly." (Respondent 19)

As reflected in Table 5, the respondents have a very high level of preparedness ($\bar{x}=4.77$) during their demonstration teaching. The statement "I see to it that the lesson I prepared and the Instructional Materials I created matched with the grade/age of my learners which I choose to demonstrate my teaching skills." has the highest mean of 4.89. At the same time, "I executed all the steps on the methods I used during the demonstration successfully." has the lowest mean of 4.54; these were all described as "Very High". This means that the respondents are exceptionally equipped with oral speaking, they exercised well their teaching skills, and they see to it that the learners engage and interact well with their teaching demonstration. The respondents prioritized that the instructional materials they used were suited for the grade or age of the learners they taught. However, they did not execute all the steps in teaching because of some factors like time and the nervousness they felt.

Table 5: Level of Preparedness of Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants on Demonstration Teaching

Statements		Mean	DR
1.	I prepared my Lesson Plan and Instructional Materials which are suited for the grade level of pupils I chose for my demonstration teaching.	4.86	VH
2.	I demonstrated mastery of the lesson that I prepared.	4.86	VH
3.	I see to it that learners listen to my discussion, and they participate in every activity I give.	4.86	VH
4.	I have a modulated voice while delivering my lesson to the class.	4.80	VH
5.	I observed wisely the time allotted for me to demonstrate my lesson.	4.60	VH
6.	I executed all the steps on the methods I used during the demonstration successfully.	4.54	VH
7.	I see to it that the lesson I prepared and the Instructional Materials I created matched with the grade/age of my learners which I choose to demonstrate my teaching skills.	4.89	VH
Mean		4.77	VH

On the other hand, the statement “I executed all the steps on the methods I used during the demonstration successfully.” showed the lowest mean. This is because the respondents could not execute all the steps because of time pressure. This proves that time pressure made it hard for the public elementary school teacher-applicants to execute their prepared lessons for their demonstration teaching.

“I have a lot of unforgettable experiences during my application to a public elementary school especially on my first time, like being so disappointed in myself because of failure in demonstrating my lesson properly because of time pressure...” (Respondents 12).

It is evident in Table 6 that the respondents of this study have a very high level of preparedness ($\bar{x}=4.59$) with their English Proficiency Test.

Table 6: Level of Preparedness of Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants on the English Proficiency Test

Statements		Mean	DR
1.	I analyzed and interpreted what I read in all the materials.	4.83	VH
2.	I recognized the reasonable application of principles or opinions expressed by the author of certain texts in the test material.	4.51	VH
3.	I studied thoroughly grammatical errors and the logical arrangement of ideas in the test materials.	4.46	VH
4.	I studied the structure of the sentences used in the English Proficiency Test.	4.51	VH
5.	I managed the time allotted to answering the English Proficiency Test.	4.66	VH
6.	I answered all the items in the test material.	4.89	VH
7.	I answered the test questions confidently.	4.26	VH
Mean		4.59	VH

The statement “I answered all the items in the test material.” has the highest mean of 4.89, and “I answered the test questions confidently.” has the lowest mean of 4.26; both have the descriptive rating of “Very High”. This suggests that the respondents prepared and reviewed their English Proficiency. It is also indicated that the respondents see to it that they answered all the items in the test material, but they were not confident with their answers. The time allotted for them in taking the test became a motivation for them to answer every item. However, they merely read the items, which causes them to be unsure of their answers.

“During the EPT, I read carefully the questions so that I can answer correctly.” (Respondent 5)

The statement indicated the importance of reading the questions carefully to get the correct answer items in the English Proficiency Test.

However, “Hardly choose the correct answer during the EPT. Need to analyze the given options.” (Respondent 18)

This shows that the possible reason why the respondents are not confident in their answers is that it is hard to pick the correct answers in the English Proficiency Test.

As seen in Table 7, the respondents have a very high level of preparedness ($\bar{x}=4.95$) regarding their social relations. It is shown that “I showed respect and politeness to the School Head when I submitted my papers for

application.”, “I express courtesy and politeness to the teachers of the school where I submitted my application.”, and “I greet with respect the Division Ranking Committee upon arriving at the demonstration site.” have the highest mean of 5.0. At the same time “I deal properly with the Supervisor of the District where filed my application.” has the lowest mean of 4.83; these were all described as “Very High”. This means that the respondents get well and exert effort to have a good relationship and good impression from the selection committee; that the respondents show good relation to their School Heads, teachers, and Division ranking committee. However, they lack confidence in dealing with the District Supervisor.

Table 7: Level of Preparedness of Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants on Social Relation

Statements	Mean	DR
1. I showed respect and politeness to School Head when I submitted my papers for application.	5.00	VH
2. I express courtesy and politeness to the teachers of the school where I submitted my application.	5.00	VH
3. I greet with respect the Division Ranking Committee upon arriving at the demonstration site.	5.00	VH
4. I can deal properly with the ranking committee during the application process.	4.91	VH
5. I express myself in the best way the ranking committee can see the sincerity in the way I talk and answer them.	4.91	VH
6. I dealt properly with the Supervisor of the District where filed my application.	4.83	VH
7. I can interact with the Division Officers with respect during the application process.	4.97	VH
Mean	4.95	VH

According to Miles et al. (2018), as the war for talent heats up, the relevance of applicant experience has only recently been recognized. However, the statement “I deal properly with the Supervisor of the District where filed my application.” got the lowest mean because some of the public elementary school teacher-applicants are relatives of the District Supervisor. This can be the reason why the respondents did not deal appropriately with the District Supervisor.

“...Though my aunt is the district supervisor, I don’t use it to my advantage.” (Respondent 16).

Finally, it can be seen in Table 8 that the respondents have a very high level of preparedness ($\bar{x}=4.38$) with financial adequacy. “I spend money on producing my Instructional Materials for my Demonstration Teaching” has the highest mean of 4.80, marked as “Very High”, while “My budget is enough for preparing for my application.” has the lowest mean of 3.91, described as “High”. This suggests that the respondents have enough budget to be used for their application. This also indicates that the respondents spend a lot of money on producing their instructional materials. On the other hand, the respondents somewhat struggled with the budget for the application.

Table 8: Level of Preparedness of Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants on Financial Adequacy

Statements	Mean	DR
1. I spend money when it comes to photocopying application requirements, lesson plans, and reviewers (for the EPT).	4.54	VH
2. I pay my fare for attending interviews, demonstration teaching, skills validation, and English Proficiency Tests.	4.49	VH
3. I spend money on producing my Instructional Materials for my Demonstration Teaching.	4.80	VH
4. I used money in the training seminars and conferences I attended.	4.17	VH
5. I spent fare going to the Division Office for the follow up the result of the Registry of Qualified Applicants (RQA) and for the recount of my points.	4.37	VH
6. My budget is enough to prepare for my application.	3.91	H
7. I repeatedly spend photocopying and production of my requirements.	4.37	VH
Mean	4.38	VH

“My demo teaching was good. It is alright to spend money because it is for our good.” (Respondent 5) This agrees with the claim that the respondents spend money on producing their instructional materials because they also benefit from it.

“My worries while undergoing the application process is the lack of finances in securing important documents since I am not yet working that time...” (Respondent 31). This suggests that the statement “My budget is enough for

preparing for my application.” was described as “High” because not all public elementary school teacher-applicants some do not have enough budget for the application process.

Overall, Table 9 shows that the respondents have a very high level of preparedness ($\bar{x}=4.64$) in application in a public elementary school in Sto. Domingo – San Ildefonso District.

Table 9: Summary Table on the Level of Preparedness of Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating
A. Teaching Experience	4.68	VH
B. Specialized Training and Skills	4.33	VH
C. Interview	4.81	VH
D. Demonstration Teaching	4.77	VH
E. Communication Skills or the English Proficiency Test (EPT)	4.59	VH
F. Social Relation	4.95	VH
G. Financial Adequacy	4.38	VH
OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN	4.64	VH

It is indicated that Social Relations has the highest mean (4.95) among the indicators, while Specialized Training and Skills has the lowest mean (4.33); both were described as “Very High” respectively. The overall weighted mean implies that the public elementary school teacher-applicants are confident, prepared, and skilled during applying for Teacher I position in the Division of Ilocos Sur. Conversely, the respondents also showed how confident they are in dealing with the hiring committee, district supervisors, school heads, and teachers. This also suggests that the public elementary school teacher-applicants conform well to the requirements stated in the DepEd Order No. 7, S.2015.

Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents and the Pre-employment Struggles of the Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants

It is evident in Table 10 that gender identity is significantly related to teaching experience ($r=.452$) and specialized training and skills ($r=.428$). It means that female teachers are more likely to gain teaching experience because teaching can be linked to caring, giving, and helping, and females are naturally like that. Thus, by being more prepared, more teaching opportunities also knock the female public elementary school teacher-applicants. This strengthens the claims of Tasner et al. (2017) that women's predominance in teaching professions impacts the harmonization of female respondents' habits and perceptions of the field they are entering.

On the other hand, the type of school graduated is negatively significant to the teaching experience ($r=-.445$) of the public elementary school teacher-applicants. This implies that the most of public elementary school teacher-applicants who graduated from a public school show to be less prepared when it comes to gaining teaching experience. According to Pattabiraman et al. (2020), unlike other public institutions, private institutions provide excellent job security for teachers. If a student graduates from a Scottish private school, they are guaranteed employment in a Scottish school for one year following graduation.

Table 10: Correlation between the profile of the respondents and the level of preparedness of the public elementary school teacher-applicants

	A	B	B	D	E	F	G
a) Age	-.292	-.101	.047	-.262	.174	-.059	.009
b) Gender Identity	.452*	.428*	.034	.315	.121	.175	.430
c) Civil Status	.204	.158	.113	-.052	.161	.085	.159
d) Type of School Graduated	-.445*	-.179	-.033	-.330	-.069	-.040	-.485
e) Qualifications	-.356	-.501	-.074	-.255	-.113	.040	-.110
f) Highest Educational Attainment	.201	.160	.473	.060	.198	.111	-.159
g) Number of Years Applying for Teaching Position	-.085	.049	.227	.069	-.020	-.059	.098
h) Employment Status	.010	-.090	-.001	.073	-.004	.030	-.204

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Note: (A) Teaching Experience, (B) Specialized Training and Skills, (C) Interview, (D) Demonstration Teaching, (E) Communication Skills or English Proficiency Test, (F) Social Relation, and (F) Financial Adequacy.

The Emotional Struggles of the Public Elementary School Teacher-Applicants in their Pre-employment in Public Elementary School

Emotional Struggle is a condition the respondents feel towards a particular thing. It affects their performance and how they mingle, communicate, and see people and things that surround them.

On Teaching Experience

Seeking a teaching experience is one of the factors to practice all the skills and strategies in teaching in a private school or any educational institution. However, the public elementary school teacher-applicants have expressed emotional struggles in earning years of teaching experience, securing a certificate of employment, and seeking teaching experience.

Weigh Me Well. In teaching experience, the points given to the public elementary school teacher-applicants were based on the length of service they rendered in a private institution in which they practiced their teaching profession. The respondents felt that they need to gain more experience in a public school to create a more significant gap with other public elementary school teacher-applicants because even though the respondent already has two (2) years of teaching experience, it is still not enough to gain more prominent points.

"I have two (2) years of teaching experience in a private school, so I was able to garner points for that criterion. It is a challenging part because only a few points correspond to a month of teaching experience." (Respondent 15)

Be Just. Respondents must have teaching experience, but not all employees are willing to give what is due to their employees. The respondent is very much willing to extend her skills and talent as a teacher in a private school. Still, to some extent, struggle to secure a certification that they need to obtain a point in this criterion.

"Getting a certificate of employment in a private school where I am currently employed is very hard." (Respondent 5)

A Rookie. Not all public elementary school teacher-applicants are lucky enough to be absorbed in a private institution to practice their profession. Some of these public elementary school teacher-applicants have their reasons and struggles as to why they could not secure a point in this criterion.

"I am hesitant to submit my application in a private school because I lack self-confidence. This is why I do not have an experience yet." (Respondent 35)

These statements support the study of Reed (2021) that applicants with no prior work experience have a tiny chance of getting a job.

On Specialized Training and Skills

Specialized training and skills are an aspect by which an aspiring public elementary school teacher can acquire skills needed to enhance the ability and capability in any teaching-related skills.

Convey It All. When the respondents were asked about their struggles regarding their specialized training and skills, most expressed their burden in bringing all the materials they needed for their skills validation. Distance is one of the reasons why it is hard for the respondent to execute their skills in the skills validation because they need to travel, even commute, with all the materials they will use.

"The first time I applied, I carried all the materials that I needed in baking even the small oven. I travelled from San Ildefonso to Cabugao because that's the place where we are going to be interviewed, deliver the demonstration teaching, and for the skills validation." (Respondent 10)

Employers' Decision. Some of the respondents are employed in a private institution, and some do not have the opportunity to undergo training and seminars which they can use in applying for a public elementary school teacher position. This statement only shows that some private institutions do not pay attention to their employees' development.

"Since I came from a private school with a very problematic organization, I admit I don't have that much relevant training because the administrations are only after their income-generating activities and showed little attention to employee development." (Respondent 16)

Unrecognized. Training and seminars are significant factors in this criterion because ten (10) points will be based on this part.

"I have the skills, but I don't have any NCII. I have 15 ISO teaching certificates, but I guess they don't recognize it." (Respondent 22)

It is evident in the DepEd Order that a public elementary school teacher-applicant must present a certificate of at least ten (10) days of training. Thus, even though it is a teaching-related recognition or certificate, it is still invalid because it is not a 10-day training.

Interview

The interview is a significant factor in hiring the best public elementary school teachers because it is where they will showcase their behavior, intelligence, and capability in the teaching profession.

The Easiest One. Preparation and confidence can contribute to the success of an interview. This theme shows how confident the respondents are while having the interview and how they enjoyed the interview in the application process. These statements indicate that the respondents are confident and capable of facing the interviewers.

“Interviews are my favourite! I am always done within 3 minutes.” (Respondent 13)

“I am confident with the interview.” (Respondent 35)

Mind in the Answers. In an interview, public elementary school teacher-applicants must focus on the questions given to them during the interview process. This articulation of the respondent shows how they felt during the interview, which causes a commotion within their minds. These feelings made them to stutter, cannot utter words correctly the way they wanted, and cannot express their thoughts about a particular topic given to them.

“The most unforgettable one was during the interview because I felt nervous and stuttered a bit when I was answering some questions which I didn’t expect because I didn’t feel nervous before it and during the demo teaching.” (Respondent 34)

Interviewer POV. In an interview, there is an interviewee and an interviewer. This theme is all about the struggles of the respondents during the interview. This focuses on their experiences with the interviewers. This respondent encountered an interviewer who chose to test the behavior and mental conditioning of one interviewing.

“More likely, the interviewer gave me a mind confusing questions and I had a hard time answering it.” (Respondent 21)

“I was a bit disappointed about the line of questioning, I was expecting that they would ask me about my credentials, but instead, they advised me not to apply for elementary but rather senior high school.” (Respondent 16)

Demonstration Teaching

Teaching demonstration is one of the criteria by which public elementary school teacher-applicants exhibit their teaching skills and abilities.

Time is Limited. Teacher-applicants were only given five (5) minutes each to execute their teaching demonstration due to the number of public elementary school teacher-applicants in the Ilocos Sur Division. The limited time given to the respondent causes them to be rattled during the execution of their demonstration teaching.

“During my demonstration teaching, I find it hard to execute my lesson on the very limited time, thus, sometimes causing me to rattle.” (Respondent 22)

Costly Materials. Public elementary school teacher-applicants wanted to impress the selection committee with these instructional materials. It is also a burden to the respondents because every year they apply, they need to spend on the preparation of these instructional materials and lesson plans. It made them frustrated because they needed to repeat it every time.

“I struggled a bit because of my fellow applicants’ extravagant props.” (Respondent 35)

Out of Comfort Zone. Not all public elementary school teacher-applicants are knowledgeable enough in teaching using Mother Tongue as a medium of teaching. Iloco is the first spoken language of the respondents, yet they still find it hard to use their Mother Tongue as a medium of instruction because it is not taught while they are still in their baccalaureate degree. This respondent encountered an interviewer who chose to test the behavior and mental conditioning of one interviewing.

“My unforgettable experience during the demonstration teaching is going out of my comfort zone, like teaching Ilokano, which for me is very awkward.” (Respondent 1)

"I was a bit disappointed about the line of questioning, I was expecting that they would ask me about my credentials, but instead, they advised me not to apply for elementary but rather senior high school." (Respondent 16)

Communication Skills or English Proficiency Test (EPT)

According to DepEd Order No. 7, S. 2015, the English Proficiency Test (EPT), administered by the Bureau of Education Assessment (BEA), will be used to assess applicants' English communication skills.

"From 2018-2020 the EPT should be taken every year. That was so inconvenient for me." (Respondent 10)

Taking the English Proficiency Test every year is a struggle because it is not convenient for public elementary teacher-applicants to do this until they get hired.

Social Relation

Applying for a job is never easy; no matter how much the applicants prepare, they will still struggle emotionally.

Connections. Having a connection with anyone in the department can add an emotional struggle for some of the applicants.

"I always worry about competing with applicants. Especially those who are close to the principals or whose parents are teachers." (Respondent 1)

It has been registered on their minds that if their competitor is connected to any DepEd officials, principals, school heads, or even teachers. On the other hand, one respondent defended this claim.

"Wala akong 'backer'. Though my aunt is a district supervisor, I don't use it to my advantage." (Respondent 16)

This just means that not everyone uses such a connection to be absorbed in the division; somehow, this can be a struggle for Respondent 1 thought that other public elementary school teacher-applicants thought that Respondent 16 took it as an advantage to get the position.

Competition Among Competitors. Expect that when applying for a specific position, there will always be a competitor.

"At first, I was worried if I would be qualified and pass knowing that, every year, many new graduates (first timers) are being added, so I'm worried about them and considered them as competitors. I was nervous but I just pray and trust the process." (Respondent 9)

The increasing number of public elementary school teacher-applicants every year is very alarming. Teacher-applicants from public elementary schools, who were not absorbed by the division, tried their luck for subsequent hiring.

Pressure on Family and Friends. When talking about social relations, it is not only about the relationship among the selection committee or DepEd employees, nor with some of the public elementary school teacher-applicants, but it also talks about the applicants and family, or the applicants and their friends and peers.

Family is the sole source of strength not to give up on applying for a particular job like teaching. Yet, this is still a feeling of pressure, especially if the public elementary school teacher-applicants have been applying for several years.

"I guess it's natural to feel pressure especially when your family is depending on you. As for me, I'm not pressured because my batchmates are already being hired. I feel most pressured by my parents having great hopes in me and my age adding up each year not being hired is also adding to that weight." (Respondent 11)

Respondent worries about being a burden to their families. They feel pressure from their family because they long to be accommodated by the Division because of the long years of applying.

"A lot of pressure. And just to let others know, sometimes, I feel depressed because of this. I always overthink then suddenly I cry. I'm also having trouble breathing whenever I overthink. I'm pressured because I don't want to disappoint my family. I'm sick and tired of hearing so many comparisons between me and other education graduates." (Respondent 27)

This shows how hard it is to apply for a public elementary school teacher I position. It is not only the pressure they are experiencing, but also a severe mental health problem called "Depression".

In applying for a job, particularly in a public elementary teacher I position, there is always a perfect time for everything and everyone; some may be accommodated first while others wait for years.

“Yes, I am pressured. You cannot escape from comparing yourself with them. ‘Buti pa sila’, ‘ang swerte nila’, those words were just normally my thoughts.” (Respondent 8)

The respondent shows how he is experiencing self-pity. The respondent is already comparing his or her career status to his or her friends and batch mates.

Financial Adequacy

In applying for any job, like education, public elementary school teacher-applicants must prepare all the necessary documents and produce all the things needed for the application process.

“It’s financially draining, especially for someone who belongs to below moderate economic status. First, in preparing your papers, then preparing your instructional materials and to a lot more processes you need to go through just to complete your requirements and application.” (Respondent 22)

This statement was proof that some of the respondents struggled with their budget in preparing for Instructional Materials and lesson plans and the printing and photocopy of some of the documents they needed for their application.

The career orientation plan may be developed to help the public elementary school teacher-applicants in the Division of Ilocos Sur

Career orientation is relevant to the needs of the public elementary school teacher-applicants to prepare them for the application and reduce their emotional struggle in applying.

10-Days Training-Seminar

This is an edge of the College of Teacher Education because they know what the best training seminar is they can give to their students which can help them in their application to the public elementary school.

Assistance Orientation on the English Proficiency Test (EPT)

English Proficiency Test (EPT) is an essential factor in measuring how proficient the teacher-applicants are in the English language. With the help of the College of Teacher Education, aspiring public elementary teachers still get assistance and guidance on how English Proficiency takes place.

Counselling

Counselling can help them overcome these things. Thus, offering a counselling service in college or even the university can help these teacher-education graduates cope with the severe mental health problems they experience upon their application to a private school.

Conclusions

A great majority of the public elementary school teacher-applicants are female and are mostly single. The majority has graduated from public school without honor, hold a bachelor’s degree, and are currently not yet hired. A great number of respondents are 24 years old and have been applying for two (2) years. The respondents’ level of preparedness is very high in the application process in Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District. Gender Identity of the public elementary school teacher-applicants is significantly related to the level of preparedness in teaching experience and specialized training and skills; the type of school graduated is negatively significant with the level of preparedness in teaching experience. There is an emotional struggle stored in the respondents in all the indicators in the application process. A career orientation plan is developed based on the findings of the study.

Cognizant of the conclusion it is recommended that the public elementary school teacher-applicants of Sto. Domingo-San Ildefonso District is encouraged to acquire teaching experience by applying to a private institution, participating in 10-day training seminars, developing self-confidence and good articulation, and utilizing available resources in making instructional materials. The Department of Education, Ilocos Sur Division should continue to give equal opportunities for all aspiring public elementary school teachers in their application to guarantee their rights and to be able to choose the best teacher. The university by which the public elementary school teacher-applicants should continue to monitor their alumni for their growth and development and their professional ladders. To help reduce the emotional struggle of the public elementary school teacher-applicants, counseling must be offered. The career orientation plan may be considered for implantation and support for all public elementary school teacher-applicants in the division. A similar study should be conducted.

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