# PEDAGOGICAL JOURNEY OF NEWLY HIRED TEACHERS: STORIES TO TELL

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Abstract- The purpose of this study was to describe the stories of the newly hired teachers on their pedagogical journey towards achieving excellence in their chosen profession. Phenomenological approach was employed to 20 newly hired teachers of the secondary schools of South Cotabato Division in the School Year 2015-2016. To gather data, in depth interview and focus group discussion were conducted. The results of the interview were transcribed, translated and coded to produce themes. As regards to the experiences of newly hired teachers in the Public Secondary Schools, the following were the themes: stress anxiety, work overload, relationship struggles, and sense of satisfaction. As look upon to their challenges to ensure effective teaching, the themes were created: diligence, ingenuity and resourcefulness, openness and respect, support system, training and development. As to their insights, the themes were generated: time tested values, reflections and realizations, hopes and aspirations, vision and guiding principles.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Journey. It refers to the professional travel of the newly hired teachers toward achieving the effectiveness in the application of the different teaching methods they used during instruction time.

Stories to Tell. It refers to the experiences, coping mechanisms and insights of the newly hired teachers.

**Newly Hired Teachers.** It refers to the participants of the study who had five (5) years and below teaching experience. They are LET passers, employed in the secondary public schools of South Cotabato Schools Division and had been employed as regular teachers of the said school division.

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#### INTRODUCTION

What the future holds for the teaching profession might be anyone's guess, but emotion plays a vital part in our daily occurrences (Santrock, 2010). As practicing professional teachers, we all go through life cycles, and each person has his/her ways of dealing with their emotional changes. Anent to this, the greatest struggles of a professional teacher as an individual are not fought on battlefields, they are fought not only inside the classroom, but in human hearts as they struggle with fear, frustration, stress, a lack of self-confidence, feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, and the inability to cope with circumstances not to their liking. While these challenges can defeat to everyone, they can also serve as catalysts for improvement, in preparation for the favorable development in the cognitive, spiritual, social, personal, as well as, in understanding of one's own professional opportunities and challenges (Bilbao, 2012).

Moreover, newly hired teachers can practice professional opportunities and challenges included the principles and guidelines that will assist students in finding peace, confidence, and fulfillment, not feeling defeated by fear, frustration, stress, or hopelessness- but to be an over comer. As declared by Zamorski & Haydyn (2012) not everyone grows up to have an innate

sense of high self-esteem or worthiness. Everybody has those rough nights, days, negative moods or being tired. Thus, to travel the path of becoming an effective teacher, everyone has its own stories to tell. Stories along one's journey of practicing the profession toward success, as Cruickshank, et. al (2010) pointed out, newly hired teachers should be equipped with knowledge, values and skills about teaching strategies.

As a matter of fact, we have not come a cross of a similar study that dealt on pedagogical journey of Newly Hired Teachers: Stories to tell in the local setting. Therefore in this context that we are interested to know the experiences of these teachers as this can raise concern to the intended beneficiary of the study and to come up with the implication to practice, thus the need to conduct a study.

# Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the stories told by newly hired teachers about their pedagogical journey towards achieving excellence in their chosen profession. It involved secondary teachers whose numbers of teaching experiences were five years and below which according to the Manual of Teachers Induction Program (TIP), still belonged to newly hired teachers. This involved 20 newly hired teachers of the secondary schools particularly of South Cotabato Schools Division.

This study recorded the experiences of the newly hired teachers including all their greatest struggles with fear, frustration, stress, or lack of self- confidence, feeling of inadequacy, inferiority, and the inability to cope with circumstances as neophyte in the practice of the profession. Furthermore, the researchers would try to let participants of the study relive in their minds the experiences they had and listen to the stories they would tell.

## **Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the experiences of the newly hired teachers in the Public Secondary Schools?
- 2. What are the coping mechanisms that newly hired teachers adopt in order to ensure effective teaching learning?
- 3. What are the insights that the newly hired teacher can share to other teachers?

**METHODOLOGY** 

Research Design

In this research, descriptive qualitative method was employed because the researcher went to the particular setting of interest to collect the data, to describe the natural setting on the direct source of data and the researchers were the key instruments. This research would be used if the intention of the research was about the collection of data that included interview transcripts, field notes, audio recording, diaries, personal comments, official records and anything else that can convey the actual words or actions of the people concerned in the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2014)

Moreover, this would also be the most suitable research methodology because the major concern of the research is to know how people make sense out of their lives. As researchers, we want to know what the participants thought about their pedagogical journey as newly hired teachers and why they think what they do. In fact the researcher's focus are likely to be the participants' assumptions, motives, reasons, goals and values about the experiences they encountered in their lives. The researchers would also try their best to capture the thinking of the participants' perspective as accurately as possible.

Furthermore, Witlis (2007) emphasized that it is through phenomenology where special events that happened as participants included their experiences could be understood better through lengthy discussions. Mesina (2009) supported these ideas when she stated that in using phenomenological research during the conduct of the study, what the researcher's most interested to know how things happened as experienced by the newly hired teachers, they interpret these experiences and find meaning to these experiences.

#### Role of the Researcher

As educators for several years, it is a real fact that to stay in the profession, one has to survive all the difficulties like making lesson plans, test plans and preparation of instructional materials appropriate for the lessons one has planned for the day. Aside from these, the distance of the home from the school assigned may cost much. But, one should remember that difficult times started during the first time the teacher started applying for the position much more, will be experienced by a newly hired teacher.

Recalling the events, what the researchers had passed when we were newly hired, gave more meaning and interest to collect experiences of others to discover the ingredients contributed to ones' success. As Taylor (2002) stated hiring new teachers is not the only time that administration need to know what a good teacher looks like. Few of us have had the privilege of hand picking a complete teaching staff more often we're stuck with somebody else's choices and are faced with supervision, evaluation and even remediation. As emphasized, the success of a school depends, in large measure, on the quality of its teaching-staff. When teachers know how to teach, students will learn. When teachers are effective, parents will be happy. When teachers look good, their principals also look good.

Inspired by these ideas, the researchers undertook this research personally made a survey of newly hired teachers assigned in South Cotabato Division. Then, we personally gather the data through in-depths interview and focus group discussions where the data gathered were all related to the sub questions asked. We also asked assistance of some colleagues to help us read and analyze the essence of the data gathered placed orderly in the themes as described in the subtopics stated. After coming up with the findings, referrals for professional specialist to data analysis and interpretation were sought and thereafter helped us to structure personal insights.

# **Research Participants**

The informants were the 20 newly hired teachers from South Cotabato Division where seven (7) came from the year 2012-2013; eight (8) from the year 2013-2014 and five (5) from the year 2014-2015 whom we chose through purposive sampling.

#### **Collection of Data**

Prior to the conduct of interview and focus group discussions ethical considerations were observed because of its importance in the research. Raizer (2009) with Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) pointed out that it should be remembered that the identities of all the participants should always be protected. Furthermore, we did our best to ensure that no physical or psychological harm would come to anyone who participated in the study. In summary, in any research, what should be taken into consideration is whether the participants identified would give their consent and confidentiality.

To work observing the ethics, the researchers tried to establish rapport before the interview started to gain the trust and confidence of the participants (Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). It is also very important to provide them safe and comfortable environment in sharing their experiences. To meet this requirement we saw to it that privacy of the place was provided to them.

In depth interview is one approach that was undertaken in order to gather information from the study informants. The in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic (Mack et al, 2005). However, focus groups resemble interviews, but in focus group discussions, both the strengths and the weaknesses of focus groups flow directly from their two defining features: the dependence on the researcher's focus and the group's interaction (Morgan, 2013).

## **Analysis of Data**

As Hancock et al, (2007) pointed out analysis of the data in a research study involves summarizing the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features. Data were analyzed using a method which included data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2007), adding that qualitative content analysis is "any qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings".

However, data reduction is the abstraction of data from the transcriptions, deleting data which are not important and transforming it into a comprehensible material, easily understood by many (Namey et al, 2007; Paul 2006; Suter; 2012). This pairing and shelving of data is often termed as thematic analysis, a form of sorting and categorizing. With data reduction, we employed the expertise of a professional data analyst for data analysis. She helped us managed and handled the data, particularly with the sorting and organizing large volumes of qualitative data, retrieving and locating words and phrases. The data came out consolidated and manageable after being sorted and categorized. Stories were sorted into stories of inspiration or encouragement and stories of despair or discouragement.

#### **Trustworthiness**

To establish the trustworthiness of the study, we observed four components. These are the following: credibility, conformability, transferability and dependability.

#### **Ethical Consideration**

Our research study involved teachers and educators where they were hesitant to disclose information out of fear and withheld some data. However, as part of research rigor, several safeguards were applied that erased their fears and promoted trust. We ensured that our study was guided by ethical principles as described by (Mack et al, 2005), namely: respect for persons, beneficence, justice, consent and confidentiality.

#### RESULTS

This section presents the experiences of the study participants, their abilities to see the inner nature of teaching and clear recognitions and as well as ideas which emerged from the information gleaned through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion.

The following research questions made possible the production of data from the informants.

- 1. What are the experiences of the newly hired teachers in the Public Secondary Schools?
- 2. How do the newly hired teachers cope with the challenges to ensure effective teaching-learning?
- 3. What are the insights that the newly hired teachers can share to other teachers?

# **Experiences of the Newly Hired Teachers in The Public Secondary Schools**

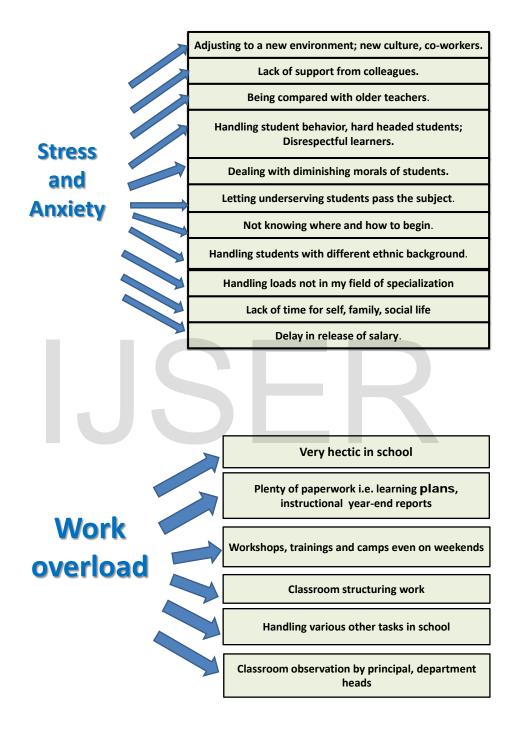


Figure 1 (Continuation)

# **Experiences of the Newly Hired Teachers in The Public Secondary Schools**

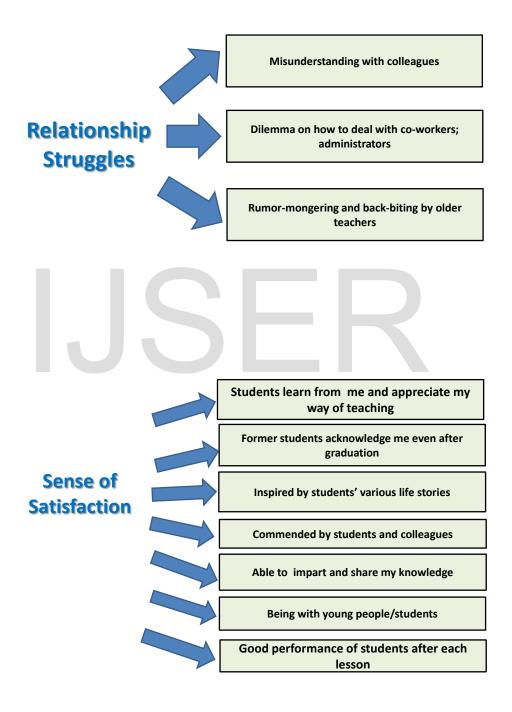
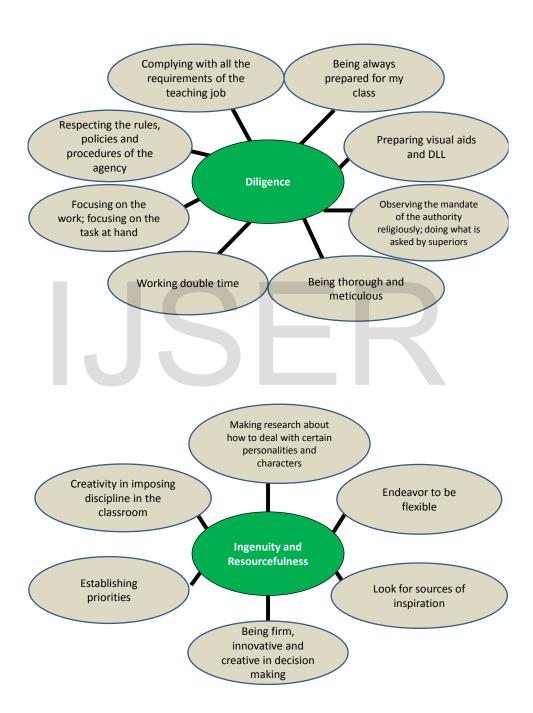


Figure 2.

# How newly hired teachers cope with the challenges to ensure effective teaching-learning.



# Figure 2 (Continuation)

# How newly hired teachers cope with the challenges to ensure effective teaching-learning.



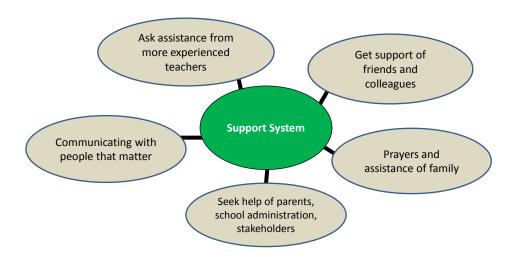
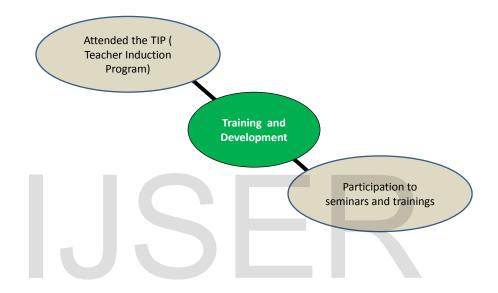
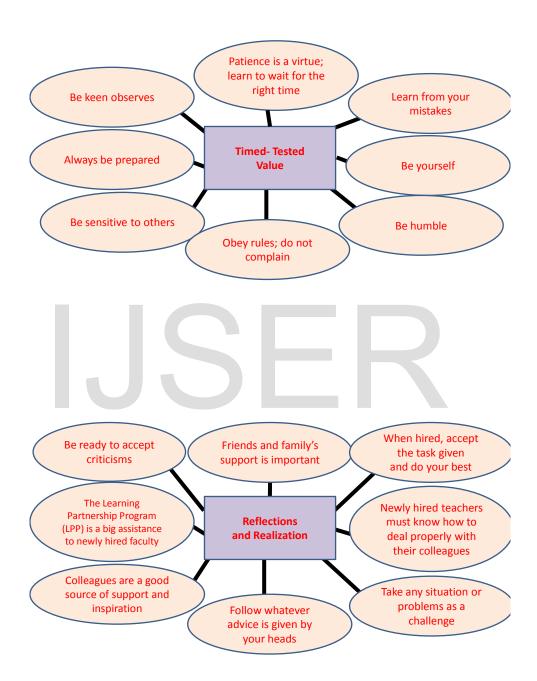


Figure 2 (Continuation)

# How newly hired teachers cope with the challenges to ensure effective teaching-learning.

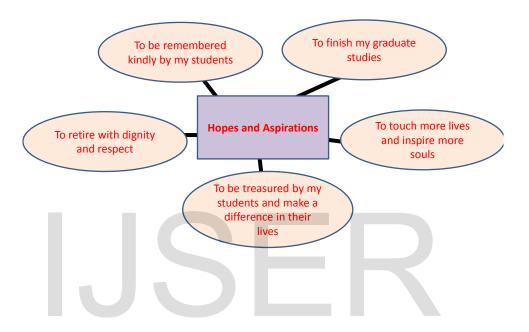


# The insights that newly hired teachers can share with other teachers



# Figure 3 (Continuation)

# The insights that newly hired teachers can share with other teachers



# **SUMMARY**

Based from the responses of both the in-depth interview informants and the FGD participants, the following issues were identified.

On issues related to the experiences of newly-hired teachers in the public school, it indicated that there were four major themes that appeared which were related to stress and anxiety; work overload; relationship struggles and sense of satisfaction. Most of the responses were focused with stress and anxiety and few on relationships struggles.

On issues related to how the participants respond about the coping they implemented to meet the challenges to ensure effective teaching-learning, there were five major themes that served as the root codes to represent the responses they gave. These major themes were namely: Diligence; Ingenuity and Resourcefulness; Openness and Respect; Support System and Training and Development. Majority of the ideas gathered about the issues were focused on Openness and Respect. There were only two ideas which pointed out the theme on Training and Development.

Lastly, on the issues related to the insights the respondents could share to other teachers, there were five major themes that appeared where ideas were highly related to time-related values; reflections and realizations; hopes and aspirations; vision; and guiding principles. More of the ideas taken from the issue fall with equal emphasis on the theme related to Time-tested values and Reflections and Realizations.

Newly-hired teachers during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions shows varied manifestations of what they experienced as neophyte in the profession, how they cope up with the diverse challenges they encountered, to ensure effective teaching-learning, and what insights they could share to other teachers.

The informants felt that after all, teaching is a noble profession, that in every success of coping to the challenges encountered as experienced, there are many beautiful lessons in life of a teacher that could be shared to make those who wanted to become a teacher are highly motivated to enter the profession. It is with pride in every heart of the Filipino teachers that teaching became professionalized in the Philippines. As proclaimed in PD 1006, as cited by Bilbao (2012), it was premised that in recognition of the vital role of teachers in nation-building and gave incentive to raise the morale of teachers, it is imperative that they be considered as professionals and teaching be recognized as a profession.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

On the experiences of the newly hired teachers in the public secondary schools, there were four major themes generated which were stress and anxiety, work overload, relationship struggles and sense of satisfaction. These results imply that being new in the profession one could encounter several difficulties. It is just normal for a beginning teacher as Artiles, Mostert &Tankersley (2014); Housner & Griffey (2015) and Szpieglea (2010) to be stressed and anxious because younger, less experienced teachers are more concerned with personal and social dimension of teaching than with academics. They tend to work hard to develop unique teaching identity that lead them to feel overload in their work and pay more attention to students interests than to involving them instruction and monitoring their achievements.

They also would tend to experience relationship struggles because even though many of them are confident beginning teachers, Coulter (2007) and Cruickshank (2010) stressed that they would likely to lose a measure of self-assurance when they confront classroom life for the first time. This is to be expected when novice idealism meets reality. However, they have sense of satisfaction because as pointed out by Perie & Baker (2007) younger and less experienced public school teachers have higher levels of satisfaction than older and more experienced teachers.

Further, these experiences told by the newly hired teachers imply that there are contributory factors why their experiences resulted to stress, anxiety, work overload, relationship struggles and sense satisfaction. These tend to happen, because as stated by Cruickshank, Jenkins and Metcalf (2010), the context in which one works, the prior experiences in education and one's personal characteristics influence teaching. To the extent that one understands this, his insight into himself and his teaching will grow. He will become more aware of whom he is as a person and as a teacher and why he teach the way he does, that he is in his way toward becoming a reflective practitioner. This implies that his teaching will be guided by insights rather than history, tradition or compulsion. To accept also that what teachers believe influence their teaching.

The results of the study imply also that when we embark on a teaching career we will be influenced by things that contributed much to the experiences we had as a new teacher, for example, the influence of prior teachers. Mark (not his true name) said that the way he presented his lessons was influenced by "Teachers I had before". Teacher education for example, Sir A (pseudonym) said that he planned his lesson using ideas he gained in an earlier education course. Beliefs and value system: for example Maam F (pseudonym) believed that, "There is more to teaching than the student in a chair, that student is real person with real needs." Lastly, beliefs about students; for example, Miss S (pseudonym) said, "students have things to contribute to a classroom" and "the teacher needs to trust the students".

Nevertheless, it also implies that other factors that newly hired teachers noted as influential on their thinking about teaching and how they taught to experience joy or pain, satisfaction or dissatisfaction included personal needs, prior work, and non-classroom teaching they had done (doing related tasks as ordered by the administrators), relatives who were educators, experience as a parent and knowledge of the subjects being taught. However, through the results, it also implied that factors which tend to influence the kind of experiences encountered by newly hired teachers came in varying degrees which might be related to their personal characteristics, experience and preparation in education and context of teaching. Whatever, is the most influential would be already the concern of a teacher.

On how newly hired teachers cope with the challenges to ensure effective teaching-learning, there were five major themes generated namely diligence, ingenuity and resourcefulness; openness and respect; support system; and training and development. These ideas actually described what should teachers equipped themselves to be effective in teaching to obtain effective learning. That, special efforts are needed from teachers to protect the effectiveness of the teaching learning process during instruction time. In other words, it implies that there should be good teaching that will happen inside the classroom. As what Orstein (2014) described, it is the classroom where action takes place, thus, good teaching is very essential. Good teaching needs good teachers whom Raspberry (2013) describes them to be caring; diligent; supportive; concerned about the welfare of students; knowledgeable about the subjects; able to get along with parents, administrators and colleagues; and genuinely excited of what they do. This implies that good teacher refer to as effective teachers.

Further results imply that if there are effective teachers, it could be an assurance that effective teaching-learning process would come in. Through these good characteristics of the teachers, effective teaching-learning process would be ensured. If teachers have the characteristics of a good teacher, these could be an assurance that they could cope up with the challenges to ensure effective teaching learning process. However, results also imply that challenges to ensure effective teaching could also be coped up for not only being them to be good teachers, but to resolve the issue why students attending same schools did indeed achieve more than students attending others.

It came out from investigations that differences in students among schools were associated largely with one factor-the socio economic status (SES) of the pupils. Coleman, Campbell, Wood, Weinfeld & Yoch (2006) stated that what was even more surprising and

disappointing to many educators was Coleman's findings that the usual factors thought to contribute to school achievement, such as class size; textbook quality; the school facilities; and teachers' experience, had little impact on student learning. Reanalysis of Coleman's findings and numerous studies since (Chall, 2010; Hunuschek, 2007) continued to suggest that SES is clearly related to students' achievement. With these information gathered, results implied that the newly hired teachers could ensure the effectiveness of teaching-learning by giving feedbacks to the government which will start from the locale area level that government's support and assistance are seriously needed to alleviate the economic condition of the people in every community.

That, the DepEd may be supportive to the plea of the teachers especially in the far flung areas, that they should be given enough number of teachers to reduce the large size classes existing today, release quality textbooks; provide good school facilities and conduct educational training programs especially to the newly-hired teachers. These implied further, that the presence of diligent, caring, flexible and dedicated teachers would not be enough to ensure effective teaching-learning but they needed a well-equipped classroom with suitable class size in each classroom.

As the stories told by the study participants, how they wished to handle 30 to 40 students only per class, each of them with appropriate textbooks needed in each learning area, attending classes in a safe school environment. They even shared same moment of sadness felt when during classroom activities some of their students have no tables or seats to use. It implied therefore that even though they are effective teachers who possess motivating, stimulating and credible personalities if the support needed from the government was not provided the truest effective teaching-learning will not be truly ensured in its strictness sense.

On what insights the newly hired teachers can share with other teachers, there were five major themes generated. These were time-tested values; reflections and realizations; hopes and admiration; vision and guiding principles. During the in-depths interviews and focus group discussion, it emerged that there are values they hold on to succeed and remain in the profession. They learned from their weakness and they became more patient, humble, always prepared and obedient. It implies that they learn to be more cohesive in their group as teachers, that whatever may happen, they would like to remain as teachers' value their work. Moreover, what they could share to other teachers were that although attributes of teaches like their being with motivating personality; orientation toward success and professional demeanor, research findings are mixed on importance of teachers' subject knowledge in promoting students' learning (Druna & Anderson, 2003; Wenglinsky, 2000).

However, research seems consistently to indicate that knowledge of the subject is important but not sufficient for effective teaching (Chen & Enonis, 2005; Peart & Campbell, 2009). The most effective teachers combine content knowledge with knowledge of teaching (that is, pedagogy) and with knowledge of students. Collectively, this unique professional wisdom is sometimes referred to as pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 2006). These insights as supported by authorities are worth sharing to other teachers. These imply that knowledge of subject and of learners helps make the teacher more aware of the misconceptions students are likely to have or to develop about the subject. Knowledge of pedagogy and of learners allows the teacher to select and implement instructional alternatives that can best address students' misconceptions. Thus, effective teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and how best to help the individual students in their classes came to understand it appropriately.

Other insights the newly hired teachers could share with other teachers out of the results of the major themes generated, was that there was a relationship between what teachers know and how much their students' learn. In general, this implied that there are positive relationships between some measures of teachers' preparation and their students' learning. Teachers' rating by their college instructors during their pre service preparation are associated with higher

student learning. Teachers' score on licensure and other certification tests are positively associated with greater student learning; and with exception of Mathematics, the number or type of degrees held by the teacher, amount or type of coursework or whether or not the teacher was certified are not found to be related to students' learning (Wayne & Youngs, 2003).

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In as much as this study is limited to the public schools of South Cotabato, the following future research are recommended.

Since the findings of this study are not generalizable beyond the twenty (20) participants, future research may be conducted on the pedagogical journey of teachers which included their experiences, as beginning teachers in the workplace, how they cope with the challenges to ensure effective teaching-learning and the insights they could share to other teachers with another group of participants in order to strengthen and validate the findings of this study.

Second, future research may be conducted on the factors affecting the pedagogical journey of newly hired teachers in other part of Region XII and other regions to add to the research base and gather more information and insights for effective teaching.

Third, future research may be done by conducting a re-interview with some of the participants to find out if their views and insights on the experiences have not changed over time.

Fourth, future research may be investigated whether workplace experiences of newly hired teachers actually portray characteristics of best teachers and effective teaching.

Fifth, further research may be conducted to identify teachers' best attributes and characteristics of Effective Teachers which may deal with Professional Skills and Abilities; Classroom Management Skills; Problem-Solving Skills of Effective Teachers and Reflective Skills of Effective Teachers.

The findings of this study were viewed from the lens of the teachers. Further research may be conducted to determine the students' and school administrators' views and insights on the pedagogical journey of newly hired teachers in the workplace to confirm the findings of this study.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the results of the study, we can say that in a school organization, those who are new in the practice of their teaching profession have the tendency to feel the stress and anxiety, work overload, relationship struggles and sense of satisfaction. That, in anyone's journey toward mastery of skills in practicing one's profession, it is just normal that if one is a neophyte he/she has to experience joy and sadness, satisfaction and dissatisfaction; and pain and pleasure.

From the findings of the study, we have seen how the pedagogical journey affected the participants of the study. This is parallel with the findings that on average, teachers with fewer than three years are less effective. However, they improve steadily until at around five years they peak. Thereafter, their effectiveness dwindles somewhat (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Younger and less experienced public school teachers have higher levels of satisfaction than older and more experienced teachers (Perie & Baker, 2007).

The investigation on the pedagogical journey of teachers on their work helped us conclude that each one has to pass varied experiences but would let them want to live a purpose driven life, spend passionately on teaching, the most noble profession (Bilbao, et. al, 2012).

Based on the findings of the study, we can claim that the way you will teach is the quality of the teaching or pedagogical preparation you are receiving. Professional education for teaching includes study of many disciplines of education but what is important is the pedagogy

or the way we plan and deliver instruction and evaluate learning. Persons without sufficient pedagogical or teaching knowledge are forced to teach by instinct and are doomed to trial-and-error approaches. Novice teachers with little knowledge of students and teaching tend to grow increasingly authoritarian and custodial (Kagan, 2012).

The contributions of this study lies in the availability of the teachers' views and insights on teachers' pedagogical journey and the concepts derived from the results. It also opens opportunities for future researchers in other areas of teaching- learning effectiveness that have not been explored yet.



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