



LOOKING THROUGH THE TAINTED GLASS: AN INTROSPECTION OF THE CAREER LIFE OF VETERAN TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This research dealt with veteran teachers in response to the call to hear their innermost thoughts and feelings in their years of service. This study utilized a qualitative design using interpretative phenomenological analysis to examine the lived experiences of veteran teachers. Focus group discussions as well as semi-structured interviews were conducted to give more details on the situation handled by the participants. Experiences were focused on three superordinate themes, namely, (1) veteran teachers' experiences with career satisfaction; (2) veteran teachers' plight and dissatisfactions; and (3) veteran teachers' coping mechanisms. Moreover, results revealed that the satisfaction of the veteran teachers was rooted in (a) the value, trust, and respect they received, (b) how they made a difference in students' lives, and (c) the career benefits they got from their years of service. However, they expressed their plight and dissatisfaction as the result of long years of unfair organizational practices and strains, and abrupt environmental changes. Further, veteran teachers tend to cope with organizational stress with the help of their families and colleagues. The findings suggest that administrators, as instructional leaders, should provide veteran teachers with the support they need in their careers. A necessary staff development and revitalization program should be designed and implemented to provide a positive impact on the working conditions of the teachers, which can renew and continuously motivate them, which in turn can improve their sense of satisfaction.

Keywords: Veteran Teachers, Teacher Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Teaching Career

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I.L.C.

I. Introduction of the Research

Teaching is an admirable profession, but it is not as easy as teaching ABCs and 123s. Teachers are faced with many dilemmas and challenges daily. Moreover, it demands a collaboration of mind, heart, and spirit in order to nurture the children and effectively influence their success.

A day in school might be thought of as routine, but it takes one to become a teacher to understand the different challenges and tight spots in what seems to be just an ordinary day. A teacher never knows what the teaching day will offer, with parents, colleagues, students, or even the piled-up workloads. These provide the teacher with new challenges to overcome every day. The resilience exhibited by teachers plays a crucial role in effectively addressing and managing these inevitable challenges. It is recognized as closely connected to their daily ability to uphold educational objectives and effectively navigate the inevitable uncertainties inherent in the practice of being a teacher (Qing Gu, 2013).

Veteran teachers in the field encounter various problems of different levels of difficulty. From being a novice teacher who struggles with adjusting to new careers, classroom management, and the working environment to becoming a veteran who tries to cope with the new and unique level of personal crises and professional crises. These challenges include discipline issues, increased interruptions during teaching time, and dissatisfaction with the administration, school policies, and practices, as noted by Sutchter et al. (2016). Also, according to Edwards (2003), after years of dedicated service, a veteran teacher must keep up with the pace of younger colleagues as well as adjust to the difficulties of aging. Added to it are the bags of family concerns, health issues, and financial difficulties that need to be addressed alongside with the dealings on behavior-

related problems among students and contending with workplace struggles (Lavigne and Bozack, 2015). The result could be a tired professional who must face a classroom of noisy children every day without the energy of his or her younger colleagues.

Despite the common occurrence of teachers leaving the classroom within the initial five years, there exists a significant cohort who, despite encountering comparable challenges, persistently return year after year, establishing a sustained tenure of 10 years or more. Furthermore, a notable demographic of veteran elementary teachers faces and surmounts challenges throughout their extensive teaching careers, opting to retire in their 60s with 25 or 30 years of service in the educational system. This seasoned group brings to their retirement a collection of attributes, including balance, maturity, character, perspective, insight, understanding, and wisdom, thereby contributing substantially to the educational landscape (Blank, & Kershaw, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2003). This phenomenon underscores the intricate and rewarding nature of a teaching career, where individuals navigate challenges, accruing a reservoir of invaluable experience and wisdom over time.

Still, even if many veteran teachers have sustained themselves in their professional lives, there is still a great concern about sustaining their beliefs and sense of commitment to teaching at its best. Added to this, much of the research has placed its focus on the early years of the profession, while less attention has been paid to those in the later years. Also, there is a need to uncover the inmost thoughts of the veteran teachers, their experiences, their struggles, their views, and their silent cries in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of their battle-scarred career lives.

Drawing upon this, the purpose of this research is to explore the lived experiences of veteran teachers through their years of service. Moreover, it allows us to understand their perception of job satisfaction in relation to the progress of their career, their plight

and dissatisfactions, and their coping mechanisms as their means of survival from burnout and stress. Further, it will offer a way to examine how schools as organizations can best support, motivate, and renew veteran teachers in order to withstand the challenges brought by the demands of the 21st century teaching and learning process.

II. Literature Review

Obtaining an understanding of veteran teachers' plight requires one to explore the possible contributory factors in concern with veterans' journeys in the teaching profession. This literature review includes five areas of study: (a) job satisfaction; (b) work environment; (c) career development opportunities; (d) career development stages; and (e) stress.

Job Satisfaction

Herzberg (1959) posits that job satisfaction involves two distinct and independent factors that can result in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The initial factor is associated with satisfaction in the job, while the second factor is linked to dimensions leading to job dissatisfaction.

Accordingly, in Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor theory, job satisfaction is commonly referred to as either satisfiers or motivators. Motivators are elements closely tied to the job's content, making them intrinsic to the job itself. These include achievement, recognition, the nature of the work, responsibility, advancement, and personal growth. On the other hand, hygiene factors are extrinsic to the job and can lead to job dissatisfaction. They encompass aspects like company policies, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations with peers and superiors, status, job security, salary, and personal life.

The findings from Hee, Shukor, Ping, Kowang, & Fei's (2019) study, affirm that job satisfaction among teachers is linked to organizational issues, such as leadership styles and practices among school leaders, school expectations, workloads, support, and opportunities for professional development. Additionally, personal issues, particularly financial concerns, and challenges in the placement system were identified as influential. Likewise, Gomba (2015) outlined key factors influencing the likelihood of teachers staying in teaching. These factors encompass self-sacrifice, the influence of family, apprehension about the unknown, job security, perceived unmarketability due to age, and the support from both administration and colleagues. Moreover, sense of achievement derived from their tasks, recognition for their efforts, the responsibility and empowerment bestowed upon them, as well as opportunities for personal growth and advancement, collectively contribute to their motivation and job satisfaction (Steffey, 1989, Baah and Amoako, 2011). Further, these can have potential to significantly heightened motivation, in turn contribute to internal happiness among employees. On the other hand, hygiene factors, while essential for preventing dissatisfaction and ensuring external happiness, might not be as potent in transforming dissatisfaction into satisfaction. Yet, the combination of both intrinsic motivators and hygiene factors is crucial for fostering a work environment where employees not only avoid dissatisfaction but also experience genuine satisfaction and fulfillment in their roles.

Work Environment

The work environment may be made up of different factors that play a part in satisfying or frustrating veteran teachers in the teaching profession. It may include factors such as wages, working hours, autonomy given to employees, organizational structure, and communication between employees and management (Esser, Holte, & Anne, 2010). Similarly, according to Chandrasekar (2011), it is argued that

organizations should establish a work environment conducive to enhancing employees' productivity, aiming to augment overall performance. He also emphasized that the interpersonal relationships and interactions among colleagues wield a more influential impact on overall job satisfaction compared to financial considerations. Meanwhile, the enhancement of overall organizational performance requires a combination of management skills, time allocation, and energy investment.

Further, a study conducted by Tariq et al. (2013) uncovered that various factor such as workload, salary, workplace stress, and conflicts with family arising from job responsibilities contribute to employee dissatisfaction, ultimately culminating in increased turnover rates. Also, Bakotic and Babic (2013) contend that working conditions significantly impact job satisfaction, suggesting that employees facing challenging working conditions tend to experience dissatisfaction through this particular factor. To enhance the satisfaction of employees working under difficult conditions, effective management intervention is crucial in improving those working conditions. By doing so, employees in challenging environments can achieve a level of satisfaction comparable to those working under normal conditions, ultimately contributing to an overall boost in organizational performance. Additionally, according to Ingram (2016), personal respect for employees at all levels is an integral part of a positive work environment. In general, the more personal respect employees are given at work, the more satisfied they will be with their jobs.

Career Development Opportunities

The extent to which schools provide avenues for personal and professional growth significantly influences the overall work environment. Offering opportunities for employees to acquire new skills, assume additional responsibilities, secure higher compensation, and attain new positions enables them to set and pursue goals. This

fosters a sense of personal achievement, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction. Employees generally seek continuous career development rather than remaining static in their roles for extended periods. By providing such growth opportunities, organizations can effectively manage employee turnover, as individuals are more likely to stay with the institution to achieve both their personal and career objectives (Ingram, 2016).

Career Stages

Just as individuals experience various life stages—from birth, childhood, and young adulthood to midlife and death—teachers similarly undergo distinct phases in their professional journey, commonly known as career stages. Career stages are the different levels that educators go through during their teaching career.

Over the course of time, a variety of models delineating the career stages of teachers have been introduced. Burden (1982) proposed a tripartite model encompassing the survival stage, adjustment stage, and mature stage. The survival stage, occurring in the initial year of teaching, is characterized by a limited grasp of the teaching and learning environment, resulting in uncertainties and confusion. Subsequently, the adjustment stage involves teachers acquiring competence and confidence in both subject matter and teaching techniques, becoming adept at handling diverse situations. Challenges in adapting instruction and addressing varied student needs may be encountered. In the mature stage, teachers experience confidence and competence but are subjected to stress due to changes in school procedures, organizational structure, and educational expectations.

Concurrently, Steffey's (1989) five-career stage model introduces stages such as the anticipatory stage, expert/master stage, renewal stage, withdrawal stage, and exit stage. The initial and final stages of the model pertain to the entry into and exit from

the organization, respectively. Accordingly, teachers in anticipatory stage are characterized by a need for collegiality, caring, professionalism, and growth through mentoring program which are essential as they navigate the early phases of their career. As teachers progress in expert/master stage, they encounter challenges associated with adaptation of teaching methods and the how to balance career and personal growth. During the renewal stage, teachers may face dilemma in navigating changes in educational trends and technologies. In the subsequent withdrawal stage, teachers may contend with burn-out and fatigue. Meanwhile, teachers in exit stage need appreciation and recognition for their service and contributions.

Grounded in the principle of lifelong learning, the Department of Education, as outlined in DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, has delineated four developmental career stages for teachers. These stages include Stage 1: Beginning Teachers, Stage 2: Proficient Teachers, Stage 3: Highly Proficient Teachers, and Stage 4: Distinguished Teachers. Beginning teachers are considered novice teachers. They focus on acquiring foundational teaching skills and classroom management. Proficient teachers have gained experience and competence in their field and demonstrate effective teaching practices. Highly proficient teachers exhibit mastery of teaching skills and content knowledge. Distinguished teachers are recognized as experts in the field.

The purpose of presenting different models of teaching stages is to offer a potential ground for understanding the varying feelings, actions, and reactions exhibited by teachers at different points in their careers. These models contribute valuable insights into the nuanced trajectory of teachers throughout their professional journeys. Further, it may explain why teachers are more motivated at certain times during their teaching careers. The longer one stays in the teaching profession, the more likely veteran

teachers can be expected to move through the stages and exhibit characteristics associated with that particular stage.

Stress

Stress is characterized as the response exhibited by an individual when adapting to a situation either real or perceived as threat. They contend that individuals undergoing stress may encounter health-related issues, exhibits symptoms of anxiety and sleep problems, may perceive lack of power or control over things, and may experience feelings of being overworked or burnout (Longhurst, 2018). In research undertaken by Alson (2019), it was found that public school teachers primarily encounter work-related stressors, which are perceived to have a moderate impact on their teaching performance. Notably, there is a discernible perception of a hazardous working environment, compounded by inadequate resources for task fulfillment and conflicting directives from informal channels. Additionally, teachers expressed facing heightened stress due to stringent monitoring by school administrators.

Comparable results were documented among Filipino public school teachers according to Manalo's (2019) study, wherein data analysis indicated that teachers are grappling with a moderate to high level of occupational stress. Factors such as excessive workload, unrealistic time constraints, additional committee responsibilities, and conflicting work demands were identified as significant contributors to the occupational stress experienced by teachers in public schools.

Stress can stem from various factors, encompassing relationships with students and parents, unattainable expectations, organizational culture, insufficient career development prospects, and a dearth of social support. These circumstances often give rise to job-related pressure, exerting an impact on both employee performance and well-

being. If not provided with the necessary support, individuals facing such challenges may ultimately contemplate a career change as a coping mechanism.

The available literature delves into the effects and influence of job satisfaction, the work environment, career development opportunities, career stages, and stress. Unraveling and comprehending the intricate interplay among these factors can potentially aid veteran teachers in sustaining motivation and productivity within the teaching profession for a decade or more.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of the veteran elementary school teachers in order to gain an improved and in-depth understanding of their situation through the years of their service in the teaching profession.

III. Research Questions

This study is carried out to primarily explore the lived experiences of veteran elementary school teachers through the years of their service.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do veteran teachers experience career satisfaction in their years of service?
2. What are the needs and struggles of veteran elementary teachers that have a significant impact to their view on their teaching career?
3. How do veteran school teachers describe their survival strategies?

IV. Scope and Limitation

This study was limited to capturing the lived experiences of the veteran teachers in Vicente Hizon, Sr. Elementary School. Veteran teachers refer to those teachers who have served for 20 years in the department. The study was narrowed down to the

captured experiences of the participants as exposed during the conduct of a one-on-one interview and a focus group discussion (FGD). Further, this study was set to gain deeper and meaningful insights to have a clear understanding of their life-world, which can be used to develop an intervention program that would cater to veterans' organizational needs.

V. Research Methodology

Research Design

To further understand the situation of the veteran teachers in school, a - qualitative- interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was employed. IPA aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences of a specified phenomenon. It involves a detailed investigation of participants 'lifeworld experiences of a certain phenomenon, how they have made sense of these experiences, and the meanings they attach to them (Smith, 2004). This approach allowed us to deeply understand the personal world of the veteran teachers, revealing their inner thoughts and feelings.

Sampling

The researcher utilized the purposive sampling technique. The group of participants was composed of eight veteran elementary school teachers from Vicente Hizon, Sr. Elementary School, Bangoy District, Division of Davao City, who have reached 20 years and above in service. Selecting teachers with this length of experience allows for a targeted exploration of the unique experiences, challenges, and contributions, contributing to a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of the teaching profession over the long term.

Data Collection

The researcher personally sought permission from the school principal and participants to be part of the study through letters and oral consent. The participants' experiences were captured through the use of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). It was conducted in five sessions, with each session lasting 30–45 minutes. The discussion gave in-depth details on the situation handled by each participant and their current situation. Moreover, member checks were employed to establish the credibility and dependability of the study.

Ethical Issues

Ethical concerns were considered. Permission from the participants and the school head was sought. Confidentiality and anonymity were chief concerns because of the sensitivity of the study; thus, participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure secrecy.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data was conducted with an open-minded approach, characterized by a willingness to immerse oneself in the data. This aligns with the same attitude adopted during the data collection phase. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), the focus remains the participant's attempt to make sense of their experience, and the analysis progresses from the particular to the shared and the descriptive to the interpretative.

The analysis of the interview and FGD transcripts followed the procedure of interpretative phenomenological analysis by Smith and Osborn (2008). The first stage

consisted of reading and re-reading the text and making initial notes on points of interest. The researcher took notice of key descriptive comments such as hesitancy, metaphor, and repetition, as well as more interpretative conceptual comments. The second stage included working with the initial notes to develop emergent themes. The researcher focused on the important and interesting data. After which, the researcher looked for connections across the emergent themes. Similar themes were clustered together and have been given a name describing the whole—a superordinate theme. The final stage involved a cross-case analysis that looked for similarities and differences and renamed themes as the understanding of the data became deeper.

VI. Discussion of Results and Recommendations

The results of the interview and FGD were clustered into three superordinate themes, namely: (1) veteran teachers' experiences with career satisfaction; (2) veteran teachers' plight and dissatisfactions; and (3) veteran teachers' coping mechanisms. These themes captured the stories and experiences of veteran elementary school teachers in their years of teaching.

The first superordinate theme focuses on the issue concerning veteran teachers' views, opinions, and awareness about career satisfaction. When and how do they feel satisfied and fulfilled about their career? Centered on these themes is the theme of veteran teachers' struggles and disappointments as they went through their careers. The third superordinate theme is associated with their survival strategies. How do these veteran teachers overcome the stress and pressure brought on by the leveling challenges of their teaching careers?

Experiences on Career Satisfaction

Veteran teachers offered different views when it comes to career satisfaction based on their varied experiences with children, parents, administration, and the community. However, assessing and analyzing the data from the FGD and personal interviews, there were subthemes that emerged, namely, (1) value, trust, and respect; (2) making a difference in student life; and (3) career benefits.

Value, Trust, and Respect. It was noted that veteran teachers feel satisfied when they are given enough recognition for their tireless work. It seemed that dedication and quality teaching should be recognized and valued at all costs. Moreover, gaining professional respect from other teachers elevated their status as well, regardless of their title and position. These incidents uplift veteran teachers' feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment in their careers. As Susie commented, "of course, recognition and promotion... these may somehow make me feel satisfied and successful with my career." "One more thing, the trust and confidence given by my head, makes me feel my worth and value," she added. Lorna also expressed the trust and respect she earned from her colleagues, parents, and students. As she said, "with my age and with the length of service I rendered in the school, I feel satisfied when I feel that I'm being trusted and respected with the people I worked with." "Even simple recognition will do. Knowing that I have done something worthwhile and that it is being valued," Luz stated.

Making Difference. Seeing the students develop, grow, and succeed impacted their sense of self-fulfillment. How they made a difference in every child's life and how they have been part of every student's success paved the way for compensating for the hard work and perseverance they have planted through the years. For example, Lory said, "I love teaching students and knowing that they got something from me." Susie also said, "There were many times that these children inspired me. After five years or

so, they went back to visit me, and we shared memories and experiences. Indeed, it's a fulfillment for me because I know deep inside that I left a positive mark in their lives." Luz concurred with other teachers, saying that despite the pressures and stress, the passion to teach and watching them succeed through the years drive her inner being to continue her career. As she stated, "watching the students grow and develop, watching their gradual changes from the moment they enter my classroom to the time they walk out of the room, the knowledge they gained from me, and the potential they have developed, that thought is very elating." Lorna also agreed when she said, "reaching out to students, being part of their lives, and making a difference are all that matter for me. It's a success when I let them go to school. It's fulfilling when I let them open up and share the story of their lives. And it seems like an achievement for me every time they participate and succeed in any activity, be it extra-curricular or academic."

Career Benefits. This theme revolves around the welfare of the teachers. It includes financial incentive benefits, summers off, retirement benefits, and security of tenure. Veteran teachers made mention of these factors. They all agreed that they have had their children finish their studies and graduate because of the financial opportunities that being a "teacher" can offer.

Plight and Dissatisfaction

Veteran teachers are faced with lots of challenges and difficulties that may put them in a state of dilemma, which eventually leads to a feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction. Among the responses of the participants, two subthemes emerged, namely: (1) organizational strains; and (2) environmental influences.

Organizational strains. It was revealed that one of the major disappointments and frustrations of veteran teachers through the years of their teaching career is rooted

in how the administration handles its people, how it carries out its responsibilities toward them, and how it manages to give due credit to the tiring work of its people. It was reflected in the common responses of the participants during the FGD concerning unjust treatment, lack of merit and recognition, bulk of paperwork, and unfair division of labor. All these experiences had led them to experience a sense of aggravation that had led them to experience dissatisfaction that impacted their view of their teaching career. During the FGD, the veterans openly expressed their bitterness and frustration regarding the administrations they have been through. As Minda, not her real name, stated:

“There is unfair treatment and favoritism in the school even before and I’m so disappointed with that kind of practice.”

Luz also commented:

“Our efforts are not duly recognized. Kato lang duol sa luwag ang ma-promote maski walay nahimo nga trabaho. Very frustrating!” Mao ng wala nako gana mu-file ug promotion kay dili gihapon ta ma-promote” Naunhan pa mi sa mga teachers nga bag-o lang sa serbisyo.”

Lita as well expressed her grief:

“Yes, unfairness and unjust treatment by the admin is really rampant in school. Akalain mo, I handled multiple coordinatorships such as Folkdance, Choir, Drum and Bugle, School Paper, and GSP. I was also the District Filipino Coordinator and a National

trainer. I was even in a Palarong Pambansa before. But to my disgrace, my efforts were all in vain. I applied for a promotion but then they had just set aside my papers because there was that somebody who was more qualified than me. Then, to pay a consolation, she promised me for the next vacancy slot. Only to find out that that somebody was the admin's pet."

Lory also stated:

"Through the years of my service, jumping from three different schools, the dilemmas were quite the same. I have observed and experienced those. There was a time when I experienced somewhat like betrayed because of unjust rating system or evaluation, I mean the PAST. I worked hard and also handled quite a number of coordinatorship, but then my co-teacher who happened to work as an academic teacher who had no advisory and who was assigned at the office had a higher rating compared to me who was an adviser and who did multiple of tasks. That teacher did not even attend regularly to her classes because of her myriad reasons that she was really busy at the office. She had even no distinction or recognition received from school."

Lorna also uttered similar words of discouragement:

"It feels like I'm a bit discouraged because of lack of administrative support. There is also lack of growth opportunities because breaks are now given to those teachers who are quite new in the service, 10 years I think. Well, some of my co-teachers would comment that those chosen ones are those who are close at the heart..hahaha! And we, veterans

are often left behind. The fact that we still need those especially with the new trends and with the birth of technology.”

Environmental changes. The teachers’ responses regarding how they experienced struggles and frustration were also influenced by the environmental changes. Over the years of experience, veteran teachers were able to become masters of their field, connect more with the students, and develop relationships with the students and parents. However, they have difficulties due to changing curriculum demands and fast-paced technological advancements. Moreover, they felt that respect for teachers had changed. Some indicated that they were not as dedicated. Motivations and feelings have also changed. Moreover, many of the veteran teachers have a hard time coping with modern technology. Since almost all of the school reports and records are digitalized, they expressed their difficulty using computers and exploring the internet. More so, the bulk of instant reports are placed on teachers’ shoulders on top of the regular teaching loads, which lessen their instructional time.

Survival Strategies

Despite the higher degree of daily pressures and hassles, in some time, these veteran teachers experience burnout, which leads them to experience stress and fatigue. In order to keep up the battle, these veteran teachers need to have their own coping mechanisms. The responses of teachers concerning how they combat stress were varied. Some of them indicated that their family tends to be their outlet when time seems rough. Others turn to their colleagues or hanging out with their friends for support and comfort, while others may look into their personal hobbies such as gardening, reading, and traveling as their vent.

VII. Discussion

The aim of this phenomenological study was to understand (a) how veteran elementary teachers experience career satisfaction; (b) what the needs and struggles of veteran teachers are that impact their career; and (c) what survival strategies they employ to cope with stress and pressure. Using a combination of deductive and inductive analyses, this qualitative study reflected on the lived experiences of teachers who have stayed in the teaching profession for 20 or more years.

Understanding veteran teachers' lived experiences through the years of their service in school has enabled us to get through the meaning embedded in every situation they encountered. Examining the subjective experiences of these veteran teachers allowed us to dig deeper into their situation, struggles, and coping circumstances, which are divided into three major themes: (1) veteran teachers' experiences with career satisfaction; (2) veteran teachers' plight and dissatisfactions; and (3) veteran teachers' coping mechanisms.

Theme 1. Experiences on Career Satisfaction

During the interview, teachers narrated their stories about the times and situations when they felt satisfied and fulfilled in connection with their teaching career. They indicated that recognition and appreciation from the administration are vital in building the ladder of satisfaction among these veterans. They tend to feel happy and satisfied when they receive acknowledgment and credit for the things they have done for the students and for the school. Promotion has also been mentioned by these teachers as one of their measures of career success. Moreover, trust, value, and respect from their colleagues, students, and parents also play a critical role in uplifting their feelings

of gratification. Additionally, aside from trust, value, and respect as mentioned, their responses reflected that their joy working with their students, watching them grow, develop, and succeed over the school year, touching lives, and making a difference greatly influenced their feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment in their teaching career. Accordingly, Ingram (2016) also claimed that personal respect for employees at all levels is an integral part of a positive work environment. In general, the more personal respect employees are given at work, the more satisfied they will be with their jobs. On the other hand, a lack of personal respect can cause employees in high-paying positions to quit their jobs, increasing employee turnover.

Further, financial and other career benefits have been one of the prime reasons why these teachers have remained in school over the years. This supports the address of Tim Khla (2006), as cited by Kadton et al. (2017), that financial rewards are very important since they induce people to work for the organization, and it is the individual's desire to satisfy his or her physical needs.

Theme 2. Plight and Dissatisfaction

The teachers discussed their struggles and issues found in the work environment. Many teachers indicated that a lack of parent involvement, leadership support, management style and supplies made teaching more challenging. They also indicated that student behavior issues, large class size, changing expectations and curriculum, new evaluation process played a role in making the teaching profession increasingly demanding. These factors cause their inner struggles and dilemmas which may lead to low achievement motivation, thus may also lead to low satisfaction and performance (Ledun et.al, 2018).

Further, veteran teachers made mention of unfair treatment which is barred as “favoritism school culture” with uneven distribution of labor and workloads, lack of support system and growth opportunities. These factors cause their inner struggles and dilemmas as they trudge their career path. Moreover, the unending changes brought about by curriculum change and technological advancements and innovations were also considered as their problems. According to them, this could not be a problem if they were given enough advancement trainings and workshops as reflected on the response of Lorna as she openly expressed her disappointment on this matter which was also agreed by the rest of the respondents. Looking closely to their responses, administrative competence in giving technical assistance and strong organizational support is needed in maintaining high teacher satisfaction particularly to veteran teachers as it positively influences their commitment, job performance, job satisfaction, and lower level of job stress (Bukhari & Kamal, 2017). Further, two of the veteran teachers as well stated that they have difficulties in catching up with the new trends because they were having a hard time learning how to efficiently use the computers, even the basic commands. Also, there is more paperwork and teachers tend to become more than a teacher and everything seemed to be in a rush.

Furthermore, as colleagues and students also impacted teachers’ sense of satisfaction and fulfillment towards their career, while teachers can get a support system from their colleagues and while they can feel satisfaction in seeing the students grow and develop, these two predominant factors have caused their frustration and dissatisfaction. Two teachers indicated that, due to changing educational demands, being creative has become more of a challenge. The teaching profession is changing, as are the teachers and students. Attitudes and society are changing the way we think. The people in the school do not seem as united as they did before. Also, a lack of

professionalism in school operations was reported, and respect for teachers has diminished. They indicated that teaching is now difficult. The results link to the claims of Norton & Kelly (1997) and Shan (1998), as cited by Kadton et al. (2017), that among the contributing factors to teacher dissatisfaction are problems relating to student behavior and discipline, problems with teacher load and expectations, and relationships with peers and administrative personnel.

Theme 3. Coping up with Stress

The teachers' responses as to their coping mechanisms and strategies for managing stress that are inherent in the teaching profession are linked to being school-related, family-related, and some are associated with personal drives. Many teachers managed their stress through interactions with peers, talking to spouses and family members, and going out with their friends. Other responses ranged from exercise, reading, garden chores, and travel and vacation. These activities are mainlines to simply start each day with a fresh new start. These educators have implemented adaptive coping strategies, contributing to their ability to maintain passion and enthusiasm in their work. This aligns with the findings of Prout et al. (2019), whose study demonstrated that positive veteran teachers, typically aged between 40 and 70 years and beyond, actively cultivate and sustain supportive social connections. These connections extend not only to colleagues within their school but also encompass relationships outside the school environment, including spouses or long-term partners and close family members which significantly contribute to their emotional and physical well-being. In the context of teaching profession, veteran teachers attribute considerable importance to their social connections, recognizing the associated benefits for both their teaching practices and personal well-being.

Conclusions

Findings from this study indicated that veteran teachers experience satisfaction and fulfillment when they receive due credit and recognition, enjoy trust and respect from their school administrators, colleagues, parents, and students, and recognize the benefits accrued from their years of service in the teaching profession. Moreover, effecting change in the lives of their students impacted their being as teachers. Seeing the students grow and develop, being part of the students' success, and knowing that they have imparted great things to them somehow made them feel satisfied with their work as teachers, despite all the demanding challenges they face every day. This finding corroborates the research conducted by Stukes (2015), indicating that teachers derive satisfaction from their ability to influence the lives of learners and create memorable moments of learning for them.

These veteran teachers have also encountered many challenges and problems that have put them in a state of uncertainty that may have caused their dilemmas, frustrations, and disappointments. . Some of the factors that they have claimed to have a greater impact were related to organizational and environmental influences. Among the identified common problems and stressors experienced by teachers are evaluations, paperwork, testing, and students' academics, changes in curriculum, and behavioral needs (Stukes, 2015).

However, in the face of all the issues and concerns, this study revealed that veteran teachers have employed many strategies and resources to get through the demands of the teaching profession. These strategies were linked to school, family, and personal-related schemes, which have helped them do away with stress in order to carry out things necessary for every day's lesson and learning. This conclusion is associated with Prout's (2019) research, which suggests that enhancing support, fostering positive

work environments within schools, and adopting a mindset of effective communication can mitigate the impact of stress and cultivate effective coping strategies among teachers.

Additionally, this study underscores that teachers derive motivation from interpersonal relations, achievement, recognition, the intrinsic value of the work itself, responsibility, and opportunities for advancement. Colleagues and administrators play pivotal roles as a support system in fostering and sustaining this motivation. This sides with the conclusions drawn by Korb and Akintunde (2013), who similarly identified that the teacher/principal relationship, attitude toward the teaching profession, and belief in the social contribution of teaching were all statistically significant factors associated with teacher job satisfaction.

Implication

This study established that looking at the lived experiences of veteran teachers, which include their plight and their coping strategies, is essential to gaining an in-depth understanding of their situation, from which we can draw their unique needs as they go into the different stages of their teaching career. These veteran teachers had been through tough and challenging times; they had their silent cries and quiet screams, yet, by any means, they have learned to cope with all those and still chose to continue and follow their career path for their students and their families. Looking closely, this study indicated that the journey of these veteran teachers is difficult because the teaching profession can be demanding in various ways and in a leveling degree.

Therefore, schools should intensify their support system among these teachers through revitalization programs that would uplift and improve the mental, psychological, and even physical well-being of the veteran teachers. It is a strategy that

would help them combat the racing challenges brought by technological advancements and environmental changes. This program can be implemented through SLAC sessions and after-class activities. Sessions may include conferences with invited specialized professionals that will enrich and inspire the teachers, particularly the veterans. Also, training can be conducted with the use of ICT in the teaching and learning process, as well as online data reporting and submission for them to keep up with the demands of this digital era. Likewise, recognition programs can also be done to acknowledge and give due credit to teachers' efforts and accomplishments. Correspondingly, to promote enjoyable, healthy physical activities to teachers, regular dance exercises or zumba and other fun and interesting undertakings can be organized.

Moreover, schools should provide targeted support programs that foster supportive work environment for veteran teachers, considering the unique needs and coping strategies. Additionally, it is suggested that the Department of Education may establish viable mechanisms for effective communication and feedback channels to address the evolving needs of veteran teachers.

Further, this intervention program does not only focus on veteran teachers; more importantly, it targets the whole school community. While the program is meant to empower and meet the needs of the veteran teachers, it also aims to bridge the gap and increase communication among the group. Working together through this program as a collaborative team can yield a school climate that endorses a positive environment, which can probably produce the outcome of improving the sense of satisfaction among all of the teachers.

VIII. Dissemination and Advocacy Plans

Objectives	Activities/Strategies	Persons involved	Timeline	Materials Needed	Expected Output/ Success Indicator
1.To inform the Schools Division Office, District Supervisor, School Principal on the result of the study.	- Send a copy of the study to the Schools Division Office, District Supervisor, and School Principal	Researcher	April 2020	Hard Copy of the research	Received copy of the manuscript
2. To Provide a detailed, convincing proposal for the adoption of the alternatives based on the result of the study.	-Request a schedule for a consultation meeting regarding the findings and recommendation of the study. -Develop an intervention plan or decide for a course of action in relation to the results, findings, and evidences of the study. -Submit a copy of the rationale and program matrix to the SDO and District office	Researcher, School Head, Teachers' Club rep, Grade Level Heads, PTA rep.	June 2020	Hard copy of the research paper, bond papers, pens Copy of the program matrix	Policy brief paper/ policy recommendations Received copy of the program matrix
3. Implement a school-based wellness program based on the policy recommendations	Implement the school-based wellness program that will serve as an intervention to support and renew veteran teachers	Researcher, School Principal, Teachers, Parents rep.	August - December 2020	Program matrix Program Design Strategic Plan of Activities	Documentation/ Narrative and Accomplishment Report
4. Ensure that intervention activities will be delivered as planned	-Monitor and supervise the intervention activities, strategies, and approaches based on the program matrix and design.	Researcher, School Head, Master Teachers	August to December 2020	Monitoring sheet/ checklist rubrics	Narrative/ Accomplishment report with MOVs
5. Ensure the sustainability of the program through program evaluation	-Conduct an evaluation before, during, and after the implementation of the program to validate the course of actions to be taken and	Researcher School Head, Master Teachers	January 2021	Evaluation checklist, Survey	Evaluation reports, identified areas for improvement, recommendations , plan of actions

	have been done for the development, improvement, and sustainability of the program				
6. Adoption of the intervention program	<p>. Inform the Regional office, schools division office, district office, and school of the success and accomplishment of the program.</p> <p>-send a copy of the accomplishment reports with the MOVs to the regional office, schools division office, and district office.</p>	Researcher	March 2021	Accomplishment Reports, MOVs	<p>Received copy of the reports</p> <p>Recommendation letter from the district or division office for the adoption of the intervention program in the district level.</p>

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