

Phenomena Of English Teacher Education Graduates Choosing Careers Other Than Teaching

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ABSTRACT

The phenomena of education graduate alumni selecting non-teaching employment was the main focus of this qualitative study on the employability of teacher education graduates after graduation. The present non-teaching jobs, the reasons behind the non-teaching career choice, the skills and abilities useful to their current work, and their opinions and feelings regarding their non-teaching occupation were all described using an interpretive phenomenology. One-on-one online interviews were used to collect the qualitative data, 3 categories were created in order to address specific research concerns. According to this research, there are three categories of non-teaching occupations currently held by graduates of teacher education programs: office work, non-education related training positions, and service and management. After careful investigation, it was also shown that graduates chose non-teaching careers due to their lack of commitment to the teaching profession, contextual influence, competitive pay, support for their passion and growth, flexibility, and desire for a balanced life. Additionally, professional values and attitudes, transversal skills, learning skills, documentation, and teaching abilities were useful qualities for their current non-teaching position. Graduates in teacher education who are not in teaching feel happy, fulfilled, and flexible. The results indicate that the basic competencies obtained in the Teacher Education Program (TEP) provide a multitude of skills that significantly enhance one's capacity to be flexible, adaptive, and productive in non-teaching roles.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the employability of graduates indicates the caliber of instructors and students as well as the efficacy of the program curriculum. After completing the program, it is anticipated that the students will use their new knowledge in the workplace. For this

reason, a tracer study is carried out on a regular basis to ascertain whether the abilities and competencies of the students are applicable to their current employment and functioning.

Soft skills are thought to be more crucial in the workplace of the twenty-first century. Employers seek candidates with a strong work ethic, professionalism, communication skills, cooperation, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Deming noted the importance of soft skills inside an organization. He talked on the highly sought-after, yet challenging to locate for a newly hired employee, characteristics as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and analytical/quantitative skills (Deming, 2017).

Research has shown that teacher education abilities and competencies are transferable to non-teaching employment, among other professions. Effective communication, self-sufficiency, and imparting relevant skills to others are essential for finding new jobs (Larraz et al., 2017). The ability to learn and listen, as well as other transferable teaching abilities including complex problem solving, coordination, critical thinking, mentoring, and decision-making, are found to be helpful in non-teaching roles. The competencies that are applicable to various non-teaching occupations include time management, monitoring, multitasking, bargaining, speaking, understanding individuality, analyzing and assessing systems, reading and writing abilities, and being service-oriented (Saptadi, et al. 2023). Regretfully, not every graduate was able to find employment that was relevant to their field of study. This is also the case for teacher preparation, where a large amount of public funds are squandered as evidenced by low licensure exam scores and the departure of some education graduates from the field to pursue other vocations (Abulon & Rungduin, 2014).

Because of institutional and program assessments that demand that the completed program be connected with the graduates' current job, tracing teacher education graduates who are not working in accordance with the program is unusual for educational institutions. Because of this, the researchers are interested in learning about the experiences teacher education graduates who have found success in non-teaching careers. The purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomena of teacher education graduates choosing careers other than teaching. Its specific goals are to identify the university-learned core competences that are useful in their current jobs and to expose the motivations, attitudes, and feelings behind their decision to pursue non-teaching careers. The purpose of this study was to investigate the phenomena of teacher education graduates who selecting non-teaching occupations. It specifically aimed to respond to the following questions: (1) Describe the non-teaching employment that participants currently hold, (2) Describe their decision to work in non-teaching roles, (3) Learn the abilities and talents from the completed curriculum that will help them in their current position, (4) Share the participants' opinions and views about their non-teaching work, (5) Make a plan of action to reduce the number of teacher education graduates who are employed in irrelevant roles.

2. METHODS

Narrative inquiry analysis was used in this qualitative study to explain the phenomena of teacher education graduates choosing non-teaching careers. Giving a thorough understanding of one's own lived experiences is the main goal of interpretative phenomenology (Smithers & Robinson, 2003).

The 12 participants are graduates of the education programs at PGRI ADIBUANA University, these individuals are not teachers; instead, they work in other fields or outside of education. The survey did not include graduates working as administrators or principals, curriculum specialists, school counselors, developers of standardized tests, curriculum planners, or other non-teaching positions in the education field.

First, we asked the individuals who don't teach if they choose their current jobs. The responses will be limited to graduates who voluntarily chose to work in non-teaching roles (Sinaga, et al 2023). Subsequently, the participants were requested to provide informed consent by the researchers in order to begin the interview. (1) non-teaching job; (2) reasons for selecting the non-teaching

employment; (3) useful competencies; and (4) sentiments and ideas. The study's problem statement would be addressed by the four classes.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Jobs for Teacher Education Graduates That Don't Involve Teaching

The present non-teaching employment held by teacher education graduates were categorized into three themes: office work, non-education related training positions, service and management, and education-related non-teacher jobs.

a. Office work

A portion of the participants work in the education sector or in schools but are not teachers. They perform the duties of administrative officers or assistants.

"I oversee personnel records as an Administrative Officer." (participant 1)

"I work at Elementary School as an Administrative Officer. Being the school's property custodian and managing debts, absences, salaries, and budget are the key responsibilities of my employment." (participant 5)

b. Non-education related to training positions

Even though some participants work in fields unrelated to education, they are nevertheless given assignments or tasks that require teaching and training. For example, fire officials are giving fire safety lessons.

"After I was promoted to the position of trainer, I was able to implement the teaching strategies and techniques I had learned." (participant 10)

"As a firefighter, I also work as administrative staff; most of the time, I process payroll, create reports, and do office work." (participant 3)

"My regular tasks at work include answering calls and emails from various offices and clients, taking emergency calls, and handling paperwork as the station's operations clerk." (participant 11)

c. Management and Services

A portion of the participants work as account managers or employees in the service sector. A further person dabbles with internet commerce.

"Working in business process outsourcing." This involves overseeing quality analysts that work under my team and reviewing data. (person 10)

"My daily responsibilities as an online vendor are to consistently post and promote my products so that our intended audience will learn about them and their uses." (person 2)

The results corroborate the assertions that teachers' competencies are transferable to non-teaching professions. Graduates of teaching programs are skilled in handling administrative tasks and office duties, such as creating reports and maintaining personnel files. In a similar vein, teacher graduates working as uniformed police officers or other non-education-related training positions might apply the teaching approaches and strategies to give seminars, train awareness campaigns, and conduct lectures. Their current positions outside of teaching have greatly benefited from additional teacher training they received while in college, especially in the areas of class management, teacher leadership, and motivation.

Motivations for Selecting Non-Teaching Careers

The recent graduates in teacher education gave their reasons for deciding against becoming teachers. Seven themes emerged from the data:

a. Lack of Commitment to the Teaching Profession

A few of the respondents are not devoted to teaching. Some people just took the degree because their parents encouraged them to. For other people, having a degree is just a "backup." Whether the position requires teaching or not, some people are just concerned with landing the job.

"My mother desires that I pursue education." (participant 2)

"I liked the curriculum in the long run, even though teaching was not my first choice of the program." (participant 3)

Those who benefited from free education are graduates who have no interest in becoming teachers. These were the applicants who, at the time of admission, did not fit the quota established for the program of their choice. They chose to enroll in a teacher education program that was still open at the time rather than enrolling in a private and paying matriculation fees. Because it is not their own choice and they do not receive professional assistance and coaching, they are not committed to their vocation. Those who were first motivated to enroll in the program demonstrate a commitment to the teaching profession (Suryani & George, 2021).

b. Contextual Influence

Participants may be forced by external factors to hunt for professions other than teaching. This involves having an immediate need for money and failing the board exam.

"I failed the board examination." (participant 7)

"My father passed away on May 28, 2021, so I decided to apply for this position as soon as I could. Fortunately, I passed all the requirements and the interview, and with this, I can provide for my family, especially my mother and my three sisters." (participant 5)

The inability to pass the board and the pressing need for money drive the graduates to seek employment outside of their field of study. They look for work after graduation to support their physiological demands, and they remain optimistic about their abilities in spite of the obstacles they face. According to Khush (2021), self-efficacy is the conviction that we can overcome obstacles and effectively finish a task (Aktan et al., 2020).

c. Competitive Income

Participants disclosed that the competitive pay was a factor in their decision to choose a non-teaching career.

"There are countless opportunities to make money in sales." (participant 4)

"I decided to work for a company because they pay well." (participant 10)

They also favor non-teaching occupations because of the competitive compensation, particularly in this recessionary period. Some teachers quit their careers as teachers as a result of the economic downturn and search for high-paying non-teaching positions (Wulandari, 2020). Another reason graduates leave teaching is because they believe their pay is inadequate (Abulon & Rungduin, 2014). Sen. Gatchalian claims that the pay for teachers in the Philippines is significantly less than the average for teachers in South East Asia (Hwa & Pritchett, 2021).

d. Support for Their Passion and Growth

Because non-teaching positions foster professional and career progress, participants select them. It offers them consistent, unambiguous possibilities for growth. Another explanation is that they can pursue their interests and passions because of their non-teaching work.

"I have been in business since college, and this is my hobby." (participant 2)

"It brings me joy and passion. Writing has always been a part of me, aside from being a passion, since I've loved reading detective books since I was a young child. I took the risk and followed this road because I felt like something was guiding me in the direction of this career". (participant 6)

"Quick career advancement. I recently began working as a call center representative, and I get called to advance every six months. Having said that, my pay increases as well". (participant 10)

Participants went into occupations unrelated to teaching that matched their interests and pastimes. They take pleasure in what they accomplish since they adore their jobs. The participants felt content and joyful because of their enthusiasm and the prospects for career progress. Interests are a good indicator of job happiness when they match the job (Hoff et al., 2020).

e. Flexibility and a life in balanced

The less demanding schedule and workload of non-teaching positions enable them to lead more balanced lives, which is another factor in their decision.

"Working whenever you want is one benefit of owning your own business. I am currently in lost until Christmas, and because I have employees that are just a phone call away, the business is running constantly. The page will be promoted by my admins". (participant 2)

"Yeah, I'm working and enjoying other activities like traveling and spending more time with my family and myself. I have more time, flexibility, and work-life balance at my current job". (participant 3)

"There is a lot of interaction with diverse people and minimal paperwork...less stress, less workload, and more income." (participant 4)

The participants' choice of non-teaching occupations is also explained by their balanced lives and manageable workloads. Teachers' burnout is significantly influenced by their workloads. Less demanding work projects provide you more time for your family, yourself, and leisure. They enjoy Work-Life Balance (WLB) because non-teaching occupations offer job and life pleasure (Haar et al., 2013).

f. Professional principles and attitudes

Participants acknowledged that the TEP had taught them these traits, which had improved their performance in their non-teaching roles.

"Just as a teacher must have greater patience with their students, so too must a businessperson have greater patience with their buyers or customers." (participant 3)

"My professors in college taught us how to value everything, including your work, so I apply this in my job," (participant 5)

Because they are based on professional principles and attitudes acquired from the teacher education program's curriculum, participants exhibit professional ethics throughout the course of their non-teaching work. The current study supports the earlier study's findings that teachers' positive attitudes and moral principles—such as love and respect for their jobs, whether they are teaching or not—have a positive impact on how well they perform at work (Aktan et al., 2020).

g. Participants acknowledged the importance of the transversal abilities

Such as flexibility, interpersonal skills, management, and organizational skills—that they had acquired during TEP.

"The capacity for social interaction...I have experience scheduling my time between leadership responsibilities and academics as the past president of a student council". (participant 8)

"...the skills useful in my current work are being flexible in any form or kind of work." (participant 9)

"Organizing skills that I learned and applied with my current job which elevated my professionalism by enabling me to prioritize tasks from highest to lowest priority." (participant 10)

Employers have recognized a number of soft skills that graduates must have in order to succeed in the workplace, including transversal talents like adaptability, interpersonal skills, management, and organizational skills (Smithers & Robinson, 2003). According to Larraz et al. (2017), cooperative

learning with active pedagogies during teacher training develops the aforementioned transferrable abilities, she concluded that collaboration problem solving is essential and important in both classrooms and businesses (Larraz et al., 2017).

h. Learning abilities

Participants acknowledged using the abilities they had learned in the Teacher Education Program (TEP). Critical thinking, creativity, and communication are all included in this.

"We are interacting and having a conversation with our client." (person 4)

"Because I oversee various personnel data, critical thinking enables me to stay organized throughout my work." (participant 1)

"Very helpful for me because, even in the business world, you have to be well-educated and thoroughly consider every choice you make." (participant 2)

Learning abilities like creativity, communication, and critical thinking have found to be helpful in occupations that don't include teaching. During their college years, these are cultivated alongside 21st-century abilities when teachers apply inquiry-based and problem-based learning strategies (Yazar Soyadı, 2015).

i. Paper Works

It has been noted that the majority of the participants' non-teaching occupations involve some paperwork. They feel that their management and report writing training equipped them for these responsibilities.

"We were trained to perform various tasks in the teaching education program, including paper work and report preparation." (participant 1)

"Complete some paperwork for our activity/training, such as accomplishment/narrative reports." (participant 12)

The creation and maintenance of records is a component of the education program's training for teachers. The creation of reports and maintenance of records are crucial responsibilities for educators in terms of assessment, tracking students' academic progress, and improving teaching and learning. This study confirms that creating narrative and accomplishment reports is a critical skill for all professions.

j. With Reference to Teaching Methods

It has also been observed that most occupations require teaching others in order to educate themselves (e.g., training on fire safety; and training of other employees). The participants applied the knowledge they had acquired regarding motivating and instructional strategies.

"After I was promoted as a trainer, I was able to put the teaching strategies and techniques I had learned to use." (participant 10)

"As a lecturer at Fire Station, I am grateful and proud to share that I am using teaching techniques that I learned in our school. Teaching is not an easy task in our line of work." I find it to be really helpful since it instills confidence in me when we visit several places and talk about various fire safety, disaster, and emergency-related themes". (participant 11)

The participants' chosen non-teaching occupations benefit from their teaching skills. They possess self-assurance, teaching and motivational tactics, and methods that enable them to carry out their duties.

Teacher Education Graduates' Thoughts and Emotions About Their Non-Teaching Work

Graduates of teacher education who are not employed as teachers feel happy and pleased and are adaptable.

a. Satisfaction and contentment

In general, participants expressed satisfaction with their current jobs. For a variety of reasons, including pay, a flexible schedule, light work, and the chance to pursue their interests and passions, they find fulfillment and contentment.

"When my place of employment feels like a second home, I feel happy and content." (participant 1)

"My family's necessities and wants were met, thus I consider myself a successful graduate with a non-teaching career. I'm free to pursue my goals in life". (participant 2)

"Yes, without a doubt, maybe even more than the expressions "glad and contented." It was like having my childhood fantasy come true. Indeed. Although the term "successful" has several connotations, in my opinion, one must be truly content in their chosen career in order to be considered successful. You can never consider yourself successful no matter how big your income is if you have an excessive sense of emptiness towards your work, and the same is true no matter how low your salary is if you feel like you are above the sky" (participant 6).

"I am incredibly happy and appreciative to be able to impart farming knowledge to our farmers in order to better their lives and the Philippines' agriculture industry." (participant 12)

This indicates that since they have been provided with opportunity to pursue their interests and passions, appropriate income, a light workload, or a flexible schedule, the participants are happy with their current jobs and/or the organizations to which they belonged. Additionally, when they provide assistance to others in need, they simultaneously experience a sense of fulfillment and contentment. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, participants are currently satisfied because their demands have been addressed.

b. Concerning Receptivity to Change

A few people are flexible with how they already work. Despite their apparent comfort, they remain receptive to new possibilities. But a teacher's employment might or might not be included in this future transition.

"The key benefit of completing a four-year degree is having a wide range of possibilities. I still have the option to apply to other businesses or give teaching a go in the future. However, I am currently content with my job as it is". (participant 4)

"I adore my work, and I anticipate getting promoted soon. Although I'm thrilled and content with my work, I'm looking for a better opportunity for my career. to attain more abilities and to be more competitive". (participant 9)

The participants' answers indicate that they are still open to changing careers in the future. Depending on their needs, they may or may not feel satisfied during the interview.

A Plan of Action to Reduce the Use of Teacher Education Graduates in Pointless Jobs

There are two Key Results Areas (KRAs), which include eliminating irrelevant employment of teacher education graduates and enhancing graduates' commitment to the teaching profession. The lack of dedication of recent graduates to the teaching profession is one of the issues raised by the research findings. Comparative studies (entry and exit interviews) involving college students are necessary to ascertain shifts in their level of commitment to teacher education.

The irrelevant employment of recent graduates in teacher education is another issue that needs to be addressed. The most practical ways to address this are to encourage graduating students to pursue teaching after graduation and to routinely provide seminars on how to become professional

teachers so that alumni can share their success stories. With the combined efforts of the dean, program director, faculty, and students, this will be made feasible. This will lead to an increase in the employment of recent teacher education graduates in relevant fields.

4. CONCLUSION

A variety of skills that are essential for becoming flexible, adaptive, and productive non-teaching workers are provided by the Teacher Education Program. Consequently, the key qualities that graduate students in teacher education gain are transferable and advantageous to employment outside of teaching, including professional values and attitudes, transversal skills, learning skills, paper work, and teaching skills.

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