

Travails of Public School Teachers: Job Placement Issues in Focus

Rostand S. Tolentino
University of Mindanao, Davao City, Philippines
Email: rostandtolentino@yahoo.com

Abstract—There is a need to investigate the travails of teachers in going through job placement issues with the public school system and the imbalance created due to the application of certain corrupt practices in their job placement. It was conducted to understand, describe and document the hardships and difficulties of applicant teachers experience after applying for permanent teaching positions in basic public education in the Philippines. Employing phenomenological approach with 17 teachers, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, results revealed the high prevalence of impropriety and misconduct of Philippine Department of Education (DepED for brevity)officials, motivated by bureaucratic anomalies in the institution, political affiliations, unabated culture of corruption such as extortion, and money making activities of DepED officials, due to a tradition of decadence in the organization, which the study participants view as incorrigible to change, giving way to a culture of infectious crookedness. Factors in the struggles of teachers in their job placement involve agitation, harassment, legitimacy, adaptation and acquiescence, rationalization, lessons learned, resolutions, shame and remorse, and repulsion. Offered in the study was removing taints of corruption by putting authority over many people representing each sector of the public educational sector such as teacher groups, private stakeholders, and DepED officials as a means for sustained transparency and accountability in pluralistic decision making.

Index Terms—travails, teachers, job placement

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is in partial fulfillment of a doctoral dissertation in Educational Management¹ that outlines pedagogical incongruence in public school administration. Teachers are critical to the academic success of our children, the profession needs to attract and retain the best and brightest. While there are examples of corruption within the Philippine Department of Education, the most serious consequences arise from the pervasive corruption that permeates the job placement transactions of the public schools, DepED's Schools Division, District offices [1], and the surest way to fix it is to make sure that Filipinos are given the best possible education by qualified teachers. For this reason, the process of choosing and appointing teachers to teaching positions is outlined in the Teachers Hiring Guidelines [2].

City and provincial educational offices are expected to comply with the relevant provisions of these laws and related policies when appointing teachers to teaching positions. Yet, not all schools division and district heads comply with the laws and policies when appointing teachers to teaching positions. Some of them comply with only some provisions while systematically flouting others in their appointment of others. Anecdotal evidence and teacher appointment data indicate that there are serious problems underlying teacher job placement issues and practices at the educational system [1], [3].

Further, the practice of selling teaching items is rampant, especially in areas where political patronage is prevalent. Some were told to pay large sums of money to DepED officials, school heads, or donate home appliances for the processing of their appointment papers. DepED Division and District Officers are in cahoots with school officials and do nothing. The right way of hiring or promoting teachers is not properly followed. The political patronage system in DepED tends to bypass more qualified individuals in government positions in favor of ones with better political connections. Many teachers are victimized by this kind of system. What is worse is that school principals are the perpetrators of this system and such are not isolated cases [2], [4]-[6].

Candid evaluations of achievements and failures in educational systems conclude that weak governance including poor transparency in the job placement of qualified public school teachers, and inadequate accountability persists due to corruption, clearly emphasizing its negative impact on the economic, political and social development of countries. Corruption among public officials is widely cited as a leading impediment to economic development in regions beset by widespread poverty. Recent surveys conducted on the impact of corruption in education suggests, that bribes and pay-offs in teacher recruitment and promotion tend to lower the quality of public school teachers [7].

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers who undergo job placement in the basic education of the public school?
2. How do their experiences on the corrupt practices of educational bureaucrats shape their image of the Philippine Department of Education?

Manuscript received July 1, 2015; revised October 13, 2015.

3. What are their insights and realizations learned from those experiences?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Design*

In this research study I made use of a descriptive qualitative research using phenomenological methodology which was exploratory in nature; for the facets of information that were derived are fluid, subjective and taken from the experiences and perspectives of the participants which was most suitable for exploratory study. Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, I used an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation included the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change [8].

Simply, the phenomenological method interprets an experience or fact, by listening to the different stories of the participants. It describes the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness, without recourse to theory, deduction, or assumption from other disciplines. The method examines the phenomena through the subjective eyes of the participants that describe the meaning of the experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon [9].

B. *Role of the Researcher*

This endeavor explored some of the challenges of participants from a population who considered education as an essential motivator towards development of oneself and the nation, only to find out that they had been victimized by those in educational administration. The Philippine government seemed to have neglected the plight of teacher victims and cared less for the effects it has on our children. It is for this reason that that conducting researches, like these, could be deemed with high regard. Choosing the topic on the travails of public school teachers as a result of administrative abuse in their job placement and appointment process was considered relevant.

I personally gathered data and conducted in-depth interviews with 10 informants and 7 participants for the Focus Group Discussion in different places as had been agreed by the informants, focusing on the difficult experiences they underwent to seek permanent employment, transfer of assignment or for promotion which I facilitated with the assistance of a colleague who took notes during the interviews and the Focus Group Discussion. I recorded the interviews through the use of two audio-digital recording devices. After conducting the interview, the recorded conversations were transcribed by

a hired transcriber who was a court stenographer. After which, transcripts were translated by the researcher and an English teacher.

Moreover, I together with two independent reader - analyst analyzed the data gathered from the audio recordings to cross-validate the findings of the transcriptions and English translations, and employed the expertise of a professional data analyst for the interpretation of the tabulated data, wherein the themes were drawn out and was thereafter formed with personal insights.

C. *Research Participants*

Prior to this research study, I was able to identify some of my research informants. They were co teacher friends whom I chose initially through purposive sampling as my participants based on a pre-selected criterion relevant to my study [10], who had struggles with the public school system that practiced certain corrupt practices in the job placement of qualified teacher applicants.

Purposive sampling was especially exemplified through the key informant technique wherein one or a few individuals were solicited to act as guides to a culture [10]. Initially with having only two informants, they gave me the ideas for my research study, and later referred me to others who could be informants in my study. After contacting my prospective informants, some agreed to participate while others were hesitant and backed out a day before the interview due to the nature of the study which was potentially and highly controversial for the participants involved.

Some populations that are interesting to study can be hard-to-reach and/or hidden. Such populations can be hard-to-reach and/or hidden because they exhibit some kind of distressing effect due to some social stigma, illicit or because of some illegal behaviors, or other trait that makes them atypical and/or socially marginalized. Snowball sampling was a non-probability based sampling technique that can be used to gain access to such populations. The informants were purposely initially chosen so that the information needed could expedite the study, however, the application of snowball sampling later was appropriate to gather the exact data needed to answer the research questions posted in the earlier part of this paper [11].

In my research study each informant was assigned to a pseudonym that in no way reveals the informant's true identity. Research risks were assessed with respect to the physical, social and psychological effects on participants.

D. *Data Collection*

In obtaining data about how the participants think and feel in the most direct ways [12], I conducted this qualitative phenomenological research relying quite extensively on in-depth one-on-one interviewing, direct participant observation, and focus group discussions,

This method, in fact, is based on an assumption fundamental to qualitative research: The participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it not as the researcher views it. The interviewing has limitations and weaknesses, and

involved personal interaction; where cooperation is essential [8].

In this research, I used an informed consent form with introductory script detailing specifically to the participants the purpose of the study, what will the study involve, why have they been asked to take part, that their participation was voluntary, and confidential and their identification in the study kept in anonymity, what would happen to the information they gave, what would happen to the results, what were the possible disadvantages in taking part and the contact numbers of the researcher. In addition, wherever possible, the interviews were conducted in areas free from distractions and at times and locations that were most suitable for the study participants. [13].

Focus group research was ideal for providing access to participants who are traditionally suspicious and for bringing to the surface meanings and emotions that might not be articulated elsewhere. The group setting contributed to the building of trustful relationships between participants and researcher and also provided a supportive forum for the expression of opinions that might not be disclosed even in private and allowed the researcher to see how people interact when they are considering a topic and how they react when disagreeing with each other [14].

E. Data Analysis

In the analysis of data, three steps were used specifically data reduction, data display, and conclusion [15]. The analysis of qualitative research notes begins in the field, at the time of observation, interviewing, or both, as the researcher identifies problems and concepts that appear likely to help in understanding the situation. The data for a qualitative study most often are notes jotted down in the field or during an interview from which the original comments, observations, and feelings are reconstructed or transcribed [16] from audio recordings. The basic data were these observations and conversations, the actual words of participants reproduced to the best of the researcher's ability from the field notes [17].

Examining relationships was the centerpiece of the analytic process, because it allowed the researcher to move from simple description of the people and settings to explanations of why things happened with those people in that setting. The process of examining relationships can be captured in a matrix that shows how different concepts are connected, or what causes are linked with the effects [18].

During data reduction, interview answers of the informants from the audiotape were transcribed and translated making the necessary decisions on how to code grouped categories and organizing them. During data display, I presented them in a form of a table respectively illustrating the patterns and findings of the data. During the conclusion drawing and verification, initial thoughts about patterns were developed. The analysis of the qualitative data was exploratory in nature and employed a constant comparison procedure. The categories and the coding of an outline were taken from three sources: the data, previous related studies, and theories [17].

F. Trustworthiness

To establish the issue of trustworthiness and credibility in my study, referential adequacy was used. Raw data, observation guide, digital audio recordings and transcription were utilized. Persistent observations, triangulation, peer debriefing, participant member checking, and reflexivity procedures were used to test the strength of the instrument that measured the phenomena under study and qualify findings as accurately as possible representing the data in discernable and meaningful ways was employed. Trustworthiness and quality was observed in the study which Lincoln and Guba posits are established by addressing the following components specifically credibility in preference to internal validity, confirm ability in preference to objectivity, transferability in preference to external validity or generability, and dependability in preference to reliability [19].

G. Ethical Consideration

Since the research study involved the application of corruption by those in educational administration in the placement of teachers in the Philippine public school system, sound research must be a moral and ethical endeavor that should be concerned with ensuring that the interests of those participating in a study are not harmed as a result of research being done. Moreover certain qualitative research approaches such as phenomenological study does pose complex challenges to an ethical conduct of research and therefore merit a closer scrutiny [20]. To manage the matter on ethical considerations I ascribed to the three core principles articulated by Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey which are Respect for persons, Beneficence and Justice [21].

IV. RESULTS

A. Experiences Teachers Who Undergo Job Placement in the Basic Education of the Public School

As the results of this study revealed, the impropriety and misconduct of DepED Officials in the job placement of public school teachers is highly prevalent. It has been described as existing and actively practiced and that all participants had actual experiences on the grave abuse of discretion of DepED officials in their job placement either for employment, applications for transfer and promotion in the basic education of the public school. Moreover, the impropriety and misconduct of DepED officials as revealed by the informants was not limited to a one-shot-deal and limited to within the public school system, but was also interrelated by political affiliations and motivations, that gives the impression that the practice of impropriety and misconduct by DepED officials in the placement of public school teachers is more of a culture rather than a practice.

Considering the case of Lisa (not her real name), despite the fact that she was already given an endorsement order by the Secretary of the Department of Education in Manila to legitimize her transfer after experiencing a frightening communist rebel group

ambush at her school, the principal of the city public school still required her to give Ten Thousand (P10,000) pesos as means to be accepted and for the processing of her transfer papers. Moreover, the principal still rejected her after getting a much higher amount from another newer teacher applicant who was hired despite Liza's priority. The principal was insensitive to the needs of people she had authority over with. She was also inconsiderate and imprudent of the sanctity of the position she held as a public servant and used her position to take advantage of others.

The experience of Jane (pseudonym) described how DepEd and school officials would corroborate with each other as a means to obtain material gain for themselves at the expense of someone else hard earned wage. Oscar (not his real name) was asked to shelve out Twenty Thousand (P20,000) pesos by the DepED District Supervisor just to get a full time teaching job. His ordeal in trying to pay for the amount he loaned from a loan shark pushed him to consider giving sex as a means to pay off his loan.

In comparison to other related readings, this study has confirmed the findings that corruption is not confined to the executive and legislative bodies of government but also to the public educational system that indeed one sector of society that has escaped the penetrating searchlight against corruption is education [22]. Furthermore, due to the impropriety and misconduct of DepED officials, extortion was found to be actively and rampantly practiced against teachers by demanding money, valuable items, or services who transact business with them for the issuance of appointment documents [2], [4] involved in the recruitment of personnel, requests for transfer and promotion of public school teachers.

In general, the study revealed the existence of Bureaucratic Anomalies within DepED, that the priority of the rating and ranking system in the job placement of teacher applicants was not followed. DepED's Schools Division and District offices are expected to comply with relevant provisions when appointing teachers to teaching positions as outlined in the Teacher's Hiring Guidelines. Yet, the result of the study revealed that not all DepED Schools Division Superintendents, District Supervisors and Public School Heads comply with the laws and policies when selecting teachers to teaching positions. It was found that some of them only comply with some provisions while systematically flouting others in their appointment of others [1]. Ara and Benjie (both are pseudonyms) had to seek prior approval from a House of Representative (Congressman) just to land a permanent teaching job with DepED's public schools after being evaluated by DepED officials themselves to be highly qualified and had first priority in their placement. Their experiences depicted that DepED officials and even Division employees had even knowledge of the corrupt practice in the placement of teachers, and would openly consent to such by recommending applicant teachers in seeking a political patron. It demonstrates the over-reaching arm of politicians onto the arena of public education despite the fact that DepED has jurisdiction

over such matters as their affiliations are primed towards equal gain [4], thus becomes a culture in itself.

The study confirmed related readings that the practice of selling teaching items is rampant, especially in areas where political patronage is prevalent. Upon their application with public schools, the informants were either told to pay large sums of money to the school heads, and to DepED officials or donate home appliances for the processing of their papers or seek political approval from a member of the corresponding House of Representative, who gets to decide on whether the teacher applicant is employed or not. They call this Congressional Teaching items. Division Officers are in cahoots with school officials and politicians as their affiliations are primed towards equal gain [4]. One, for granting political favors to supporters and politicking, and the other as a guarantee for budgetary funding. Too much paper requirements, long and arduous processing of documents, ineffective and inefficient personnel management and the absence of professionalism in the public service are employed by School Heads and DepED officials in a way that support the cause or extraordinary and illegal methods for the immediate processing and issuance of required personnel documents [1], like extorting money, appliances and other things and is commonplace to a point that it is the current trend in hiring that becomes a culture in itself.

The stories revealed by the informants of their experiences in the study confirms the heavy struggles of teachers in the public school and what they have to face and undergo just to land employment with our public schools, be selected for transfer to another school nearest their homes or away from harm's way, or acquire the promotion they so deserve for being qualified is just a portion of the struggle. It was also revealed that the teachers were extremely agitated due to their experience of the impropriety, and misconduct of DepED officials and the culture of bureaucratic anomalies within DepED.

Ara was so angry with what she had experienced. During the interview she cried as she recounted how she complied with all the necessary requirements in accordance to DepED's hiring guidelines, was ranked three overall, only to learn later that someone with a much lower ranking was appointed instead of her. She could not describe her feelings and was annoyed why government employees were like that. Mary (pseudonym) was so disgusted over the trend of the DepED Division Superintendent and school officials in extorting money or items from applicants before being appointed, after being appointed and having to give something as a gift for being hired.

Gemma (not her real name) narrates the same feelings of annoyance, anger and irritation at her DepED District Supervisor who was imprudent and so insensitive to her plight of being five months pregnant but still had the guts to extort money from her just to approve her request for transfer to another school, knowing that she had to walk a very long distance several kilometers in fact and crossing a river to just get to her assigned school in the hinterlands. Charlie (pseudonym) worries up to now with constant

feelings of pain and frustration, thinking how he may correct his problem in paying for a Hundred Thousand (100,000) peso loan he was fooled into entering by his school head's wife.

Agitation is a result of a person's interactions with the environment giving rise to unmet needs [23], while emotions are a pervasive feature of occupational experiences and feelings of agitation such as frustration, anger and irritation [24]. This explains why the study participants displayed feelings of anger, annoyance, frustrations, fear of their actions, and pain when they experienced bureaucratic anomalies by DepED officials and where made to do extraordinarily things despite their qualifications and for some, despite having done what was required of them had unmet needs or were rejected and not selected for appointment.

Similar stories on reported cases of sex in exchange for teaching items [4] were found to be true as the study revealed to have been experienced and validated by two informants. Interestingly, the study disclosed that there are in fact incidents of harassments by DepED Officials as a means for selecting teachers for transfer and employment.

When Fe (not her real name) applied for transfer to another district area, the DepED District Supervisor agreed on the condition that she allows him to touch her leg first. She was so discouraged to continue because of the illicit demands of her DepED Supervisor that she never applied again for transfer. In another related issue, Jane disclosed how her teacher applicant friend was made a sex slave by a DepED Schools Division Superintendent who required that the married teacher co-habitate with him for two weeks, on the promise that she be appointed for employment. Her teacher friend after being employed in the public school, resigned only after a few years in public school.

The findings of this study conform to studies that sexual harassment in the workplace and in educational settings creates an environment that demeans people and may have a negative impact on individual performance and effectiveness as well as organizational productivity and unit morale. Although sensitivity to this complex issue has been heightened recently, much confusion exists, even about exactly what constitutes sexual harassment, as well as about modalities appropriate for dealing with the problem. It is incumbent on employers, organizations, and institutions to represent all their constituents, male and female, and provide education and guidance to facilitate eradication of this destructive behavior [25].

B. How Experiences of Teachers in the Corrupt Practices of Educational Bureaucrats Shaped Their Image of the Department of Education

A tradition of decadence in the job placement of public school teachers of the Philippine Department of Education emerged from the answers of the study participants. Queenie (not her real name) disclosed when asked how she looked at DepED, she stated that DepED Supervisors practice money making activities which still happens until today. All the study participants support

this conviction with Fe specifically stating that it is the culture climate in place because despite the fact that her corrupt DepED District Head is gone, his replacement still extorts for money.

Rachelle (pseudonym) revealed that when she applied the DepED District Supervisor told her personally that there was a price tag to it, stating further that even if she applied through somebody else; giving him money was a form of expression of gratitude for being hired by him. Mary goes on to state that that the corrupt ways of the DepED Schools Division Superintendent destroys the image of the department, and the practice is still existing nowadays and became worst. These revelations may come to a shock for those who are not from the Philippine Department of Education. It only goes to say that there is a deeply rooted problem in the Philippine educational bureaucracy which insiders hesitate to divulge. There is a need to conduct further studies on such issues as it is eating away the very fabric of morality in public education.

Accordingly when extortion, and corruption continue unabated, and the bureaucracy and is plundered by one and all, a tradition of such culture contributes to the decadence of the values of the society in the bureaucracy [26]. Generally, there is a high prevalence of a culture of corruption currently in place at DepED, where they make money out of the poor teacher-applicants, the appointing head does not adhere to established hiring rules and procedures, act unprofessionally, and a political padrino (patron) is really needed to get you in and the corrupt ways of DepED are getting worse.

In comparison to other related readings, this study has confirmed claims and reports that the conditions set for the selection and appointment of teachers depends on whether or not the teacher-applicants give them something to please the appointing authority's eyes and desires. The latest Guidelines of Hiring Teachers is great but the question is on how the DepED Superintendents and his/her subordinates implement it. Most talented applicants are being rejected for unknown reasons. Most gifted applicants are given poor scores during ranking, so that the appointing authority may have the reason not to hire them if they are included in the Registry of Qualified Applicants. This crooked way of hiring teachers is still going on [5].

A portrait of incorrigibility emerged from the responses of the participants regarding their helplessness in the current system in place at DepED. Generally most of them perceive that the current system and culture of rampant corrupt practices in DepED and in the public schools is bad beyond correction or reform, willful, and uncontrollable that any change to this corrupt culture climate within DepED is impossible to do. This may be so due to the fact that graft and corruption is rampantly being practiced by DepED officials against public school teacher applicants that they have no alternative means but to follow, otherwise their papers will not be acted upon or they will not be hired, transferred or promoted.

In consideration of the experiences of Ara when she applied for a teaching position in a public school, she had

no other option but to seek the endorsement of a political patron, as she already used the standard process using her credentials. She was ranked number three overall but nothing happened for three consecutive years. The same goes for Benjie who recounts his ordeal with a Congressman who did not support his application and threw his application papers together with other unsupported applicants in a mountainous dump of green folders at the Congressman's stock room. Benjie was the top ranked qualified applicant in DepED at that time. Neil goes straight to the point and divulges that it is impossible to change the ways of their supervisors, unless someone sacrifices in going against the head and risk losing his job.

Most of the study participants believe that the certainty of change or doing something about this corrupt culture is incorrigible as corruption within DepED is there to stay, unless someone exposes them and risk losing their jobs. We know for a fact that Philippine whistleblowers end up at the worse wide of the bargain, thus disclosure of the corrupt activities would thus have a negative impact on the whistleblower. Some of the responses of the study participants portray a fear of risk of losing their jobs.

Similar to a report of a case in South Africa that "everyone in a municipality is corrupt. It is difficult to catch them out. Although a report was compiled about the wrong-doings and took it to council with the recommendation that charges should be laid down and people arrested. However, nothing happened, because the councilors were afraid that they would lose their jobs if they confronted corrupt people. Either that, or they are implicated in the corruption themselves" [27]. Certainly in this sense, the incorrigibility of the culture of corruption, is actually a dilemma of those within the Philippine public educational sector who are afraid to expose the people behind the practice and culture, because they believe coming forward is risky due to the negative impact of whistle blowing in the Philippines or they themselves are also implicated in the said corruption.

Some of the responses relay that a culture of infectious crookedness is present within DepED, especially if the kind of school environment present caters to the culture of corruption. Benjie's response in the study mentioned "given the kind of environment and the practices at DepED, people can be easily influenced by the system," Jane's statements supports this claim, who says if the higher ups are also up to the same thing, meaning in the practice of corruption, then the corruption is there to stay.

School management is responsible for making sure that the right controls are in place, and that they are performing as intended. Nonetheless, the head provides the leadership needed to establish and guide an integrated internal control framework. The head establishes a positive "tone at the top" by conducting the organization's affairs in an honest and ethical manner and establishing accountability at all levels of the organization. If the head does not demonstrate strong support for internal controls, the organization as a whole will unlikely practice good internal controls [28].

Moreover, the control environment is pervasive, as it affects either positively or negatively the entire organization. It is the medium that spreads the organization's commitment to ethical and honest behavior [29]. This therefore implicates that there are no internal controls in DepED nor does DepED truly care in establishing a positive tone at the top, conducting the organization's affairs in an honest and ethical manner and establishing accountability. Correspondingly, this explains why the culture of crookedness is infectious; because DepED itself is saturated by this kind of culture.

C. Insights and Realizations Learned by Teachers from Their Experiences

It could be generalized from the results of the study that due to the culture of corruption within DepED, teachers have no choice but to go with flow, and are forced to give in to the demands of DepED officials and public school heads due to the belief that the culture of corruption within DepED is incorrigible to change and thus become adaptive and acquiescent to the culture of corruption.

Harry (not his real name) who was very reluctant at first to state his mind revealed that sometimes they cannot do anything anymore about the current system of our public educational system. If they patronize the system, they would have to resort to bribery the more. If they do not do that, then they cannot use the system. Rachelle statements conform to Harry's revelations disclosing that things are like that. Sometimes you cannot get your wish if you do not bribe or do what they want. It is like a shortcut procedure for them to act on your requests.

Neil when applying for a promotion was disheartened by the corrupt ways of the successor of his previous honest DepED Supervisor who kept secret available positions for promotion to those he favored. Neil was a ranked number two in the evaluation for promotion, but the corrupt DepED Supervisor who he had personal acquaintances with did not follow the priority in the hiring policy of ranking. He could not do anything but follow the ways in DepED. He approached a padrino for help.

Acquiescence is the conformity of people within the institutional environment and the desirability of adhering to the customs of the institution. Over time, a second force emerges as adaptation to customs, as members of a community learn to live the institutional culture. The adaptation of the participants therefore implies that the influence of the culture evolved to mitigate the negative consequences of acquiescence to the culture. This is due to the fact that many individuals in the organization essentially assume acquiesce to what is the trend in the institution, because they rather do it than bear the costs of challenging or working around it [30]. It therefore proves that teachers would willingly adapt to the culture of corruption within DepED rather than bear the consequence and cost of challenging or working around it.

The results of the study reveals that some responses of the informants are indicative that their participation in corrupt practices are due to their acquiescence and

adaptation to the culture of corruption, although knowingly understand that it was wrong and would rather rationalize their actions as justifiable or to avoid true explanation.

Neil knew that his asking the support of a padrino for a promotion was wrong as he was clearly qualified based on the ranking he received from DepED. However he wanted to get a higher paying job and knew that doing so would be impossible to achieve due to the culture of corruption. When queried how he felt when he did that, he explained that it was because it was a stepping stone to do good.

Similarly Shiela (pseudonym) mentioned that finding a job was really hard. If there was no other way, she would do whatever it takes to get employed even if it was the wrong anyway, stating furthermore that she will be a good person in the department.

As a defense mechanism the controversial actions, behaviors, or feelings people had are justified and explained in a seemingly rational or logical manner to avoid true explanation, and are made consciously tolerable [31]. It would therefore explain why some of the participants would justify their acts as a means of doing something good later.

However who gets to decide what an individual is to do? This question seems to have exactly one correct answer, the individual himself, which is an obvious truth, and certainly does not imply that whatever an individual decides that he must do is the right thing for him to do. Of course an individual must decide himself what he is to do; and of course he can make horrible mistakes and do actually wrong things as a result of bad decisions—bad decisions which, nonetheless, he made for himself. So who's to decide what we must do? The person himself of course, but will certainly want to make use of competent advice, sound reasoning, and accurate information [32].

The good thing about having bad experiences is that there are always good lessons to be learned from the experiences we had, that we learn from it and fix the problems we have. It makes us stronger and gives us a motive to become better prepared and point out that we can be good citizens after all.

When Liza was asked what she had learned out of her experience, she responded with if we give money to other (corrupt) people, we are helping them to be more corrupt. Further, Ara commented that if the school head is corrupt, those under her are also corrupt. Charlie who was fooled into making a One Hundred (P100,000) Peso loan for his school head's wife using his Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) Card as a guarantee with the assurance that she would pay him within the month, stated that before acting on things, weigh things first. Lisa gave a very inspiring message. She said teacher applicants should not give any money because if they did, they were encouraging and enticing the receiver to do wrong and extort money even more and that teachers and government employees should only live within their own bounds and do not desire more than they we can actually earn.

This follows that if we believe that by explicitly identifying persistent challenges, we may be better attuned to these challenges and more able to address them. Likewise, by better understanding why these challenges remain unresolved, we may be able to adapt their lessons-learned processes to better support behavioral change and improvement. Furthermore, whatever lessons are learned from our experiences it should be a motivation for change as learning is, at its core, a process of growth; thus a successful learning process requires a commitment to change [33].

The study revealed some very inspiring responses that teaches a way out of committing corruption, such as, one, "if you give money to a corrupt person, you are also tolerating corruption and you are also corrupt," Two, "never give money. If you are qualified, it will be given to you," Three, "before acting on things, you must weigh things first." Four, "we can commit mistakes but learn from those mistakes," The last was the most inspiring of all, "we should live within our bounds and not desire more than what we can actually earn,"

The study revealed that there were some participants who experienced intrapersonal conflict. It means that the experiences they encountered had an effect of on the person's mind, that are actually psychological, involving the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions that they tend to resolved their experiences towards a positive step in the right direction with ashift in operating towards a community level.

Ara despite her decision to engage the services of a padrino which she knew was wrong, mentioned that she believed she would remain the same person who if she does not adopt the corrupt people at her school as her friends. That she was hopeful in being a good teacher, and initiated in the creation of a teachers group composed of newly hired teachers who were victims of the same corruption she underwent, teaching them ways in combating the corruption in their school citing that if she wanted to stop corruption at her school, it would have to start with her. Shiela also knew that what she did was wrong. She resolved to stand fair amidst the acts she committed even if people will be angry at her.

Once the respondents described and placed the event in their environment as well, a reviewing of the setting emerges, which includes an assessment of positive and negative emotional responses, feelings of powerlessness and frustration, and a tendency to shift in worldview. This shows that people usually resolves to do something about what they had experienced after assessing the positive and negative effect it had on them [34].

Interestingly, negative feelings are not, per se, a bad thing. In fact, when some of the study participants experiences some degree of guilt, shame, and remorse after violating his or her core values, especially when this behavior has harmed not only themselves but in a sense also other people, it is actually a very good sign.

Shiela claims that it was degrading to her as a teacher to have to pay just to get her job. Fe states that she was a deserving person, thus why would she give in to what the DepED official was demanding. Kathy (not her real name)

painfully relates her experiences that she was advised by her school head that she was eligible for permanent status as she had priority in the placement due to being the lone Local School Board employee. Her husband was then asked to give the school head a 25 inch television set. Although she was eventually appointed, she became the object of ridicule at her school. She was wrongfully accused of bribing the school head and was severely harassed by all her co-teachers. Worse, she received a letter from the Philippine President's Office endorsing a complaint that was asking for the recall of her appointment, which was followed by an investigation by DepED officials. This drove Kathy to consider committing suicide as she was so stressed out and in constant pain. When Kathy was queried on what she would recommend to others she cried saying do not imitate what she did. That God made a way out of her misery because her best friend later confessed in starting the painful intrigues against her and begged her forgiveness.

Moral emotions represent a key element of our human moral apparatus, influencing the link between moral standards and moral behavior. Many potential explanations exist for the discrepancy between behavioral decisions (intentions) and actual behavior in both moral and non-moral domains. Naturally, people do, on occasion, lie, cheat, and steal, even though they know such behavior is deemed wrong by moral and societal norms. Individual differences in people's anticipation of and experience of moral emotions likely play key roles in determining actual moral choices and behavior in real-life contexts. When we sin, transgress, or err, aversive feelings of shame, guilt, or embarrassment are likely to ensue. When we "do the right thing," positive feelings of pride and self-approval are likely to result [35]. These feelings as accentuated from the responses of the informants therefore show that the participants in the study do indeed have a moral compass.

The responses of some of the study participants are indicative that they had feelings of strong disgust over the experiences they've had over the application of corrupt practices by government educational bureaucrats in their job placement. The strong dislike or disgust of some participants the very least provide proof of the effects of corruption in education on its teacher victims.

Mary angrily commented that she was disgusted after giving the money asked of her as a form of paying back the favor who made it possible for her to be hired. Neil asserts that his level of confidence dropped when he learned about the trend of money making activities of DepED supervisors at the expense of struggling teachers. Gemma reveals that most officials would abuse the authority they have because of the position they wield over others. Benjie was disgusted and repulsed over the idea of Congressmen having blind authority in selecting his preferred people as public school teachers regardless of whether they voted for him or not and that the public school system was politically motivated and with DepED officials playing cahoots with politicians.

Corruption or the abuse of entrusted power for private gain hurts everyone who depends on the integrity of people in a position of authority [36]. This may be a reason why some of the study participants gave responses that they were repulsed because they were hurt by their experiences in their job placement that affected them, their relationship to peers, family and work performance. Repulsion therefore does point out and show how displeased were some of the study participants of the experiences they had. It's undeniable that some people are indeed disgusted with their treatment in their job placement with the public educational system.

In summary, It would seem that the engagement of corrupt practices in the employment of public school teachers are a result of the failure of DepEd to acknowledge and address the real needs of the Philippine educational system. Poor transparency, inadequate accountability of educational bureaucrats, and crooked practices of the administrators of our basic educational public school institutions persists due to corruption in regions beset by widespread poverty, clearly emphasizing its negative impact on our educational outcomes [36]. The findings are troubling, shocking and a big letdown to the straight path policy of the national government.

D. Implications for Practice

On the experiences of teachers who underwent job placement in the basic education of the public school of the Philippines, it has been established from the responses of the participants that corruption in education is deeply-rooted and widely practiced especially in the government bureaucracy to the extent it has been accepted as a "way of life", and incorrigible to change.

Thus efforts must be made in legislation to change the way teachers are appointed [1], by putting authority over many, or groups of people representing the public educational sector and private stakeholders, wherein the final decision to place or appoint teachers to our public schools are done by a collegial body composed of DepED officials, the school head, members of an accredited teachers group and from the private sector.

The idea is remove taints of corruption by providing accountability to the decision made and removing delegated discretionary powers from a single person into a group of people. It means employing and giving institutions pluralistic authority to decide on matters as a means for sustained transparency and accountability in decision making. With many parties at the table sharing power, it is natural to have laws, rules and constraints apply to all. Once pluralism and the rule of law are established, there would be demand for even greater pluralism and greater participation in the political process. The greater masses must therefore have a seat at the decision table to be able to defend their interests that would generate the dynamics that would create a process of positive feedback. Inclusive government institutions create constraints against the exercise and usurpation of power of a few [37]-[39].

On how the experiences of the teachers on the corrupt practices of public education bureaucrats shape their image of the Department of Education, in understanding

the avenues for the practice of corruption within DepED, it for this reason, and equally important that DepED management including governing School Divisions Superintendents, District Supervisors, and school heads are made responsible and accountable for making sure that the right controls are in place, and that they are performing as intended. They provide the leadership needed to establish and guide an integrated internal control framework that establishes a positive “tone at the top” by conducting an organization’s affairs in an honest and ethical manner and establishing accountability at all levels of the organization. If they do not demonstrate strong support for internal controls, the organization as a whole will be unlikely to practice good internal controls. It is the medium that spreads the organization’s commitment to ethical and honest behavior [28], [29]. Therefore ensuring first that many parties are at the table sharing power in pluralistic decision making, it is natural to have laws, rules and constraints apply to all [39].

Further, information and communication must be allowed to openly flow through the entire bureaucracy of DepED, as information is the vehicle by which control policies and procedures are introduced and reinforced, while communication is the conduit by which people become aware [28] of DepED’s commitment to corruption controls.

On the insights and realizations learned by teachers from their experiences, Individual differences in people’s anticipation of and experience of moral emotions likely play key roles in determining actual moral choices and behavior in real-life contexts. When we sin, transgress, or err, aversive feelings of shame, guilt, or embarrassment are likely to ensue. When we “do the right thing,” positive feelings of pride and self-approval are likely to result. The best ways to change the way things are is for teachers to do what is morally right and speak out against corrupt practices in their school and the illicit activities of DepED officials, share their personal experiences with others, and continuously improve on teacher quality and efficacy by getting trainings to be better adapted to fighting corruption. Transparency and access to information are essential to control the prevalence of corruption in education. There is no stronger deterrent to corruption than public information and exposure [40]. Improving teacher recruitment, retention and recognition of teachers by educational bureaucrats, then seems inescapable [41].

E. Implications for Future Research

In as much as this study is limited to a few DepED officials and public schools in Davao City, and the cities and municipalities in the provinces of Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte, the following applications for future research are advanced.

Since the findings of this particular study are not generalizable beyond the 17 study participants, future research may be conducted investigating the travails of public school teachers in their job placement with another group of participants in order to substantiate the findings.

Second, future research may be conducted investigating the culture of corruption within the

Department of Education in other parts of the country to add to the research base other ideas, concerns and issues related to it.

F. Concluding Remarks

The investigation on the travails of public school teachers: job placement issues in focus have highlighted the significance and the necessity of such a study. The findings substantiated claims and reports that the process in utilizing the Register of Qualified Applicants is severely misused. No matter how good the teacher-applicant’s rating are, DepED Schools Division Superintendents, and District Supervisors or School Heads will not accommodate nor recommended them but someone else. The conditions set for the selection for appointment depends on whether or not the teacher-applicants give them something to please the appointing authority’s eyes and desires [5], [6]. It also upheld the assertion that without adequate internal controls, management has little assurance that its goals and objectives will be achieved. Properly designed and functioning controls reduce the likelihood that significant errors or fraud will occur and remain undetected [28]. The study also supports other study findings that transparency must be strongly asserted [40].

The data from the two methods of data gathering employed in this study proved to be similar and analogous. The focus group discussion thus completed the components of the triangulation technique that is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through the cross validation from more than two sources – the first being the readings on the travails of public school teachers, second the in-depth interviews, and third the focus group discussions [42].

The contributions of this study lie in its making available the experiences, perceptions, and insights of teachers on the phenomenon of corruption in the Philippine public school system as well as the constructs derived from the findings. Moreover it brings to the fore the advantage of using the qualitative approach in understanding shared and common experiences. It has also opened opportunities and ideas for future researches in as much as there is a great deal more to be learned about corruption in the public school.

APPENDIX

June 19, 2014

Mr. Rostand S. Tolentino, C.E., G.E., MAED
Researcher
University of Mindanao
Bolton Street, Davao City
Through: Eugenio S. Guhao, Jr., D.M.
Dean, Graduate School

Dear Mr. Tolentino,
This pertains to your letter dated June 13, 2014, requesting permission from this Office to conduct a research study to public school teachers entitled: “*Travails of Public School Teachers: Job Placement*

Issues in Focus,” leading to the degree in Doctor of Education major in Educational Management.

Please be informed this Office interposes no objection to your request provided classes will not be disrupted, no government funds will be used for this purpose, and results of the study will be furnished this Office. In this regard, please be advised to coordinate with the Schools Division Superintendents of the Divisions of Davao City, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, and Davao Oriental for proper scheduling in the conduct of your research study.

Very truly yours,
 NENITA L. LUMAAD (SGD)
 Assistant Regional Director
 Officer-in-Charge
 Office of the Regional Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

There searcher expresses his sincere thanks and gratitude to the following people who have assisted and extended their help in making this dissertation a reality.

Dr. Eunice A. Atienzar, his adviser, for her support and kindhearted guidance; Dr. Gloria P. Gempes, his professor, for her untiring kindhearted encouragement and support in guiding him in making this dissertation;

Dr. Eugenio S. Guhao, chairman of the panel ofexaminers, and members Dr. Gloria P. Gempes, Dr. Alvin O. Cayogyog, Dr. Minerva T. Fabros, and Dr. Rinante L. Genuba, for all their suggestions and recommendations in the refinement of this dissertation; Dr. Eufrosina Mines his data analyst, Dr. Ana Helena Lovitos his editor, his classmates Dr. Mila Ramos, Tina Hiro, Dr. Rico Maghuyop, Dr. Anne Al-Ag, Dr. Lyn Balatero, and Roxsan Asares, Aireen Guerrero, Johanna Roxas, Mary Joy Candido of the Graduate School, for their kindness, and unrelenting support. His ever supportive and loving wife and classmate, Alma C. Tolentino, for her understanding, and patience during the most trying times; Most of all, my heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty God, source of all wisdom and knowledge, patience and strength that enabled the researcher to strive against all challenges.

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Rostand S. Tolentino was born in the City of Davao, Philippines on October 7, 1967. He finished his Post Graduate Studies in Doctor of Education – Major in Educational Management with the University of Mindanao in Davao City on October 2014 where he completed his dissertation entitled "Travails of Public School Teachers: Job Placement Issues in Focus. Took his Master of Arts in Education – Major in Mathematics from the same university last March 2010 with his thesis entitled "ICT Integration in Teaching Mathematics and the Engaged Learning of Students. Completed his Earning Units in Bachelor in Secondary Education from the University of Southeastern Philippines in 2007, and undertook some units in Master of Engineering Program in Computer Engineering in 2004 and Bachelor in Laws in 1999 from the Ateneo de Davao University. Studied Interior Decorating from the International Correspondence School of Pennsylvania in 1995 and graduated with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the Ateneo de Davao University on March 1990. He is currently employed with the Office of the City Engineer of the City Government of Davao as the Chief City Geodetic Engineer. He used to head the Street Cleaning Workforce of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office of the City of Davao. He previously worked in Supplies and Logistics for a Regional Telecommunications Provider, was a Sales Consultant for Master Builders Technologies (Phils.) and as a Project Manager for a construction firm doing general engineering – general building projects with the Department of Public Works and Highways. He currently teaches at the Ateneo de Davao University as a professor in Database Programming and Research Methodologies using Computer Technologies. Dr. Tolentino is Board Member of the Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines, Regional XI Division and a member of the Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers. He was a Research Paper Presenter at a Graduate School Research Colloquium collaborated by the Graduate Schools of the University of Mindanao, University of Immaculate Conception and the Holy Cross of Davao College held on September 6, 2014. He was also a Research Paper Presenter during the Graduate School Research Fair of the University of Mindanao held last May 12, 2012.