

A journey of a Filipino pre-service teacher before entering the Department of Education

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Received: May 7, 2024

Revised: July 24, 2024

Accepted: August 9, 2024

Abstract

The journey of pre-service teachers in the Philippines was a transformative and crucial phase that involved comprehensive preparation, training, and personal growth. This research explored the experiences and challenges encountered by Filipino pre-service teachers and the factors that influenced the duration of their journey before they officially entered the Department of Education (DepEd). The research utilized a mixed-method design. The participants were sixty (60) pre-service teachers from different Teacher Education Institutions across the Philippines. Results showed that the duration of entering DepEd varied for each pre-service teacher based on different factors and their unique circumstances. Additionally, changes in policies, educational reforms, or external factors influenced the timeline for entering the department. The timeline for pre-service teachers to secure employment within the education department ranged from several months to a year or more, depending on the combination of academic requirements, licensure examinations, and bureaucratic processes they needed to complete. The duration of the transition process varied based on individual circumstances, such as qualifications, networking efforts, flexibility, and the specific conditions of the job market and educational institutions in a particular region. These findings implied that educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders could make informed decisions and implement targeted reforms that expedited the employment process for pre-service teachers. It was important to strike a balance between efficiency and maintaining high educational standards, ensuring that the reforms contributed to the overall quality of the education system.

Keywords

Pathway, pre-service teachers, professional educators, teacher education, transformative.

INTRODUCTION

The journey of Filipino pre-service teachers before entering the DepEd is a significant phase in their professional development and an essential aspect of the educational system. This journey encompassed academic preparation and field experiences or practice teaching, which shaped aspiring educators into competent and dedicated professionals.

However, a comprehensive understanding of the duration it takes for pre-service teachers to secure employment within the department is lacking. Thus, understanding the challenges and experiences faced by pre-service teachers during this journey was crucial to improving teacher education and fostering the development of effective educators.



In a study conducted by the Philippines for Business Education (PBE) in 2017, based on the number of LET passers in each TEI (Teacher Education Institution) using the LET examination results from 2009 to 2017, it was revealed that 48% (elementary examination) and 51% (secondary examination) of TEIs scored below the national passing rate.

Moreover, in 2019, the PRC and the Professional Regulatory Board for Professional Teachers (BPT) reported that 28,973 elementary teachers out of 92,440 examinees (31.34%) and 54,179 secondary teachers out of 136,523 examinees (39.68%) successfully passed the LET [1]. In 2021, the PRC and the Board for Professional Teachers (BPT) announced that 4,883 elementary teachers out of 8,726 examinees (55.96%) and 10,318 secondary teachers out of 17,863 examinees (57.76%) successfully passed the LET [2]. In 2022, there were 49,783 elementary teachers out of 91,468 examinees (54.43%) and 71,080 secondary teachers out of 139,534 examinees (50.94%) who successfully passed the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT) [3].

The data prove that there are indeed problems and factors affecting the performance of future teachers. Likewise, the quality of teacher preparation has a significant impact on the performance of pre-service teachers in the LEPT. Thus, TEIs needed to intensify the measures in preparing their pre-service teachers [4]. Intensive review classes focused on the specialization and professional education subject areas should be conducted [5].

Moreover, there are various stages in their journey and the support systems in place to nurture their growth before entering the DepEd. The first stage of the journey was the Pre-Service Teacher Education program which involved enrolling in a pre-service teacher education program at a recognized higher education institution. This program provided the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for teaching. It typically included coursework in education theories, pedagogy, subject specialization, and teaching methods.

The second stage consists of the teaching practice program, which is part of their pre-service teacher education program. Filipino pre-service teachers undergo a teaching practice program that allows them to gain practical teaching experience in real classroom settings. They are assigned to schools where they observe

experienced teachers, assist in lesson planning, and gradually take on teaching responsibilities under supervision.

Furthermore, the pre-service teachers continue to engage in professional development activities. These may include attending seminars, workshops, and conferences related to teaching and education. Professional development opportunities enhance their knowledge, skills, and understanding of current educational practices. Following this, after completing their pre-service teacher education program, Filipino pre-service teachers are required to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). This examination assesses their competency in the principles and practices of teaching. Successful completion of the LET is a prerequisite for obtaining a teaching license.

Once pre-service teachers pass the LET, they can apply for teaching positions in public or private schools. The hiring process typically involves submitting application documents, attending interviews, and demonstrating their teaching abilities through demonstration teaching sessions. The DepEd and school administrators evaluate their qualifications and suitability for teaching positions.

These stages reveal the challenging process that Filipino pre-service teachers experience. While going through these stages, challenges and barriers are possible. Hence, by examining the completion of academic requirements, passing licensure examinations, and navigating bureaucratic processes, this research sheds light on the factors that influence the duration of the journey for pre-service teachers. Understanding these factors is crucial for identifying potential areas of improvement in the system, ensuring efficient and streamlined pathways for aspiring educators, and enhancing the quality of education in the Philippines.

In addition, challenges and barriers faced by pre-service teachers in passing the LET in the Philippines are known [6]–[10]. Similarly, the study by Ramos and Balansay [11] discloses factors influencing the employment opportunities for education graduates, including pre-service teachers in the Philippines. It provides insights into job market conditions, skills required, and the duration of the transition from pre-service to employed teacher. This is supported by Dalit [12], who explores the factors affecting the employment of education graduates, focusing on

a specific university in the Philippines. It examines the impact of academic performance, licensure examination results, and other factors on the duration of the employment process. Moreover, Ganotice Jr. and Rojas [13] investigated the bureaucratic processes involved in hiring public school teachers in the Philippines, including the DepEd's recruitment and selection procedures. It explores the potential bottlenecks and challenges that contribute to delays in the hiring process.

The previous studies provide insights into various aspects of the pre-service teachers' employment process in the Philippines, including licensure examinations, employment opportunities, bureaucratic processes, and challenges faced by education graduates. By reviewing these related studies and literature, one can build upon existing knowledge and identify gaps that researchers can address.

Furthermore, Sato and Kemper [14] provide an overview of the transition process for pre-service teachers globally, including factors influencing their entry into the teaching profession. While not specific to the Philippines, it offers valuable insights into common themes and challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their transition. Aguilar and Pedrosa [15] examine, through a systematic review, the factors influencing the employment of education graduates in the Philippines. It synthesizes existing literature to identify common factors affecting the duration and success of pre-service teachers in entering the DepEd. Wang [16] explores, through a critical review, the transition from pre-service to in-service teaching, focusing on the challenges faced by new teachers. While not specific to the Philippines, it offers insights into broader issues related to the duration and difficulties encountered during the preliminary stages of a teaching career. Dumrique and Javate [17] analyze the teacher supply and demand situation in the Philippines, including the factors affecting the entry of pre-service teachers into the DepEd. It discusses issues such as teacher shortages, geographical disparities, and policy implications.

The related studies and literature above provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the duration of the journey for pre-service teachers in the Philippines. They cover various aspects, including global perspectives, systematic reviews, and specific analyses of teacher supply and demand.

Incorporating these sources has helped the researchers gain a broader perspective on what to address in this research.

Furthermore, the study of Ocampo [18] discloses that there are significant and positive correlations between 21st-century learner skills and 21st-century teacher skills. This implies that pre-service teachers should elevate their skills to become effective teachers. This is related to the recommendation of Borja et al. [19], which suggests that pre-service teachers should engage in various seminar workshops that address different aspects of teaching.

Based on the standards of PPST-RPMS, pre-service teachers should exhibit the performance expected of them. Pacpaco et al. [20] reveal that there is a significant relationship between the performance of pre-service teachers along the Philippine Professional Standards for Beginning Teachers in curriculum and planning. The pre-service teachers' level of competency regarding PPST was perceived as proficient, according to the results of evaluations by cooperating teachers [21].

These previous studies reveal that various factors need to be considered by pre-service teachers before entering the DepEd. Generally, the data presented, along with the related literature and studies, prove that there are existing problems related to the timeline before pre-service teachers enter the DepEd, as well as the challenges they encounter.

Therefore, the findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on teacher education and the employment of teachers in the Philippine context. Additionally, this research explores the experiences and challenges encountered by Filipino pre-service teachers and the factors that influence the duration of their journey before they officially enter the DepEd.

By providing insights into the challenges and obstacles faced by pre-service teachers in their transition from education programs to the DepEd, policymakers, educators, and relevant stakeholders can make informed decisions and implement necessary reforms to expedite the process without compromising the quality and competence of teachers.

Moreover, this research provides valuable information that can guide educational institutions, policymakers, and pre-service teachers themselves in making informed decisions, setting realistic expectations, and

streamlining the pathway to entering the DepEd. By addressing the factors influencing the duration of this process, the study aims to contribute to the enhancement of the educational system in the Philippines and ensure that qualified and motivated teachers are efficiently integrated into the workforce.

As disclosed by previous studies, the process of transitioning from a pre-service teacher to employment within the DepEd in the Philippines is marked by varying timelines, raising the need to understand the factors influencing the duration of this journey. Therefore, this study seeks to address the following questions: (RQ1) What are the factors that contribute to the duration it takes for pre-service teachers in the Philippines to enter the DepEd?; (RQ2) How do academic requirements, licensure examinations, and bureaucratic processes impact the timeline for pre-service teachers to secure employment within the department?; (RQ3) What are the challenges and obstacles faced by pre-service teachers during the transition?; (RQ4) What potential areas of improvement can be identified to streamline the pathway for pre-service teachers and reduce the time it takes to enter the DepEd based on the results of the study?; and (RQ5) How can the findings of this study inform educational institutions, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders in making informed decisions and implementing necessary reforms to expedite the process of employment for pre-service teachers without compromising educational standards?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a mixed-method design, as the researchers considered both quantitative and qualitative data from the participants. Quantitative data were obtained through surveys administered to pre-service teachers in different teacher education institutions (TEIs) across the Philippines. Qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, providing deeper insights into the experiences and emotions of pre-service teachers. Additionally, the researchers considered the quantitative data gathered through the interviews and FGDs to highlight the number of participants with common responses. Moreover, a comprehensive review of existing literature, research studies, and policy documents related to pre-service teacher employment, licensure

processes, and educational requirements was conducted. This helped the researchers establish a theoretical framework and identify gaps in knowledge.

Participants of the study

The participants of the study were sixty (60) pre-service teachers from different TEIs across the Philippines, specifically from the three major island groups: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Purposive sampling was used. The participants were those who expressed their willingness to be part of the study. The twenty (20) participants from Visayas and twenty (20) participants from Mindanao answered the survey questionnaire and participated in the interview and FGD online. On the other hand, the twenty (20) participants from Luzon answered the hard copies of the survey questionnaires and joined the interview and FGDs face-to-face. They were given enough time to answer the survey questionnaires and another schedule for the interview and FGD. The interviews and FGDs were conducted for two to three hours to further scrutinize the participants' responses. Furthermore, to expedite the interview processes, the three researchers conducted the interviews simultaneously to cater to at least six participants every scheduled date.

Research instruments

The researchers developed and utilized survey questionnaires and open-ended questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from pre-service teachers and recent graduates. The survey questionnaires contained a list of contributory factors that affect the duration it takes for pre-service teachers in the Philippines to enter the DepEd. Likewise, in conducting the in-depth interviews and FGDs, the researchers used open-ended questions.

Additionally, the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with the participants focused on the impact of academic requirements, licensure examinations, and bureaucratic processes on the timeline for pre-service teachers to secure employment within the department based on their experiences. Likewise, these determined the challenges and obstacles faced by pre-service teachers, as well as potential areas for improvement.

Furthermore, since the researchers aimed to explore the experiences and challenges of pre-service teachers, they believed it was vital to investigate and examine the participants'

experiences and challenges through in-depth interviews and FGDs.

However, to further supplement the responses of the participants, some educators, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders were interviewed.

Data collection and analysis

The researchers gathered data from the participants after obtaining their approval. Data collection was conducted both online and face-to-face. Participants from Visayas and Mindanao answered the survey questionnaire and participated in the interview and FGDs online. On the other hand, participants from Luzon answered the hard copies of the survey questionnaires and joined the interviews and FGDs face-to-face. The participants were given enough time to answer the survey questionnaires and another scheduled time for the interviews and FGDs. The interviews and FGDs were conducted for two to three hours to further scrutinize the participants' responses.

The researchers analyzed the collected data using appropriate qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. To determine the factors that contribute to the duration it takes for pre-service teachers in the Philippines to enter the DepEd, frequencies and percentages were used. Both quantitative and qualitative data were considered to determine the challenges faced by the pre-service teachers, with the researchers analyzing the commonality and patterns of responses and determining the number and percentage of participants with similar answers. By employing qualitative insights, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and obstacles faced by pre-service teachers, the

impact of academic requirements, licensure examinations, and bureaucratic processes on the timeline to secure employment within the department, as well as potential areas for improvement. Hence, the researchers analyzed and looked for patterns, themes, and relationships in the data. Thus, thematic analysis was applied to identify recurring themes and perspectives.

Ethical considerations

The researchers observed ethical considerations throughout the research process, including obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining confidentiality, and adhering to research ethics guidelines.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pre-service teachers would definitely build competence and confidence in participating in teaching practice since this is vital in achieving quality teacher education [22], [23]. However, there are significant factors that should be taken into consideration.

Factors contributing to pre-service teachers' entry duration

Table 1 shows that 100% of the participants considered academic requirements, teacher education programs, professional development workshops, and LET as the most contributory factors for entering the DepEd. It is noted that 58.33% of the participants considered regional disparities as a contributory factor although it is still one of the factors. The data imply that several factors contribute to the timeline before the employment of pre-service teachers.

Table 1. Factors influencing the entry duration of pre-service teachers

Contributory Factors	Frequency (F)	%
Academic Requirements	60	100
Teacher Education Program	60	100
Field Immersion & Observation	55	91.67
Professional Development workshop	60	100
Practice Teaching	54	90
Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)	60	100
Bureaucratic Process	56	93.33
Teacher Hiring Policies	58	96.67
Regional Disparities	35	58.33

The quantitative result of data gathered were supported through the result of the interview and FGD conducted. Based on the result of the study,

the following key factors that contributed to the varying timelines were disclosed:

First, the completion of academic requirements such as the attainment of a bachelor's degree in education or a related field, is a fundamental step in the process. The time it takes to fulfill these requirements can vary depending on the program's duration, course load, and any additional certifications or specializations pursued. Dalit [12] found out the impact of academic performance, licensure examination results, and other factors on the duration of the employment process. Ocampo [18] recommended that the pre-service teachers should elevate their skills to become effective teachers.

Second, pre-service teachers embark on their journey by enrolling in teacher education programs, where they receive rigorous academic training in pedagogy, subject content, and educational theories. They specialize in specific grade levels or subject areas to equip themselves with specialized knowledge and teaching skills. This finding is supported by Jarrah [24].

Third, field immersion and observation in real classroom settings are integral components of the pre-service teacher's journey. Through fieldwork, they gain practical experience, observe experienced educators in action, and begin to develop their teaching philosophies. According to Jarrah [24], pre-service teachers have found challenges in applying theoretical knowledge into practice. In addition, availability and support of cooperative teachers, classroom management, students' behavior in the classroom, teaching and learning strategies and the schedule of practice teaching.

Fourth, pre-service teachers participate in various professional development workshops that focus on classroom management, lesson planning, educational technology, and inclusive teaching practices.

These workshops aim to enhance their instructional abilities and classroom effectiveness. This result is supported by Borja et al. [19] who recommended that pre-service teacher should be engaged in different seminar workshop that cater the various aspects.

Fifth, one of the defining aspects of the journey is the practice teaching experience. Pre-service teachers spend a designated period teaching in actual classrooms under the guidance of mentor educators. This immersive experience allows them to apply their theoretical knowledge, face practical challenges, and refine their teaching strategies. During practice teaching,

pre-service teachers engage in reflective practice. They critically analyze their teaching performance, seek feedback from mentor educators and peers, and identify areas for improvement. Reflective practice fosters continuous growth and enhances their teaching effectiveness. The journey of a pre-service teacher is not solely about academic and professional development; it also involves emotional and personal growth. They learn to manage stress, overcome obstacles, and develop resilience, which are essential qualities for effective educators. These practices were supported by Ramirez [9] in which it was revealed that pre-service teachers were challenged to use a variety of pedagogical skills in order to teach and considered the learners' diversity such distinction of teaching approaches.

However, the study of Antallan et al. [25] revealed that flexible schedule in preparing learning plans and modules, managing academic and practice teaching requirements, imposing classroom rules and discipline to students, setting guidelines for students to follow, setting the alignment from teaching-learning activities with the outcome-based objectives, and having easy access to online resources were some of the opportunities that pre-service teachers should take. These findings may provide chances for all educational institutions to improve their curriculum for practice teaching.

Sixth, pre-service teachers in the Philippines are required to pass the LET administered by the PRC before they can be employed by the DepEd. The duration can depend on factors such as the frequency of examination schedules, the time taken to prepare for the examination, and the waiting period for examination results. Upon completion of their teacher education program and practice teaching, pre-service teachers undergo certification and licensure processes. They must pass the LET conducted by the PRC to be officially recognized as licensed educators by the DepEd.

The seventh factor considered navigating the bureaucratic processes within the DepEd, including application, evaluation, and selection procedures, can introduce additional time delays. This includes submitting the necessary documents, undergoing background checks, and waiting for the processing of applications. As Ganotice Jr. and Rojas [13] investigate the bureaucratic processes involved in hiring public school teachers in the Philippines, it explores the

potential bottlenecks and challenges that contribute to delays in the hiring process.

Lastly, the policies and guidelines set by the DepEd regarding teacher hiring can impact the duration. Factors such as the availability of teaching positions, allocation of resources, and the prioritization of specific subject areas or geographic regions can affect the speed at which pre-service teachers are employed. This finding is supported by Dumrique and Javate [17] who analyzes the teacher supplies and demand situation in the Philippines and discussed issues such as teacher shortages, geographical disparities, and policy implications. Lastly, the duration to enter the DepEd may vary across different regions in the Philippines. Factors such as teacher demand, population density, and educational infrastructure can influence the availability of teaching positions and the efficiency of the hiring process.

Furthermore, each pre-service teacher's individual circumstances, such as their level of preparedness, availability for employment, and personal commitments, can also affect the duration. Factors like the time taken to secure necessary documents, relocate to the desired location, or address personal circumstances can contribute to the overall timeline.

It is important to note that the duration can vary significantly for each pre-service teacher based on these factors and their unique circumstances. Additionally, changes in policies, educational reforms, or external factors can further influence the timeline for entering the DepEd.

Impact of factors on pre-service teachers' employment timeline

Based on the result of the interview and focus group discussion conducted, it revealed that:

Academic requirements, licensure examinations, and bureaucratic processes have a significant impact on the timeline for pre-service teachers to secure employment within the education department.

The following is a breakdown of how each factor affects the timeline based on the responses of the participants:

Academic requirements

100% of the sixty participants disclosed that academic requirements have significant impact to

the time frame. Although, each of them has different program structure relying on his/her institutions, the 60 participants admitted that such requirement served as barriers to expedite their employment. 95% or 57 participants admitted that as pre-service teachers, they need to fulfill specific academic requirements to be eligible for employment. These requirements typically include completing a bachelor's degree in education or a related field, which takes around four years. However, the timeline can vary depending on the program structure, credit load, and individual circumstances. 35% of the participants revealed that sometimes it took them time to accomplish their academic requirements. Hence, the challenges and adversities they encountered would somehow affect the timeline. Napanoy et al. [10] showed in their study that problems encountered by pre-service teachers vary from each field of specialization.

Further, they unfolded that individual differences among students, supervisors, and peers, lack of facilities, and lack of preparation and training are some of the key reasons affecting the difficulties encountered. Lebala et al. [26] exposed five challenges such as insufficient time for teaching practice, lack of teaching aids/material, unconducive environment at host schools, undisciplined behaviors of students and poor alignment between teaching practice period and the host school calendar. This is supported by Omodan [27] who revealed that lack of infrastructure, physical resources, teaching aids, absenteeism and truancy among students were the major challenges in schools. It is noted that 96% of the participants pointed teaching practice as the most challenging part of their journey [7], [26], [27].

Moreover, although the participants are aware of the difficulties as well as the duration in the completion of the academic requirements, 100% of them expressed their willingness to finish their studies and awareness of the benefits to undergo with the academic requirements.

Licensure examinations

All the participants of the study expressed their awareness of the importance of licensure examination. As they mentioned, to become a licensed teacher, pre-service teachers usually need to pass licensure examinations. These examinations assess their knowledge and skills in areas like pedagogy, subject matter expertise, and teaching methods. 95% of the participants

disclosed that the preparation and registration process for these examinations can take several months, and the timeline for receiving the examination results may vary. 100% of the participants expressed their great desire to pass the examination. Moreover, they admitted that one of the most challenging part is the preparation in which they undergo several days of review to pass the examination. Cabutotan [28] found out that the pre-service teachers' performance in their in-house review determines their performance as well. Therefore, it was recommended that there should be intense review to significantly prepare the LET takers. Cabahug [29] stated that disparity and diversity of the personal accountability factors present an opportunity to improve the passing rate of pre-service teachers.

Bureaucratic processes

Once pre-service teachers have met the academic and licensure requirements; they often need to navigate bureaucratic processes to secure employment within the education department.

Out of 60 participants, 55 of them experienced bureaucratic processes while 5 participants were still on preparation. The results of the interview and FGDs conducted revealed that 55 participants experienced submitting applications, attending interviews, completing background checks, providing references, and fulfilling any additional requirements set by the specific educational institution or district. It is noted that 10% of the participants took 6 to 7 weeks to do the processes while 81.67% to 3 to 14 months. This implies that the timeline for these processes vary widely ranging from a few weeks to several months.

Moreover, it is important to note that the timeline for securing employment as a pre-service teacher is influenced by factors such as the demand for teachers in the area, the availability of teaching positions, and the overall efficiency of the hiring process within the education department.

Overall, the timeline for pre-service teachers to secure employment within the education department can range from several months to a year or more, depending on the combination of academic requirements, licensure examinations, and bureaucratic processes they need to complete. In the study of Tolentino [30], it was confessed that there are some DepEd officials who are motivated by bureaucratic anomalies in

the institution, political affiliation, unabated culture of corruptions and money making activities. Such findings proved that sometimes people in authorities take advantage of bureaucratic process to do illegal actions which somehow delays the employment process. Ganotice Jr. and Rojas [13] investigated the bureaucratic processes involved in hiring public school teachers in the Philippines and revealed the potential bottlenecks and challenges that contribute to delays in the hiring process.

Challenges impacting pre-service teachers' employment timeline

During the transition from pre-service teacher to employed teacher, there are several challenges and obstacles that individuals may encounter as perceived by the participants of the study. Based on the question, "What are the challenges you encountered during the transition?", the researchers analyzed the commonality and pattern of responses, consolidated the number of participants (F) and its percentage who mentioned similar responses and presented the theme through Table 2.

Table 2 shows the responses of the participants about the challenges they encountered during the transition. As shown, the responses presented in patterns are the common answers of the participants. It revealed that the participants have found difficulties due to limited job opportunities, competitive job market, lack of experience, licensing requirements, bureaucratic processes, and geographical considerations. Moreover, the data reveal that 100% of the participants considered limited job opportunities and licensing requirements as the most challenging factors. Based on the result of the interview and FGDs conducted, the researchers highlighted below the themes and presented the concepts/ perceptions of the participants.

Limited job opportunities

Based on the responses of 100% of the participants, one significant challenge is the availability of teaching positions. Depending on the region and subject area, there can be a surplus or shortage of teaching vacancies. If there is a limited number of job openings, pre-service teachers may need to wait longer to secure employment. This finding is supported by Dumrique and Javate [17] who discussed issues such as teacher shortages, geographical disparities, and policy implications.

Table 2. Challenges faced by pre-service teachers in transition to employment

Responses	F	%	Themes
No vacant teaching position	25	41.67	Limited Job Opportunities
Shortage of teaching positon	16	26.67	
Limited number of job opening	19	31.67	
Tough competition	12	20	Competitive Job Market
Large number of applicants	8	13.33	
Highly competitive	18	30	
Teaching experience	10	16.67	Lack of Experience
Number of years in teaching	25	41.67	
LET passer	45	75	Licensing Requirements
Teaching license	10	16.67	
Preparation for LET	5	8.33	
Preparation of requirement	13	21.67	Bureaucratic processes
Application	9	15	
Interviews	15	25	
The school is too far	6	10	Geographical consideration
Limited teaching job in our area	8	13.33	
Prioritized resident applicant	12	20	

Competitive job market

The 38 participants disclosed that the job market for teachers is highly competitive, especially in desirable locations or sought-after subject areas. Pre-service teachers faced tough competition from experienced teachers or a large pool of applicants, which can prolong the search process.

Lack of experience

The 35 participants admitted that many of them lack practical classroom experience, which can make it harder to secure employment. Schools often prefer teachers with prior teaching practicum or student teaching experience, and the absence of such experience can delay the hiring process. Alvarez Jr [31] supports the finding that technological, instructional, technical support, and collaboration were considered roadblocks to teaching experience.

Licensing requirements

100% of the participants expressed their sentiments about the challenging process of obtaining teaching licenses or certifications. Meeting the specific requirements for licensure, such as completing additional coursework, passing exams, or fulfilling internship hours, can take time. Delays in licensure can delay the overall process of securing employment.

Bureaucratic processes

The 37 participants revealed that the bureaucratic processes which involved in the hiring and

onboarding of teachers can also contribute to the duration of the transition. These processes may include background checks, reference verifications, contract negotiations, and other administrative tasks. Delays or inefficiencies in these processes can prolong the time it takes to secure employment.

Geographical considerations

The 26 participants mentioned that the desired location of employment has an impact to the duration of the process. If they have specific geographic preferences, they may face challenges if there are limited job openings in those areas. In such cases, they may need to expand their search to other locations, which can extend the duration of the transition.

The findings of the study are supported by Masood et al. [8] in which they revealed pre-service teachers experienced moderate to slight challenges. Hojeij et al. [32] revealed that revealed that having well-structured program and strong collaboration are some of the factors that enhance teachers' experiences. Moreover, Napanoy et al. [10] found out that pre-service teachers encountered difficulties in administrative support, cooperating teachers, related tasks, and learning environment. There are several problems and challenges encountered by pre-service teachers [4]–[12].

It is important to note that the duration of the transition process varies significantly based on individual circumstances, such as qualifications,

networking efforts, flexibility, and the specific conditions of the job market and educational institutions in a particular region.

To mitigate these challenges, pre-service teachers can enhance their chances by gaining relevant experience through internships or volunteer work, networking with professionals in the field, actively searching for job openings, considering different geographical locations, and staying up to date with the requirements and processes for licensure and employment in their target region.

Potential areas to improve pre-service teachers' entry pathways

Based on the results of the study, it is identified that to streamline the pathway for pre-service teachers and reduce the time it takes to enter the DepEd, while maintaining the competence and quality of educators, several areas of improvement were considered by the researchers.

Streamlined licensure processes—Simplifying and streamlining the licensure processes can help expedite the transition for pre-service teachers. This can involve reducing unnecessary paperwork, minimizing redundant requirements across different areas, and establishing standardized licensure procedures.

Integrated teacher preparation programs—Collaborative efforts between educational institutions and the DepEd can lead to more integrated teacher preparation programs. This can involve aligning coursework, field experiences, and licensure requirements, allowing pre-service teachers to complete the necessary components concurrently, thereby reducing the overall time required. Cardoza [33] stated that the absence of clear understanding of the design of program and its implementation are challenging. Thus, these challenges may somehow guide decision makers in using the most effective strategies in teacher's preparation program.

Expanded practicum and internship opportunities—Providing more opportunities for pre-service teachers to gain practical classroom experience during their training can better prepare them for the demands of teaching. Expanding and enhancing practicum and internship programs can help bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling pre-service teachers to enter the workforce more efficiently.

Targeted support and mentorship—Implementing robust support systems and mentorship programs for pre-service teachers can

enhance their professional development and readiness for employment. Mentorship can provide guidance, feedback, and assistance throughout the transition process, helping pre-service teachers build their skills and confidence.

Enhanced job placement services—Establishing effective job placement services within educational institutions can help connect pre-service teachers with employment opportunities more efficiently. These services can provide job search assistance, facilitate networking opportunities, and keep pre-service teachers informed about vacant positions.

Flexibility in certification pathways—Offering more flexible certification pathways can accommodate the diverse backgrounds and experiences of aspiring teachers. This can involve recognizing alternative routes to certification, such as for candidates with relevant industry experience or advanced degrees in a subject area.

Technology integration—Leveraging technology can streamline administrative processes, such as application submission, document verification, and communication, making the overall transition smoother and more efficient. Online platforms and systems can facilitate the exchange of information between educational institutions, prospective teachers, and the DepEd.

Ongoing professional development—Providing continuous professional development opportunities for educators can ensure their competence and quality throughout their careers. Offering workshops, training programs, and access to research-based practices can help pre-service teachers stay updated and enhance their skills.

It is crucial to strike a balance between streamlining the pathway and maintaining the quality of educators. These improvements should be implemented with careful consideration of educational standards, rigorous evaluation processes, and ongoing monitoring of teacher performance to ensure that competent and highly qualified teachers enter the education system.

Napanoy et al. [10] emphasized that individual differences among students, supervisors, and peer, lack of facilities and lack of preparation and training are some of the difficulties encountered. These imply that there is a need to streamline the pathway of pre-service teachers. Thus, the potential areas mentioned above are vital.

Moreover, Danks et al. [34] recommended a renewed program evaluation agenda which include consistency in definitions used in program design and consistency in goal measures used to evaluate programs.

Informing stakeholders for expedited pre-service teacher employment processes

The findings of this study provide valuable insights to educational institutions, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders, helping them make informed decisions and implement necessary reforms to expedite the employment process for pre-service teachers without compromising educational standards. Here are how these findings can inform their actions:

Understanding challenges—The study can highlight the specific challenges and obstacles faced by pre-service teachers during the employment transition. This understanding can guide educational institutions and policymakers in identifying the areas that require attention and improvement.

Identifying bottlenecks—By analyzing the factors that contribute to delays in the employment process, the study can help pinpoint bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the existing system. This knowledge can guide policymakers and stakeholders in targeting specific areas for reform and streamlining processes.

Enhancing collaboration—The study can emphasize the importance of collaboration between educational institutions, the DepEd, and other stakeholders. It can highlight the need for closer coordination and cooperation to align curriculum requirements, licensure processes, and employment opportunities. Policymakers can facilitate such collaboration and establish mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and information exchange.

Çelik and Topkaya [35] determined the preparedness of pre-service teachers (PSTs) based on the perceptions of stakeholders and found out the emergence of perception gap showing lack of common understanding and mismatch between the stakeholders perception regarding their standard and approaches toward high quality education. This finding could motivate all stakeholders to work collaboratively to contribute to the overall quality of the education system.

Evidence-based reforms—The findings can serve as evidence to support proposed reforms or changes in policies and practices. Policymakers

can rely on the study's insights to advocate for evidence-based decision-making and reforms that expedite the employment process while maintaining educational standards.

Tailored support programs—The study can inform the development of targeted support programs for pre-service teachers. Educational institutions and stakeholders can create initiatives that address specific challenges highlighted in the study, such as mentoring programs, job placement services, or streamlined licensure processes. These programs can be designed to provide timely and relevant support to pre-service teachers during their transition into the workforce.

Leveraging Technology—The study can underscore the importance of integrating technology to streamline administrative processes and improve communication channels. Policymakers and stakeholders can explore technological solutions to automate paperwork, simplify application processes, and enhance collaboration between different entities involved in the employment process. Snoek et al. [35] required the teachers to facilitate learning by creating and maximizing technological resources.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation—The study can highlight the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implemented reforms to assess their impact and effectiveness. Policymakers and stakeholders can establish mechanisms to gather feedback, track progress, and make necessary adjustments to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved while upholding educational standards.

By considering the findings of this study, educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders can make informed decisions and implement targeted reforms that expedite the employment process for pre-service teachers. It is important to strike a balance between efficiency and maintaining high educational standards, ensuring that the reforms contribute to the overall quality of the education system.

Furthermore, such understanding will enable stakeholders to identify areas of improvement, streamline processes, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the teacher education system, ensuring a competent and well-prepared teaching workforce that contributes to the overall quality of education in the country.

In the article of Zeichner et al. [36], they stated the three primary purposes of teacher

preparation program evaluation. These include supporting program improvement; holding programs accountable to various constituencies; and providing consumer information for multiple constituencies. These emphasize monitoring program quality to address deficiencies. Hence, in teacher education program, these three objectives should be enforced.

The finding is supported by Mancenido [37] who disclosed that based on prior review, there were several issues regarding to measurement in impact evaluation of pathways into teaching profession. Thus, there is a need of monitoring and evaluation of the implemented reforms to assess their impact and effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, these imply that the journey of a Filipino pre-service teacher before entering the DepEd is a transformative process that involves pre-service teacher education, teaching practice, professional development, licensing examination, and the application and hiring process. This journey equips pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences to become effective educators. The recent reforms in the Philippine education system have further strengthened the pre-service teacher education process, ensuring that future teachers are well-prepared to meet the challenges of the teaching profession.

The experiences and challenges they encounter during this journey play a pivotal role in shaping them into skilled and dedicated educators. By understanding the nuances of their journey, TEIs and the DepEd can work together to further strengthen the teacher preparation process and ensure that pre-service teachers are well-equipped to make a positive impact on the future of education in the Philippines.

In conclusion, expediting the employment process for pre-service teachers without compromising educational standards is a complex endeavor that requires collaboration, thoughtful reforms, and ongoing evaluation. By streamlining licensure processes, enhancing collaboration between stakeholders, expanding practical experience opportunities, establishing job placement services, providing mentorship programs, fostering alternative certification pathways, leveraging technology solutions, supporting ongoing professional development,

and conducting regular evaluations, educational institutions, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders can work together to address the challenges and obstacles faced by pre-service teachers.

Based on the context of expediting the employment process for pre-service teachers without compromising educational standards, the following are recommended:

Streamline licensure processes—Work towards standardizing licensure requirements and procedures across areas, reducing redundant paperwork, and simplifying the overall licensure process. This can expedite the licensing of qualified pre-service teachers.

Enhance collaboration—Foster collaboration between educational institutions, the DepEd, and other stakeholders to align curriculum requirements, licensure processes, and employment opportunities. Regular communication and cooperation can lead to a more seamless transition for pre-service teachers.

Expand practical experience opportunities—Increase the availability of practicum and internship programs, ensuring that pre-service teachers have ample opportunities to gain practical experience in real classroom settings. This can better prepare them for employment and reduce the need for additional training or support after graduation.

Establish job placement services—Develop effective job placement services within educational institutions to assist pre-service teachers in finding suitable employment opportunities. These services can provide guidance, job search support, and networking opportunities to expedite the job placement process.

Provide mentorship programs—Implement mentorship programs that pair pre-service teachers with experienced educators who can provide guidance, support, and feedback during the transition period. Mentorship can help pre-service teachers develop their skills, build confidence, and navigate the complexities of entering the teaching profession.

Foster alternative certification pathways—Explore and promote alternative pathways to certification that recognize relevant experience or advanced degrees in specific subject areas. This can attract individuals from diverse backgrounds and expedite their entry into the teaching profession.

Utilize technology solutions—Leverage technology to streamline administrative processes, simplify application procedures, and facilitate communication between educational institutions, prospective teachers, and the DepEd. Online platforms, digital document management systems, and streamlined communication channels can expedite the overall process.

Support ongoing professional development—Provide opportunities for continuous professional development to ensure that educators remain competent and up-to-date with best practices. Offer workshops, training programs, and access to research-based resources to support their growth and effectiveness in the classroom.

Conduct regular evaluations—Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented reforms, ensuring they align with the desired outcomes of expediting the employment process without compromising educational standards. Regular assessment can help identify areas for improvement and inform future decision-making.

By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders can work together to expedite the employment process for pre-service teachers while upholding educational standards and ensuring the quality of educators entering the profession.

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