RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING WASTAGE IN TEACHER PREPARATION INVESTMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

The Philippines spends billions of pesos annually to prepare education students. It is believed, however, that a significant portion of these investments is wasted in terms of the high failure rates in the licensure examination and the estimated number of education students abandoning the profession after graduation in favour of alternative careers. The study explores this dimension of the Philippine education system, an area that merits prompt government attention, especially considering reports that the country remains unable to devote sufficient resources on education relative to other Asian countries. This issue of wastage need to be addressed critically to optimize whatever meagre resources that the government can channel into improving the access to and the quality of education in an emerging economy, indeed a vital key in sustaining the Philippines' newfound economic momentum. Increasing the corps of competent teachers is likely to provide a new foundation for the country's drive to development. Cost analysis using the annual budgetary allocations of the 56 sample SUCs vis-à-vis their respective enrolment and graduation data was done to estimate the cost of teacher preparation.

Keywords: education, education spending, teacher preparation

INTRODUCTION

Government spending on education in the Philippines remains one of the lowest in Asia. In 2011, the Philippines' public education spending stood at only 2.8 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), only better to Cambodia's 1.4 percent. Malaysia registered 5.6 percent, Thailand 4.3 percent, and Brunei Darussalam 3.3 percent (Asian Development Bank, 2013). In 2012, the Philippines' education spending slightly improved to 2.9 percent of GDP, but tailed behind Malaysia's 5.8 percent and Thailand's 3.8 percent (Asian Development Bank, 2013).

Similarly, the World Bank reported that Philippine spending on tertiary education only reached 0.34 percent of GDP as against 1.69 percent of Malaysia, 1.2 percent of Indonesia, and 0.71 percent of Thailand (Manila Standard, 2011). On top of reported concerns over the insufficiency of resources channelled into the education sector, teacher education institutions seem unsuccessful in maximizing government assistance. As a result, observed issues on inadequate public investments in the sector are magnified by attendant concerns on wastage of scarce government funds.

State universities and colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines are funded by the national government, following the provisions of Philippine Republic Act 7722, also known as the Philippine Higher Education Development Act of 1994. Appropriations for all SUCs, including those completely focused and partially involved in teacher education, are granted annually through the General Appropriation Act (GAA). Thus, government investments in teacher education or preparation are imbedded in the budget allocation of a state university or college every fiscal year.

The wastage in public expenditures on preparing teachers cannot be neglected much less ignored. Based on observation, a considerable number of freshman students who enter teacher education programs leave the university even before finishing college. Others do not go into teaching after earning their degrees, opting for jobs unrelated to teaching. A more worrying dimension relates to those already teaching but abandoning the profession for various reasons, including unattractive or uncompetitive

remuneration.

On mobility and wastage of teacher education graduates, available foreign research literature suggests that weaknesses in teacher recruitment and teacher dissatisfaction with the working condition contributed mostly to teacher wastage among the Commonwealth Caribbean member countries (Oxford University, 2003). Similarly, Smithers & Robinson (2003) identified five main factors affecting teachers' decision to leave the profession: workload, new challenges, school situation, salary, and personal circumstances. Workload was the most important factor, while salary, the least important factor. In Australia, Cameron (2001) also noted several factors that affect the supply of qualified teachers in the Victorian teacher labor market. These include monetary and non-monetary rewards of the teaching profession; limitation on the number of teacher education courses offered by universities; rate of the net migration of teachers; and relative working conditions.

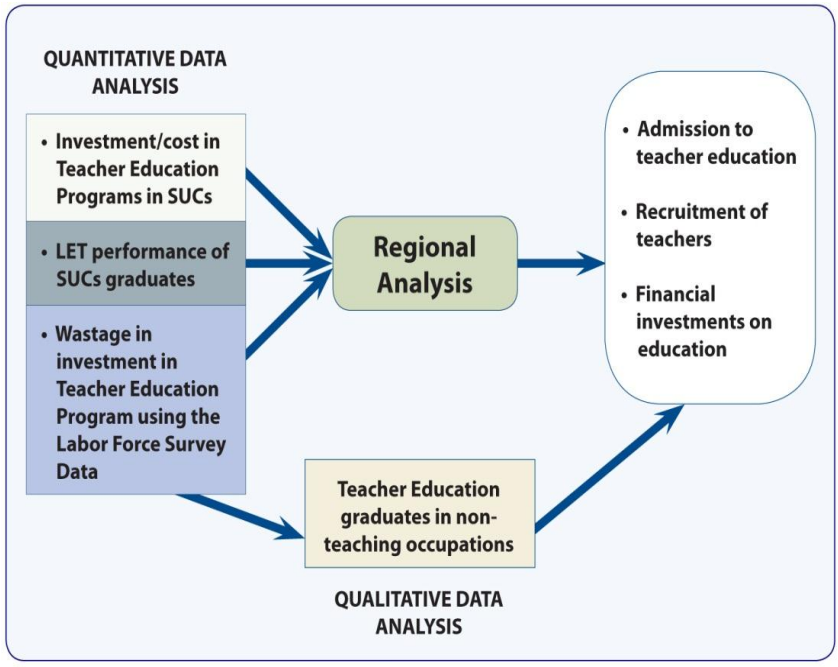
In the local setting, the importance of teacher preparation programs cannot be overemphasized. The new Philippine K to12 Basic Education Program calls for innovative changes in teacher education institutions (TEIs) to better address the need for quality teachers. The program adds two years to the country's basic education, suggesting an increased need for teachers for Grades 11 and 12. It has been propounded that the Philippine government may need to offer a better compensation package to attract quality teachers in the field. For TEIs, a more aggressive campaign to lure the best students and potential teachers will be essential. The new education program is perceived to transform Philippine education, making it more competitive and responsive to local and regional demands, particularly in consideration of the expected full implementation of the ASEAN Economic Integration by 2015.

Given these issues and recent developments, it is imperative to estimate any possible wastage in public investments in teacher preparation to identify areas for additional policy reform and optimize meager public investments in education. In this study, wastage was explored using a regional analysis of costs of teacher education programs, performance in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) of selected SUCs, the Labor Force Survey (LFS) data

of the National Statistics Office, and interviews of 2007 to 2011 graduates of teacher education programs. A consolidation of findings and observations from gathered statistics and qualitative data identified policy measures and reforms that could help maximize public investments in teacher preparation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 depicts the operationalization of the variables of the study. A cost analysis for a period of four school-years (SY 2008-2009 to SY 2011-2012) was done on government investments in teacher preparation programs in SUCs sampled in the study. Regional trends in the performance of these selected SUCs in the LET, also for a period of four years (graduates of 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012), were equally established.



SUCs – State Universities and Colleges; LET – Licensure Examinations for Teachers

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

To estimate wastage from investments in teacher education, the research embarked on a quantitative estimation of graduates who did not pursue teaching jobs using relevant data of the LFS for five years (2007-2011), and on qualitative analysis of interviews of graduates from eight normal schools who did not pursue a teaching profession, after graduation from 2007 to 2011.

A consolidation phase to analyze the quantitative data and the qualitative data provided inputs for policies on admission, recruitment of new teachers, and public investment in education.

METHODS

Research Participants

Fifty-six of the 106 SUCs in the Philippines participated in this study. Half of the number of SUCs in each region was randomly selected to represent the region. The budgetary allotment based on the approved appropriation for the selected SUCs, the enrolment from 2005-2011, and graduation data from 2006-2012 were used as basis for estimating government investments in teacher preparation per region. For a given academic year, the budgetary allotment for each SUC for the past four years was considered to estimate the four-year spending of the government to support teacher education students in the selected SUCs. The graduates' LET performance in the same SUCs from 2009 to 2012 was also analysed on a regional level.

Eight deans from participating institutions and six to 10 graduate-participants from each school were interviewed to support the quantitative data.

Cost analysis on teacher preparation

Cost analysis based on annual budgetary allocations *vis-à-vis* the enrolment and graduation data on teacher education programs across the sample SUCs was done. The government investments in each institution, using data from relevant General Appropriations

Act (GAA), were collected through the assistance of the Philippine Department of Budget and Management National Capital Region Office. The enrolment and graduation data on teacher education programs were generated with the help of the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Research Division. These data from the two agencies became the baseline information to perform the cost analysis.

The cost of teacher preparation was estimated only in terms of the annual appropriations for the covered SUCs, while the appropriations were considered as fixed cost. Other variable costs were excluded from the analysis.

To depict regional trends on cost per year, the computed cost per SUC was summed up to get the total estimated cost of teacher preparation in each region. The formula below was used to analyse the yearly government spending on teacher preparation in each participating SUC.

$$Cost\ of\ TE_Y = \left(\frac{GAA_{Y1}}{TNE_{Y1}} + \frac{GAA_{Y2}}{TNE_{Y2}} + \frac{GAA_{Y3}}{TNE_{Y3}} + \frac{GAA_{Y4}}{TNE_{Y4}}\right) + TEG_Y$$

where:

GAA = General Appropriation Act's budgetary allocation on a particular SUC
TNE = Total number of enrolees in the SUC
TEG = Total number of teacher education graduates in the SUC
$_{Y1}$ = First year
$_{Y2}$ = Second year
$_{Y3}$ = Third year
$_{Y4}$ = Fourth year
Y = Particular year of graduation/completion of teacher education programs

LET performance

The percentage of LET flunkers with Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education degrees was computed and combined. Trends from 2009 to 2012 were established to know the performance of each SUC in each region.

Furthermore, a regional analysis was done to describe the LET performance across regions.

Wastage of teacher preparation using the Labor Force Survey

To estimate the total and regional wastage in public investments or spending on teacher preparation, the relevant results of the Labor Force Survey (LFS) conducted quarterly by the National Statistics Office (NSO) were used. A cross-tabulation of variables (highest education and primary occupation at the time of the survey in each region) was utilized to determine the number of teacher education graduates who were and were not teaching at the time of the survey. The average values of the four quarters in a given calendar year were obtained to represent annual aggregates for each year covering 2007-2011.

The described methodology using the LFS could only generate a crude estimation of the wastage in the teaching profession for two reasons. First, the LFS data do not reflect the type of school (i.e., whether private or public) that each respondent graduated from. Hence, the wastage from the point of view of government investment on teacher education cannot be inferred from the data, since respondents who graduated from SUCs cannot be disaggregated from their counterparts from private schools. Second, there is no indicator of professional board examination in the LFS data, that is, whether the respondent took the licensure examination for teachers. Therefore, for this part of the current research, the crude wastage is only defined as covering respondents who finished teacher education programs, but were not into teaching at the time of the survey.

Interview Proceedings

The interviews of graduates who did not go into teaching were examined through cross and within-case analysis, making use of a content-analysis program that categorized the responses with regard to frequency and salience. The response categories were generated based on the grouped responses and thematic analysis. Fragments of texts in a transcript were selected and associated with a code. Multiple codes were attached to the fragments. Lastly,

code hierarchies were developed out of the multiple codes and text fragments.

RESULTS

Regional Analysis on the Total Estimated Cost of Teacher Preparation

Table 1 shows that Regions 5, NCR, and Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) consistently received the largest government support.

Table 1. Total Estimated Cost for Teacher Preparation across Regions from SY 2008–2009 to 2011–2012.

Region	Cost of Teacher Preparation (in PHP million)			
	SY 2008–2009	*SY 2009–2010*	*SY 2010–2011*	*SY 2011–2012*
Region 1	108.5	72.1	76.5	92.2
Region 2	101.5	69.1	66.1	75.5
Region 3	96.2	76.7	74.1	80.5
Region4A	55.5	55.0	57.5	60.7
Region4B	34.0	34.4	30.8	38.6
Region 5	**136.5**[1]	**129.6**[1]	**100.3**[3]	**90.5**[3]
Region 6	110.0	67.0	64.4	70.5
Region 7	39.8	38.7	41.2	46.0
Region 8	81.4	81.8	70.0	75.0
Region 9	37.1	58.3	50.2	37.5
Region 10	24.5	34.9	44.6	25.1
Region 11	37.7	30.7	42.6	48.5
Region 12	8.9	17.6	19.9	23.6
NCR	**110.6**[3]	**128.7**[2]	**126.2**[2]	**141.7**[1]
CAR)	59.8	34.8	38.3	68.9
Caraga	11.8	11.5	11.1	8.8
ARMM	**121.0**[2]	**125.5**[3]	**126.9**[1]	**119.6**[2]
Total	1174.8	1066.6	1040.7	1103.2

Note: [1] – Rank 1; [2] – Rand 2; [3] – Rank 3

Table 2 presents the percentage of LET failure across regions. The ARMM consistently registered the highest percentage in the four study years. Caraga registered the second highest percentages in 2009 and 2010 and Region 12 in 2011 and 2012. Regions 3, 4B, 9 and 4B posted the third highest percentages in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, respectively.

As to average statistics, Table 3 presents the annual estimated cost in teacher preparation and the annual failure rate in the LET per region. Notably, the participating TEIs in the NCR received the

largest government support of Php126.8 million, followed by those in the ARMM and in Region 5. In terms of failure rate in the LET, TEIs in the ARMM topped the list with 85.32%, followed by Region 12 with 81.27%, and Caraga with 75.79%.

Table 2. Percentage of Failures in the LET of Sampled SUCs across all Regions.

Regions	Participating SUCs	Average LET Performance			
		2009	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Region 1	3	59.17	69.38	65.03	49.59
Region 2	3	**78.34**[3]	76.59	73.88	50.01
Region 3	5	72.18	75.57	70.10	51.17
Region4A	3	74.38	76.69	78.94	55.78
Region4B	3	76.40	**86.29**[3]	79.94	**59.38**[3]
Region 5	4	65.79	70.41	65.47	44.50
Region 6	5	58.44	54.92	50.61	39.60
Region 7	3	45.62	49.03	40.32	24.88
Region 8	5	77.02	80.72	73.18	51.84
Region 9	3	74.91	79.77	**79.98**[3]	58.88
Region 10	3	72.88	80.47	74.54	53.16
Region 11	2	54.87	61.27	51.20	35.47
Region 12	2	78.13	85.97	**85.80**[2]	**75.18**[2]
NCR	4	41.23	47.19	41.91	30.72
CAR	3	65.98	63.90	57.57	40.02
Caraga	2	**81.82**[2]	**86.32**[2]	78.02	57.00
ARMM	3	**85.25**[1]	**90.76**[1]	**87.68**[1]	**77.59**[1]
Nationwide		**68.38**	**72.66**	**67.89**	**50.28**

Note: [1] – Rank 1; [2] – Rank 2; [3] – Rank 3

Table 3. Annual Average of Estimated Cost and LET Failure Rate.

Region	Annual average of estimated cost (in PhP millions)	Region	Annual average of failure rate in LET
NCR	**126.8**	**ARMM**	**85.32**
ARMM	123.3	Region 12	81.27
Region 5	**114.2**	Caraga	75.79
Region 1	**87.3**	Region 4B	75.50
Region 3	**81.9**	Region 9	73.39
Region 2	**78.1**	Region 4A	71.45
Region 6	**78.0**	Region 8	70.69
Region 8	77.1	Region 10	70.26
Region 4A	57.2	**Region 2**	**69.01**
CAR	50.5	**Region 3**	**67.26**
Region 9	45.8	**Region 5**	**61.54**
Region 7	41.4	**Region 1**	**60.79**
Region 11	39.9	CAR	56.87
Region 4B	34.5	**Region 6**	**50.89**
Region 10	32.5	Region 11	50.70
Region 12	17.5	**NCR**	**40.26**
Caraga	10.8	Region 7	39.96
Nationwide	**1,096.5**	**Nationwide**	**64.80**

Table 3 also indicates that regions receiving ample government financial support generally exhibited low LET failure rates. Using Spearman's rho correlation, the obtained correlation coefficients between ranks in the total cost and ranks in the percentage of failures in the LET among the regions per year (2009 to 2012) are as follows: 2009 = -.29; 2010 = -.23; 2011= -.16; 2012 = -.34, and; overall = -.30. While none of these correlations are significant probably due to the small number of regions, the results show a negative trend on the relation between ranks in the total cost and ranks in the percentage of failures in the LET among the regions, indicating that the lower the education cost or government support, the greater the tendency to have higher percentage of failure in the LET.

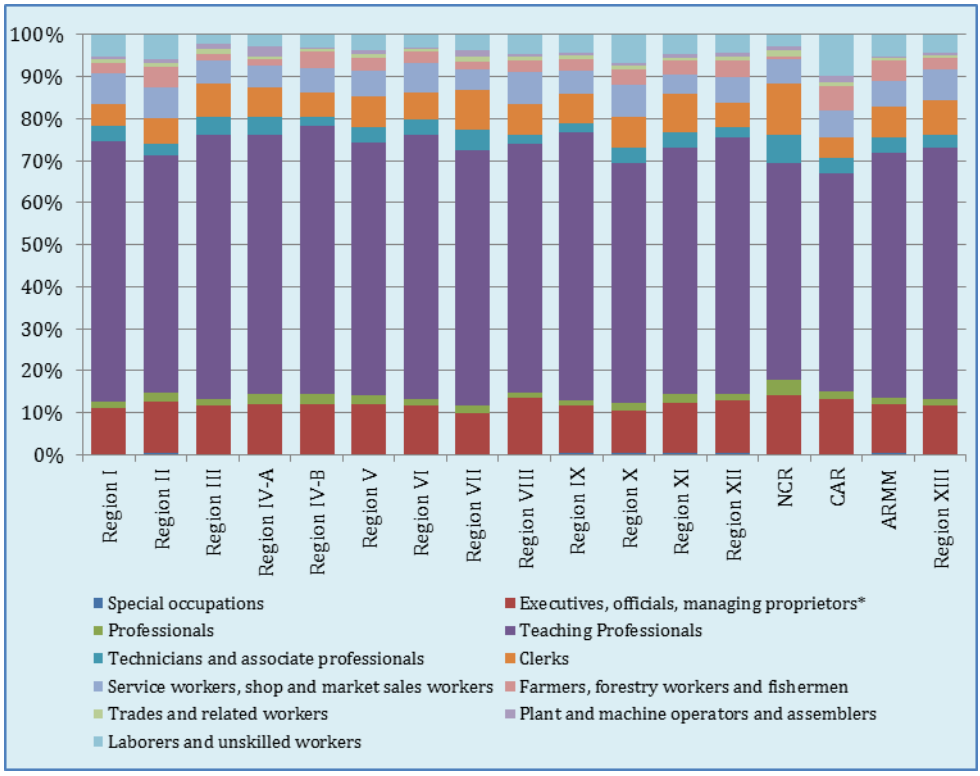


Figure 2. Average percentage distribution by occupation of teacher education graduates across the regions

Figure 2 presents the average percentage distribution by occupation of teacher education graduates across regions. Data show that on the national scale, about 60 percent of those who finished education degrees actually went into teaching. The average proportions were highest in MIMAROPA and Zamboanga Peninsula Regions at about 64 percent, while the lowest was reported in the CAR with about 52 percent and in the NCR with only 51.5 percent.

Moreover, the following regions registered mean proportions of graduates of education in the teaching profession below the national average of 60%: Cagayan Valley (56.5%), Northern Mindanao (57%), ARMM (58%), Davao (59%), and Eastern Visayas (59%). These regions had more teacher education graduates who ended up in non-professional occupations. For instance, while CAR had the least number of education graduates who went into teaching, it also reported the highest proportion of respondents in occupation groups such as laborers and unskilled workers, including farmers, forestry workers and fishermen. The same pattern was also observed for ARMM, Cagayan Valley and Northern Mindanao.

On the average, most education graduates were into professional jobs, with the majority practicing their profession as teachers. However, around a quarter of them settled to work in a non-professional line of jobs like being clerks, service workers and shop and market sales workers, farmers, forestry workers and fishermen, and even laborers and unskilled workers. It can be surmised then that, depending on the area where jobs may be ample, education graduates would opt for readily available jobs.

Interview results on motivations and perceptions for not pursuing a teaching career are presented in Table 4. Topping the list of reasons based on the frequency of responses is *better appraisal in other profession*, followed by *providing support to immediate family*, and *mismatched personal characteristics with teaching*.

Some respondents perceived that other jobs offer higher compensation and better work conditions. Concerns regarding work safety (being exposed to chalk dust) as well as the demands of longer work hours were emphasized as reasons for not choosing to teach. The participants also mentioned about financial support

to their families. Lastly, many of the participants believed that they do not possess the personality characteristics required of teachers.

Table 4. Top Five Personal Motivations of Education Graduates for Choosing a Non-Teaching Career.

Generated themes	Theme definition	Frequency*
Better appraisal in other professions	This refers to comparisons of professions that lead the graduates to realize that other professions other than teaching have better stature in terms of salary and working conditions.	43
Providing support to immediate family	This concerns the motivation to provide the family with a comfortable living arrangement by earning a higher salary that teaching may not provide	39
Mismatched personal characteristics with teaching	The graduates perceive that their personal characteristics are not required of the teaching profession	32
Medical consideration	This describes the choice a person takes in considering different jobs because of medical conditions that may affect them if they pursue teaching	22
Uncertainty about teaching	This describes feelings of uncertainty about teaching where the graduate has little to no knowledge of the opportunities one has in pursuing teaching as a course.	19

*Note: * - Multiple responses*

DISCUSSION

Data from the sample SUCs indicated that the Government spent an estimated P4.386B to support 73,882 TEGs from SY 2008-2009 to SY 2011-2012. This means that an average of P59,366.30 was invested per graduate across his/her four-year stay in the respective universities.

The sample SUC's from NCR, ARMM, Regions 5, 1, 3, 2, 6, and 8 received the highest government funding support for teacher preparation during the period under study. Incidentally, six of these eight regions also registered in the Top 8 best LET performers from

2009 to 2012 (i.e., they registered the lowest LET failure rates). The six regions were NCR, Regions 6, 1, 5, 3, and 2.

The nationwide LET failure rate averaged at a high 64.8% among the takers from the 56 sample SUCS from 2009 to 2012, as evident in Table 2. However, it can be noted that the failure rate improved from 72.7% in 2010 to 50.3% in 2012. Nevertheless, these results call for further significant improvements on how the SUCs prepare their graduates for the LET. SUCs must see to it that their graduates have the competencies to pass the LET. While the LET performance of graduates is more likely a product of a number of personal and external factors, the results showing SUCs as either consistently performing well or poorly in the LET indicates that school factor is also a determinant of the graduates' LET performance.

This observation is supported by the results of Pearson r correlation, which yielded a weak, but consistently negative correlation between the Cost of Teacher Preparation and LET Failure Rate for the 56 sample SUCs. The predominant negative relation suggests that TEGs are likely to perform better in LET, as government support to teacher preparation increases. Thus, it remains sound to sustain or even strengthen public investments in teacher education to enhance the overall performance of TEGs in the licensure examination.

More likely there is a host of reasons behind the chronic poor performance of TEGs in the LET, indeed, a good subject of a spin-off research. The results should engender the formulation of funding strategies to ensure better performance of TEGs in the LET.

The data obtained from the National Statistics Office (NSO) indicate that a significant number of TEGs fail to go into teaching, representing possible substantial waste in public investments on teacher preparation or education. Covering the period 2007 to 2011, the data reveal that only 59.54% of teacher education graduates during the aforesaid years actually went into teaching-related jobs, leaving the remaining 40.46% scattered in other fields or professions.

The 2012 Occupational Wages Survey of the Bureau of Labor and

Employment Statistics shows that while teacher-related jobs in the private sector earn higher than such workers as professional midwives, professional nurses, and medical technologists, they are practically competitive only with respect to such other professions as accounting and bookkeeping clerks, call center agents, and air travel clerks and attendants.

Thus, given the chance to work long hours in standard, poorly ventilated classrooms as a teacher or work in air-conditioned offices as accountants, bookkeepers, call center agents and air travel agents, TEGs are likely to opt for the latter non-teaching jobs. This finding is consistent with the two most cited reasons in the qualitative study as to why TEGs eventually choose professions other than teaching: better appraisal in other professions in terms of salary and working conditions as well as the desire of prospective teachers to help their respective families. Aside from less attractive working conditions in schools, beginning teacher salaries are still deemed insufficient to allow a prospective teacher provide for his/her own upkeep and at the same time help his/her family, an established characteristic of Filipino family values.

Considering this notion, there is a felt need for a fresh review of teacher compensation, especially in the public sector to identify salary levels that are more appropriate to the perceived demands and requirements of the job.

Available literature indicates that programs intended to attract new teachers and keep old ones in service via salary upgrades had been considered in a number of countries. Sclafani (2011) reported that Australia, Denmark, England, Finland, Norway and Scotland raised starting salaries to encourage teachers to enter the field. Austria, Japan and Portugal concentrated in retaining mid-career teachers, while Greece, Hungary and New Zealand offered salary increases to experienced teachers.

Sclafani (2011) also cited various pre-service and start-of-service programs to attract teacher education graduates into the teaching profession. These programs can be considered in the Philippines:

- Scholarships in exchange for a definite service requirement (Australia);

- Grant of special allowances, stipends, computers, and free accommodation or housing to potential teachers in remote areas (Denmark, United Kingdom, and United States);
- Special job placements in priority schools (France); and
- Alternative Certification Programs or ACP to recruit people with better academic preparation and also encourage mid-career professionals to move into teaching (US).

Sclafani (2011) and Asia Society (2011) also reported that some countries experience high attrition rate of teachers during the first five years of service reaching as high as 50% in some countries, including the US. Induction programs were offered to ensure smooth transition for new teachers in their initial years in service and additional training and mentoring by experienced teachers given new teachers. Among the countries that have considered induction programs include England, Wales, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Northern Ireland, Australia, Switzerland and Hong Kong.

Proceedings from the International Summit on Teaching Profession in 2011 also noted the importance of boosting the public image of teachers, and creating a professional working environment for them. This approach can be just as important as salary upgrading, according to the Summit report. Key specific strategies include campaigns in mass media to promote or protect the public image of teachers, institutionalizing a public recognition day for teachers, improving and simplifying school management, stronger teacher engagement in important school decisions, strengthening the aspect of ethics in teacher preparation programs, addressing gender imbalance in the profession, and offering available online professional development programs (Asia Society, 2011).

These global trends geared toward downsizing the teacher loss phenomenon provided the study with a well spring for policy pointers and recommendations.

In the local scene, it is imperative to explore the implications of the findings on the admissions policies of teacher education institutions for incoming teacher education students. Reforms in scholarship programs and civil service eligibility may also be explored as

supplemental incentives to minimize wastage of teacher education graduates.

On the admissions policies

Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) may consider the waiver of entrance/admission examinations, certain documentary requirements (e.g., original NSO birth certificates), and even the payment of application/testing fees to ease entry for prospective teacher education students, particularly for those graduating from high school with honors; meeting a certain minimum average grade (e.g., 90%); and coming from low-income families, as certified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

At the University of Santo Tomas (UST), for instance, the application fee for high school students identified as candidates to graduate in the Top 5 of their batch is waived. Similarly, Siliman University observes an Open Admission policy by lifting the requirement on admission and placement examination. The Central Philippine University only requires Form 138 and NSO birth certificate (original and photocopy) for incoming freshmen, while the University of Cordilleras only requires Form 138, birth certificate, and Certificate of Good Moral Character.

On scholarships for freshmen including teacher education students

An institutionalization of scholarship programs for deserving teacher education students may also help encourage more young people to go into teacher education. The entrance scholarship programs of Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) may be worth emulating by other SUCs and TEIs. MMSU awards entrance scholarship to those who graduated as valedictorian, salutatorian, first, second or third honorable mention of a class of 50 or more students for the first semester in the university.

On the policy for transferees

There might also be a need to review the existing policy and requirements of SUCs and TEIs on transferees, for streamlining and standardization across institutions. Perhaps the transfer of students

with potential and valid reason/s needs to be facilitated, instead of discouraged. A case in point is West Mindanao State University, that has a long list of requirements for transferees: certificate of eligibility to transfer, original and photocopy of college entrance exam results, medical certificate, and college admission evaluation form. The University of Cordilleras, on the other hand, only requires certificate of honourable dismissal, true copy of scholastic records, and certificate of good moral character.

On the layers of authority to fill-up teaching positions in the public basic education sector

It may be gleaned from the passages of Section 3 (Recruitment and Qualification) of Republic Act 4670, otherwise known as *The Magna Carta for Public School Teachers,* that the recruitment process takes several layers of authority giving much responsibility to the Division Offices resulting to longer selection and hiring process. One notable variant response from the interviews conducted in Palawan State University goes:

> *Applying for a teaching position in the public school in Puerto Princesa is difficult. You need to apply for the ranking every January, and there is no assurance that you will be hired by the next school year. So when I got into this opportunity for an office work, I grabbed it immediately.*

Though the claim of the Philippine government (see report of Flores, 2013) that the DepEd was able to reduce the hiring process from eight months to three months in 2013, this claim seemed to disregard the period when the graduate was initially employed as a volunteer teacher or a locally funded teacher (those hired by the local government to augment the teaching force in the local public school). Hence, a thorough review of the recruitment process with the corresponding time-line may facilitate decrease in wastage among teacher education graduates.

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered in this study suggests that better appraisal in other professions topped the reasons that prevented teacher education graduates from pursuing teaching jobs, followed by providing support to immediate family and mismatched personal characteristics with teaching.

The majority of the graduate-respondents' perception of the heavy workload of the teaching profession may have changed their minds to shift to jobs they appraised as rather easy and more time-bound. This particular result mirrored what have caused the "teacher loss phenomenon" in some countries like in the United States, Australia, and United Kingdom, as cited in the review section (Oxford University, 2003; Cameron, 2001 and Smithers & Robinson, 2003). Based on the results of these studies, teacher workload was identified as the common denominator when teachers were asked why they leave their professions.

Moreover, better appraisal in other professions could have stemmed from the graduates' negative evaluation of their pre-service training due to perceived difficulties encountered in the course of finishing the degree (e.g., difficulties encountered during the off-campus course). Also worth noting were the observations of 22 out of the 74 graduate-respondents that prompted them to consider other jobs, because of medical conditions. Such decision may have resulted from their perception on teaching and actual working condition.

Most of the graduates also grabbed non-teaching jobs that came along right after graduation to help provide financial assistance to their families at the shortest possible time. Hence, the issues of unattractive financial rewards of the teaching profession and lengthy hiring process can be deduced in this respect.

Perception on mismatched personal characteristics with teaching profession may be addressed during pre-service phase of teacher education. In particular, as suggested by five administrator-respondents in the qualitative phase of the study, a TEI should consider a selection program meant to sustain the motivation among students in pursuing a teaching career. Such program can be explored through in-depth interviews with applicants. Three administrator-respondents suggested that a selection process be done to cover the aspect of selecting those who have the aptitude for teaching cognitively and affectively. During the pre-service training, periodic conduct of student support and personality development programs can further lessen the occurrence of mismatch.

CONCLUSIONS

While the government has made significant investment in teacher education in SUCs, it seems that this investment is not optimized, as a significant number of graduates of teacher education programs in participating SUCs do not meet the minimum requirement for professional teachers (passing the LET) in the Philippines. When combined with the implications of the LFS data, specific areas of concern include CAR, Cagayan Valley, Northern Mindanao and ARMM whose significant proportion of education graduates failed to secure a teaching career were prompted to settle for lower-skilled jobs.

Despite the issue of wastage, public investments in education, including teacher education, still make good economic sense. Already a number of studies point to the relationship between education and development. In this light the issue of improving the quality of teacher education graduates via their performance in the LET, and minimizing wastage in public investments on teacher education have to be prioritized. More pointedly, keeping teacher education graduates from abandoning teaching to move into competing non-teaching professions need to be highlighted.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the aforecited findings and conclusions, several courses of action geared towards enhancing public policy and institutionalization are recommended. Initially, the Legislative Branch of the Philippine Government can conduct a fresh review of the thrust and direction of public spending on education in relation to current and emerging issues affecting the education sector. Provisions for additional funding to address urgent concerns and challenges that may be identified may be considered. Also, review of teacher salaries for possible upgrading will be vital to attract more high school graduates pursue teacher education programs and prevent or minimize the number of teacher education graduates leaving the teaching profession in favor of alternative jobs.

National government agencies can consider the possibility of suspending or even closing/ending teacher education programs in SUCs with chronic and low passing rate in the LET; reviewing teacher recruitment policies and procedures at the Department of Education (DepEd) to rationalize the selection and hiring process for new teachers; and enhancing the existing in-service incentives and professional development programs to sustain the interest of new teachers, both public and private, in the profession, particularly in the level of basic education.

For their part, TEIs can consider providing pre-service incentives and benefits (e.g. scholarships, student loans) to keep pre-service teachers from abandoning their education programs in favor of other tertiary courses. It behoves the Philippine Normal University, in its capacity as the National Center for Teacher Education, and other SUCs and private TEIs with good track record in the LET, to adopt mechanisms to assist SUCs with chronic weak performance in the LET. Other relevant options in this regard include a review of the admissions and retention policies, as to develop programs meant to instil a deeper sense of commitment among pre-service teachers and to preserve the nobility of the teaching profession. Moreover, these institutions may develop and adopt strategies that help sustain students' interest in teacher education and in the teaching profession, cum career-oriented programs capable of assisting students in securing teaching jobs right after graduation.

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