
RECRUITMENT VIEWPOINTS FOR HIRING TEACHERS IN BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study looked into the factors that Philippine basic education schools utilize to hire teachers. Specifically, it sought to answer the following: 1) What factors are currently considered by public and private basic education schools in hiring teachers? 2) How important are these identified hiring factors in processing teacher applicants? And 3) What teacher-training institutions are preferred by public and private basic education schools in selecting newly-hired teachers? In using the descriptive survey research design, the study asked respondents to rate factors according to the extent of importance in deciding which applicant to hire: personal attributes, educational background, professional attributes, and possible supporting papers. The instrument included an unobtrusive query for them to name teacher training institutions they prefer teacher applicants to graduate from. Out of 327 randomly-selected public and private basic education schools spread in 17 cities in the National Capital Region, only 15% responded despite provisions to facilitate retrieval of the aforesaid instrument. Results revealed that the top specific recruitment factors deemed extremely vital in the hiring process of teacher applicants were: Health Condition, Certificate of Good Moral Character, Communication Skills, College Degree, Demonstration Teaching Performance, Interview Results, and NBI/Police Clearance. Preparing college graduates for successful employment begins once students start the freshman year. With a college degree and diploma, graduates should have polished indispensable communication skills, matured with confidence, and exuded ingenuity and potential. Academic scholarship, cum a solid character formation and genuine love for teaching secure a winning formula in job application.

Keywords: teacher education institution, hiring, preservice teachers

INTRODUCTION

What are the significant factors that a teacher applicant would be better off prepared to secure his/her successful employment? A cursory glance at Philippine advertisements on job openings for teachers reveals varied information that seem to hold no common factors, except that the teacher applicant has an Education degree. One may not have teaching experience. Feedback from teacher applicants, however, discloses the actual significant

factors utilized by schools to hiring process. These include, among others: passing the licensure exam for teachers, hurdling the interview and the demonstration teaching performance.

Confirming this feedback from teacher applicants, the Department of Education (DepEd), during the term of Secretary Butch Abad (2004-2005), tightened the policy on teacher hiring for public schools:

Only teacher applicants who perform well in a personal interview, in demonstration teaching, and on a written examination in English and Filipino will qualify to teach in public elementary and high schools, announced the Department of Education today in its new policy on teacher recruitment and hiring.

“We want to ensure that only the most competent and qualified teachers are hired”, said Education Secretary Butch Abad.

The new policy also requires that vacancies in high school English, Math, and Science be filled first by teachers who majored in those specific subject areas.

In previous years, teacher applicants only needed to pass the Licensing Examination for Teachers (LET) to qualify for hiring in public schools. However, the recently dismal scores of public school students and teachers in several nationwide achievement tests prompted the DepED to re-examine its standards.

The new guidelines also allow schools themselves to have the final say on who teaches in their classrooms. Committees composed of principals, teachers, and parents from schools with vacancies will select from the registry of qualified teachers those who best meet their needs. The registry will be screened and compiled by division offices.

(Communications Unit, Department of Education)

Despite this policy, however, several applicants have posted in tabloids, social networks, and in teacher organizations newsletters the ambiguity of the hiring procedure in applying to teach in Philippine public schools. In one 2009 posting, for instance, an applicant for Region VII public schools lamented on how the “whom you know” politics still prevails, aggravated by the acceptance of gifts in exchange for teaching items (AnnMines, 2009).

In one job vacancy posting for a kindergarten teacher, a college degree was sufficient, regardless that one is not an Education degree holder (Sulit, 2012). In several instances, a mere requirement for an “equivalent” course to an Education degree would suffice, when teaching posts are announced on the web (Job is Job, 2012).

Inherent in the role of educational institutions is to ensure that its graduates do not simply earn a degree, but that these are successfully employed. This concern stretches into matching the degree with appropriate work. In short, an Education graduate who is trained to be a teacher must teach and not work as a sales clerk or call center agent, etc. However, to be hired as teachers, the educational institution can very well facilitate the employment of its graduates by being informed on how teacher applicants are evaluated by prospective employers. Career orientation programs can be enriched with such useful feedback.

Several factors are pooled together by the school manager to reach a wise decision on which teacher applicant will best be an asset to the school. Based on the usual contents of résumé and curriculum vitae templates, information on personal attributes, educational background, professional attributes, and certain supporting papers from local government offices (e.g. Police, Barangay) are all essential to vouch for an applicant’s merit to teach according to the hiring school’s standards.

This is the conceptual framework of the study:

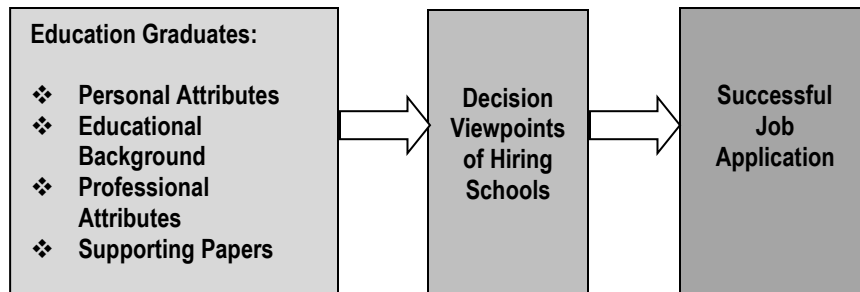


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

How the stakeholders perceive the impact of teacher training institutions through the graduates they have molded is equally gleaned from this study. Any university or college, by way of its alumni, exists to serve society and to ensure the optimal development of a nation. More than a hundred academic institutions produce Education graduates in the country - from which of these institutions are preferred by basic education schools in hiring teachers can provide vital feedback.

This study intends to look into the factors which Philippine basic education schools, private and public, utilize to hire teachers. Specifically, it seeks to shed light on these questions: What factors are currently considered by public and private basic education schools in hiring teachers? How important are identified hiring factors in processing teacher applicants? What teacher-training institutions are preferred by public and private basic education schools in selecting newly-hired teachers?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive-survey is the research method used in this study.

The first phase of this study covered randomly selected private basic education schools (n=40), public elementary (n=60), and public secondary schools (n=53) for a total of 153 respondent schools in the 17 cities comprising the National Capital Region. A cover letter, signed by the proponent of this study but withholding her affiliation with PNU, was sent to the school heads. The cover letters, with the research instrument attached, were mailed to the selected schools, with a stamped envelope showing the Post Office box mailing address of Philippine Normal University (PNU) in July 2011. Purposely, the cover letter did not identify the University to avoid prejudice against the respondents to answer the question on which preferred teacher education schools that applicants graduate from that they would most likely prioritize.

Due to the low rate of retrieval, the same research questionnaire, with a cover letter to the school heads, was sent out to a new batch of 174 randomly selected private basic education schools (n=74), public elementary schools (n=51), and public secondary schools (n=49) all in the National Capital Region in January 2012. This time, the cover letter was signed by the Center for Research and Development in Education (CREDE) Director, with the hope that more respondents would participate, if they are aware that PNU was the proponent of the study.

The research instrument included questions on personal attributes (gender, age, physical appearance, health condition, certificate on good moral character, and communication skills), educational background (institution where degree was earned, college degree, appropriate major/specialization vis-à-vis teacher vacancy, academic honors, co-curricular awards, and extra-curricular awards), professional attributes (demonstration teaching performance, Licensure Examination for Teachers rating, seminars, trainings and workshops attended, membership in professional organizations, interview results, and performance rating from previous teaching employment), and possible required supporting papers (National Bureau of Investigation/Police clearance, *barangay* clearance, recommendation letters) which hiring officials may consider in hiring teachers. Respondents were asked to rate these factors according to the extent of importance in deciding which applicant to hire. The

instrument includes an unobtrusive query for the respondent to name teacher training institutions that teacher applicants graduate from that they would most likely accord greater attention to.

The rated extent of importance of each factor was measured as follows:

- ❖ Extremely Important
- ❖ Important
- ❖ Slightly Important
- ❖ Not Important at all/Not Relevant

Towards the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to name the top four (4) teacher training institutions that applicants come from to which they would accord considerable weight in deciding who to hire.

The instrument was pilot tested and validated.

Frequency and weighted mean were used to treat the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 153 schools (Batch 2011), only 25 research instruments were returned within 2 to 12 weeks after these were mailed. Of the 174 schools (Batch 2012), only 25 research instruments were also retrieved, within 2 to 8 weeks. Only 15% from the total 327 schools responded, despite provisions to facilitate the return of the aforementioned instrument.

Sixty per cent (60%) of Batch 2011 and 88% of Batch 2012 of the research instruments were answered by the school principal who came from schools spread in 12 of the 17 cities comprising the National Capital Region.

The data obtained in 2011 and in 2012 were put together.

Recruitment Viewpoints and Their Perceived Importance

Personal Attributes

The top three answers named by the respondents coming from the three types of schools which were deemed extremely important were: 1) Health Condition, 2) Communication Skills, and 3) Certificate of Good Moral Character.

The high value ascribed to the teacher applicant's **health condition** underscores the physical fitness required in the teaching career. Although regulated at the usual 8 hours/day, with a maximum of 6 hours/day actual teaching for the public school teachers, (R.A. 4670, *Magna Carta* for Public School Teachers), work hours actually go beyond official time. Unlike several professions where an employee is free to take off when his/her time is done,

with no work brought to the house, the teacher “volunteers” his/her presence after class is dismissed for a myriad of school concerns. Weekends are likewise utilized for school events, meetings, co-curricular organizations. Indeed, the teacher can be said to be “on call” 24/7. Despite this scenario, very few teachers enjoy the benefit of health insurance as sponsored by their employers. Health insurance premium is unaffordable, when one considers the teacher’s pay. PhilHealth provision, required by law for all employees nationwide, only covers less than 50% of hospitalization bills and none at all for clinic consultations and optometric services. (Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, 2012) For private school teachers, the *Magna Carta* for Private School Teachers (Zubiri, 2012) which was filed 4 years ago is still pending action in the Senate. Incorporated in this bill are free compulsory medical examination before employment and compensation for work-related injuries due to the physical and nervous strain of a teacher’s work. This implies the acquiescence by society of all the hard work put in by teachers. For this reason, the health condition of teacher applicants is essentially checked.

Consistent with recent research findings from HRM offices, **communication skills** of job applicants can spell a crucial criterion in deciding to accept or reject an applicant (Trimble, 2001; Loren Murcia, 2012).

Communication skills include language fluency, in both written and oral form. Moreover, the ability of the job applicant to express broadly and coherently his/her thought and ideas is an influential plus factor. Concerns on right spelling and grammar are also checked. Inherent to great communication skills is the capability to organize one’s thoughts clearly and to use higher order thinking skills. The stock knowledge of teacher applicants on the content and methodology of his/her subject specialization can only be best appreciated if one can communicate well. Listening skills are evaluated as well.

Furthermore, teachers deal with parents, community officials, and other school personnel. The teacher can best conduct his/her role as mentor of the pupils when s/he communicates effectively. When communication skills are poor, somehow this inadequacy reflects a person with low confidence levels, slow cognitive skills and inadequate interpersonal relationship skills. One’s teaching capability is thus pointlessly compromised (Jacobs, 2012).

Admittedly, teaching is not an anonymous job. One cannot remain unknown and detached when teaching. Not only does one teach a course, but also invariably teaches values, life. The subject course is not the only curriculum in any class. Since 1961, academicians have already realized that there is “unwritten curriculum” in the classroom (Kentli, 2009). Also known as the “hidden curriculum”, such covers value formation, among many. In short, the teacher is not a mere professional. S/he is also a friend, the *co parentis*. Given this desideratum, it is no wonder that employers concern themselves with the **moral character** of the applicants. After all, as written in several

versions, the teacher helps mold the character of his/her students. Logically, one cannot entrust such responsibility to a teacher whose character is problematic, if not questionable or leaves much to be desired.

The teacher applicant's **gender** was perceived as "quite important" only from 50% of the respondents from public elementary schools. Only 1 out of 4 respondents from public secondary and from private schools found gender "quite important". Somehow, the teaching profession is no longer perceived as a female gender turf, although the Alliance of Concerned Teachers in the Philippines (actphils.com) reports that 80% of public school teachers are female. Both male and female teachers can be relied upon to teach well.

Age of the teacher applicant was rated "quite important" by 3 out of 4 respondents from public elementary schools, and only by 2 out of 3 from public secondary and from private schools. Teacher applicants can best relate with pupils/students when the age gap is narrow. In one web blog, readers joined a survey on the topic "Ideal Teacher: Does age matter?" (Randall, 2007). Results show that male teachers, age 20-30, were most preferred by 32% of the respondents.

Physical Appearance was "quite important" for 3 out of 4 respondents from public secondary schools, but only for 1 out of 2 respondents from both public elementary and from private schools. Notably, 2 out of 5 respondents from public elementary schools believe that physical appearance of the teacher applicant is "extremely important".

On Educational Background

Having the **appropriate major/specialization vis-à-vis the teacher vacancy** was regarded as extremely important for respondents, both from public and private secondary schools. The result is expected of high school teacher applicants who are hired to teach specific subjects. As to the respondents from the public elementary schools, the **college degree** of the teacher applicant was extremely important, ranking as number 1 answer out of 6 choice answers. Respondents from public secondary schools and from private schools also rated college degree as extremely important.

A college degree, particularly in Education, is valuable. Expectedly, teacher applicants must finish college. There is hardly a teaching advertisement that does not list the attainment of a college degree as one of its basic minimum requirements.

As to the *alma mater* of the teacher applicant, this was considered only as "quite important" by the majority of the respondents. Prospective employers are still particular on where one obtained his/her baccalaureate degree. Perhaps the existence of more than a hundred teacher training schools in the country inadvertently produces a percentage of Education graduates

who may not have been well-trained, or are ill-prepared according to the standards set by hiring schools.

In contrast to the other respondents, the majority of the respondents from the public elementary schools believed that **academic honors, co-curricular awards, and extra-curricular awards** were “quite important”. These three (3) factors were not that essential for majority of the respondents from public secondary schools and from private schools. Listings of teaching job vacancies do not include either these factors as basic application requirements. Furthermore, the literature to guide job applicants and even those which narrate job application experiences rarely mention academic honors and awards as highly advantageous in deciding which applicant to hire.

Professional Attributes

The following ranked highest as extremely important: Demonstration Teaching Performance, Performance Rating from one’s previous teaching employment, and Interview Results.

In one blog spot on how to apply as a public school teacher, **demonstration teaching performance** marks twenty per cent (20%) in the criteria to decide which applicant to hire. A well written lesson plan, excellent classroom management, engrossed learners, and attainment of 100% mastery level are evaluated (LorenMurcia, 2012). The teacher applicant’s capability in this aspect should have been honed during their practice teaching, on or off campus. While in college, this is one area that preservice teachers must seriously attend to.

Performance Rating from one’s previous teaching employment is notably influential as well. Having more information about each applicant, apart from the other factors used to decide who to hire, is always a wise move.

The **Interview** subtly reveals relevant information about the teacher applicant which are not written in the résumé and application letter. Exuded during the interview are self-confidence, poise, inner strength – or the lack thereof. The applicant’s judgment sense and potential are measured. How to prepare for the job interview is one topic in career planning that should be given priority.

The teacher applicant’s **Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) rating** was evaluated as “extremely important” only by respondents from the public secondary schools. Half of the respondents from the public elementary so thought, too, but the other half perceived the LET rating only as “quite important”. The majority of the respondents from the private schools deemed the LET rating only as “quite important”. It is not enough that one passes the LET. Education graduates are better off aiming for a desirable rating which can boost their job qualification.

As to **seminars, training, workshops attended**, the majority of the respondents from the public elementary schools believed these are “extremely important”. The same was perceived by the respondents from the public secondary and private schools as only “quite important”. These activities enrich the applicant’s personal and professional status and propel career development.

Membership in professional organizations was the least important component among the professional attributes.

Supporting Papers

The majority of the respondents from all types of school respondents considered the **NBI/Police Clearance** as “extremely important”. The Baranggay Clearance was seen as “quite important” by the respondents from the public secondary and private schools, but the same was “extremely important” for the public elementary school respondents.

Recommendation Letters were determined to be “extremely important” by the private school respondents, “quite important” by the public elementary school respondents, and “not important at all/not relevant” by the respondents from the public secondary schools.

Table 1 illustrates how the respondents viewed each factor in hiring teacher applicants.

Table 1. Extent of Importance on Recruitment Factors

Personal Attributes	PUBLIC ELEMENTARY	PUBLIC SECONDARY	PRIVATE SCHOOLS
1. Health Condition	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
2. Certificate of Good Moral Character	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
3. Communication Skills	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
4. Age	Quite important	Quite important	Quite important
5. Physical Appearance	Quite important	Quite important	Quite important
6. Gender	Quite important	Not so important	Not so important
Educational Background			
1. Institution where degree was earned	Quite important	Quite important	Quite important
2. College degree	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
3. Appropriate Major/ Specialization vis-a-vis teacher vacancy	Quite important	Extremely important	Extremely important
4. Academic Honors	Quite important	Quite important	Quite important
5. Co-curricular Awards	Quite important	Quite / Not so important	Quite / Not so important
6. Extra-Curricular Awards	Quite important	Not so important	Quite / Not so important

Table 1. Extent of Importance on Recruitment Factors (*continued*)

Professional Attributes	PUBLIC ELEMENTARY	PUBLIC SECONDARY	PRIVATE SCHOOLS
1. Demonstration Teaching Performance	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
2. Interview Results	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
3. Performance Rating from previous teaching employ	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
4. LET Rating	Extremely / Quite important	Extremely important	Quite important
5. Seminars, Training, Workshops attended	Extremely important	Quite important	Quite important
6. Membership in professional organizations	Quite important	Not so important	Quite important
Supporting Papers			
1. NBI / Police Clearance	Extremely important	Extremely important	Extremely important
2. Baranggay Clearance	Extremely important	Quite important	Quite important
3. Recommendation Letters	Quite important	Not important at all	Extremely important

To summarize, recruitment factors which rated “extremely important” by the three (3) types of respondents are: Health Condition, Certificate of Good Moral Character, Communication Skills, College Degree, Demonstration Teaching Performance, Interview Results, and NBI/Police Clearance.

Some of the respondents volunteered a few more factors that they use, or suggest that these be implemented in deciding which teachers to hire: applicants take the neuro-psychological test (n=7). Other plus factors included: Proximity of residence to school; and admirable communication and ICT skills.

Preferred Teacher-Training Institutions

Table 2 illustrates which teacher-training institutions are preferred by the respondents.

Table 2. Preferred Teacher-Training Institutions

TEI	Batch 2011 (n=25)		Batch 2012 (n=25)		Total (n=50)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Philippine Normal University	21	84	17	68	38	76
University of the Philippines	20	80	10	40	30	60
Pamantasan Lungsod ng Pasig	11	44	10	40	21	42
National Teachers College	9	36	0	0	9	18
Ateneo de Manila University	3	12	6	24	9	18
Technological University of the Philippines	1	4	7	28	8	16
Siliman University	3	12	3	12	6	12
Pamantasan Lungsod ng Manila	2	8	2	8	4	8

Other institutions named were: Bicol University, Centro Escolar University, De La Salle University, *Pamantasan Lungsod ng Muntinlupa*, *Pamantasan Lungsod ng Valenzuela*, Philippine Christian College, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Rizal Technological University, San Beda College, St Louis University, St Paul's University, University of Makati, University of Sto Tomas, University of the East.

PNU ranked most popular from the 2 batches of respondents. Interestingly, this is more true of Batch 2011 where PNU as research proponent was not mentioned in the research invitation than in Batch 2012 where PNU already identified itself. In a number of University research regarding the profile of college students and their perception of the reputation of the University (Mancao, 2001; 2004; 2009), results yielded that the impact of PNU on the community is highly favorable: "*premier teacher institution, center of excellence for teacher education, the mother of TEIs*", etc. In 2010 when the University celebrated its 109th year of service, the *Manila Bulletin* Editorial (*Manila Bulletin*, 2010) lauded the University as "the flagship institution for teacher education". Perhaps the status of the University in society, proven over time and through its alumni who are not only esteemed teachers in the field but also hold important positions in numerous public and private offices, has certainly strengthened, better yet, entrenched, its respectable place to produce teachers.

The choice of the respondents reflect their trust in the teacher training institution to produce Education graduates that they envisage will best satisfy their expectations of newly-hired mentors. For teacher training institutions to be relevant, their graduates must be sought after by school employers and successfully hired.

CONCLUSION

Preparing Education graduates for successful employment starts when students begin the freshman year. With the appropriate college degree, graduates should have polished indispensable communication skills, have matured with confidence, maintained physical and mental health, and exuded ingenuity and potential. A teacher training institution must be mindful that teaching and learning are at its finest, when the students' personal development and professional training take on a wholistic slant. Academic scholarship, fused with a solid character formation and a genuine love for teaching, secure a winning formula in job application.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on what public and private basic education schools deem as extremely important in processing teacher applications, it is recommended to teacher training institutions that:

As early as first year college, students be informed of these priority recruitment viewpoints.

Maintaining a healthy condition is a state that demands regular discipline and check up. This *sine qua non* cannot be forced before job application so that the Medical Clinic can initiate a health program in cooperation with the academic departments, in encouraging students to observe a healthy lifestyle.

To be certified to possess good moral character, the office of student affairs and the guidance office can organize various fora and activities for the studentry to promote this goal.

Possessing excellent communication skills, just like a healthy condition, does not happen instantly. At the start of one's college education, students must be prodded to be conscious of their language fluency, both in oral and written form. Campaigns for "One Language", meaning the use of only one language in one sentence are essential. This applies to everyone in the academic community to maintain an environment where each one serves as an example to another.

Fortunately for the Filipino society, finishing a college degree is already highly valued, amid or despite financial difficulties. Incoming college students, through regular and effective academic advisement program, can be inspired to stay steadfast to earn a degree.

Pedagogy and methodology are not the only ingredients in coming up with an impressive demonstration teaching session. Preservice teachers are expected to exude self-confidence, dynamism, and creativity to motivate students to learn and retain the lesson, although these traits are not easily acquired. Therefore, all kinds of opportunities that the faculty can provide in teaching any college course must be planned so that students are not only steep in subject content and pedagogy, but also able to grow in confidence and enthusiasm to teach.

Facing an interview with the school's hiring official can be daunting, especially to a fresh Education graduate who has never had work. What hiring schools check out in an applicant during an interview must be clearly understood by the graduates: communication skills, thinking skills, potential, self confidence. Career planning is best begun even during the sophomore year of college students, because several personality and professional factors that guarantee successful employment are never acquired overnight.

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