#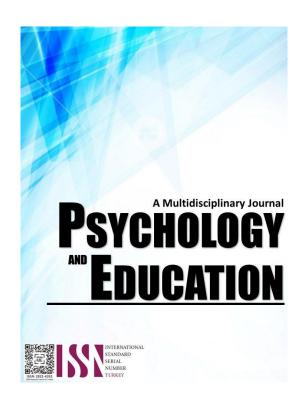 THE LIVED-EXPERIENCES OF THE NEWLY HIRED TEACHERS IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF DEPED-DIVISION OF GUMACA: INPUTS FOR POLICY INSTRUCTION

The Lived-Experiences of the Newly Hired Teachers in the Recruitment Process of DepEd-Division of Gumaca: Inputs for Policy Instruction

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Abstract

This study used the qualitative approach due to its concern with understanding the social phenomenon from the participant's perspective (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2019). Specifically, the study adopted the phenomenological educational research. Through interview and other forms of communicating to the respondents of this study, the researcher gained clear, wide and specific knowledge as regards the lived experiences of newly hired teachers in the recruitment process. The respondents of the study were from the 3 schools namely, Progresso Elementary School, Gumaca West Elementary School, and Gumaca East Elementary School. This study aimed to determine the lived-experiences of the newly hired teachers in the recruitment process of the Department of Education which served as inputs for policy instructions during the school year 2024-2025. The experiences of the newly hired teachers in the recruitment / employment process. The respondents stated that the recruitment process for newly hired teachers in the Department of Education (DepEd) is strict and contains a lot of processes and methodical procedure. It was also mentioned by the respondents that the process was designed to not only assess qualifications but also prepare new teachers for the realities of the classroom. Additionally, the respondents concluded that it was both a stressful and exciting experience, as it represents the first step towards entering the educational system and clearly, the guidelines in the recruitment and employment process with the Department of Education (DepEd) were both challenging and enlightening. The insights that can be shared to the other newly hired teachers regarding the recruitment process. Most of the common insights presented by the respondents were: If unsure about any aspect of the process or the requirements, don't hesitate to reach out to the DepEd or your local school district for clarification; present yourself professionally in all communications and interactions. This includes dressing appropriately for interviews and speaking politely in all exchanges. Additionally, the respondents also mentioned the following: Familiarize yourself with the rights and protections that teachers have under Philippine law, including benefits and job security; The recruitment process may have unexpected turns, such as a change in interview dates or venue. Stay flexible and prepared to deal with changes; Ensure that all documents are complete, signed, and properly formatted, missing or incorrect documents can delay your application; If you don't get hired right away, don't be discouraged. Keep applying and learning from the experience and lastly, during the recruitment process, be honest about your qualifications, experiences, and any gaps in your background. Transparency will help build trust.

Keywords: *department of education*, *student-teacher placements, qualifications*

Introduction

Education plays an indispensable contribution in building a nation. Teachers are the key players of realizing the goals and objectives of a country for education. This is why the process of recruiting and hiring teacher-applicants who will mold the characters and values of young children is very important. But the question is, what is the best practice or process in hiring to ensure highly qualified teachers are selected?

Recruitment and selection of employees are part and parcel in any institutional organization. In the Philippines, hiring and selecting new public secondary teachers in the Department of Education (DepEd) is a concerted effort between the schools and the division offices.

The recruitment, selection, and placement (RSP) system plays a critical role in ensuring that an organization has right talent in the right positions. Effective recruitment, selection, and placement processes contribute to the overall success and productivity of the workforce. It also plays a vital role in the satisfaction and retention of employees, as individuals who are well-suited for their roles and are more likely to be engaged and motivated in their work. The emphasis on organization's ability to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, particularly in the context of delivering quality, accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education, suggests a forward-looking approach to human resource management within the Department of Education. Therefore, it is necessary to uphold the integrity and sanctity of this system for the ultimate losers will be our learners, who are also the future of our country (Tejano, 2022).

There are technical selection committees which are responsible to do specific jobs for this purpose. However, School Principals are not authorized to hire and appoint teachers though it is mandated under the School-Based Management (SBM). Schools Division Superintendents (SDS), being the highest personnel in the division, have the prerogative to appoint teachers for permanent position in the government which sometimes may influence by the politicians and influential people in the community.

Furthermore, the success of a school is intricately linked to the effectiveness of its workforce. Quality recruitment and selection

processes are keys to ensure that the right people contribute to the growth and success of the educational institution.

Teacher applicants who wish to enter in DepEd should take all necessary preparations during the hiring and selection processes. As applicants, there are more struggles which constitute to become successful teachers. Despite of the different struggles and challenges being faced by each applicant, there are still many of them who aspire for a permanent position in DepEd for security reasons. Some of them submit application in their respective district for ranking purposes several times and others are fresh graduates and do several preparations during the entire process.

Based on observations, those applicants who did not find luck in their district preferred to transfer in other places, but others still stayed on their respective district for several reasons. Others lose their hopes and quitted on ranking due to financial constraints. Applicants who usually enter the permanent position are those who have relatives currently working in the DepEd or due to political intervention.

Thus, this study aims to determine the lived-experiences of the newly hired teachers in the recruitment process of the Department of Education for the school year 2024-2025.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the lived-experiences of the newly hired teachers in the recruitment process of the Department of Education which served as inputs for policy instructions during the school year 2024-2025. More specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the newly hired teachers in the recruitment / employment process?
2. What are the coping mechanisms of the newly hired teachers in order to get through the process?
3. How and to what extent does the school district act strategically when hiring elementary school teachers?
4. What are the insights that can be shared to the other newly hired teachers regarding the recruitment process?
5. Based on the results of the study, what policy instructions may be proposed?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative approach due to its concern with understanding the social phenomenon from the participant's perspective (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2019). Specifically, the study adopted the phenomenological educational research. Through using a phenomenological hermeneutic approach to educational research, the underlying meanings and existential experiences of participants (the 'why'), as well as the strategic thinking, practicalities, hands-on approaches and embodiment (the 'how').

Through the use of qualitative approach, the researcher would be able to determine the lived-experiences of the newly hired teachers in the recruitment process of the department of education.

Respondents

The participants of the study are sampled among public elementary schools in the Schools Division of Gomaa, Quezon Province. Purposive and random sampling methods were used in the selection of participants. The purpose of the selection is to obtain the lived experiences of newly hired teachers. Therefore, from the rostrum of teachers with a 5-year length of service, 10 participants were randomly selected.

Instrument

The study used a researcher-made interview questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was consisted of interview questions and the comments and suggestions of the teacher-respondents.

The questionnaires that served as survey instrument of the study were validated by experts to ensure its correctness and validity. The contents of the said questionnaire were analyzed and scrutinized by principals, master teachers, English teachers, and education program supervisor. Their comments and feedback were considered in the final approval of the method and were examined by the consultant again as the proofreader of the researcher.

Procedure

In collecting the data, the researcher sought the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd-Division Office of Gumaca, Quezon Province and the school heads of the selected public elementary schools through a request letter from the researcher, signed by the Dean and the assigned thesis adviser. A letter of consent was provided by the researcher to gather information through the use of virtual interview or face-to-face interview. Rest assured that the information that was gathered from the respondents was handled with confidentiality and in accordance with the data privacy act of 2012.

The sets of data were gathered to organize, analyze, and interpret in accordance with the order of the specific research problem. The

researcher gathered the information from the selected public elementary school guidance advocates. Using a researcher's-made interview guide question. The researcher conducted a virtual interview or face-to-face interview to gather the necessary data needed for the study. Upon gathering, the researcher organized and prepare the data by transcribing the interviews. After gathering the data, the researcher made an interpretation of the results of the study and formulate a program for the guidance advocates.

Data Analysis

For the qualitative method, this study employed what is generally referred to as theme-centered or category-based analysis. Braun and Clarke (2019) describe a specific theme-centered analysis as thematic analysis. One of the advantages of this type of analysis is its theoretical freedom. Thematic analysis is done by coding the data. Coding is done by combining the data for themes, ideas, and categories and making similar passages of text with a code label so it can be retrieved at a later stage for further comparison and analysis. Coding the data makes it easier to search, compare, and identify any pattern.

Results and Discussion

1. What are your experiences as a newly hired teacher in the recruitment / employment process?

Below are the significant statements extracted from the responses regarding the experiences of a newly hired teacher in the recruitment/employment process:

Table 1. *Significant statements to Themes from the 1st School*

Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/ Or Themes
1. Support and Mentorship	Support Systems and Mentorship
2. Professional Development	Professional Development and Training
3. Feedback and Growth	Feedback and Reflective Growth
4. Workload and Time Management	Challenges and Adaptability
5. Challenges and Adaptability	Workload and Time Management
6. Increased Confidence and Growth	Increasing Confidence and Competence
7. Continuous Learning	Evaluation of the Recruitment Process
8. Recruitment Process Evaluation	

From the significant statements, it was formulated into key themes that capture the essence of your experiences as a newly hired teacher in the recruitment/employment process. Here's how they can be organized: Support Systems and Mentorship, Received crucial support from colleagues and a mentor. Mentorship helped with lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement. The collaborative school environment reduced feelings of isolation.

Professional Development and Training, DepEd provided workshops, seminars, and training for skill enhancement. Continuous learning through professional development was invaluable. Feedback and Reflective Growth, Received constructive feedback from supervisors on teaching practices. Used feedback for self-reflection and continuous improvement. Challenges and Adaptability, Faced difficulties like disengaged students, large classes, and unexpected disruptions. Challenges became opportunities to develop flexibility and resilience.

Workload and Time Management, Initially overwhelmed by lesson planning, grading, and extracurricular tasks. Learned to prioritize tasks and set boundaries for better efficiency.

Increasing Confidence and Competence, Gained confidence in classroom management, lesson design, and student relationships. Each challenge contributed to professional and personal growth.

Evaluation of the Recruitment Process, Found the recruitment process thorough and well-structured. The Guidelines were mostly clear but had some complexities causing delays. The process prepared new teachers for real classroom demands.

Table 2. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 1st School*

Themes	Clustered Themes
1. Support Systems and Mentorship	Institutional Support & Guidance
2. Professional Development and Training	Professional Growth & Adaptation
3. Feedback and Reflective Growth	Practical Demands & Coping Strategies
4. Challenges and Adaptability	
5. Workload and Time Management	
6. Increasing Confidence and Competence	
7. Evaluation of the Recruitment Process	

The themes were reduced and clustered into the following: Institutional Support & Guidance 1. Received mentorship, colleague support, and structured training (workshops/seminars). 2. Recruitment process was thorough but had bureaucratic complexities. 3.

DepEd's system aimed to prepare teachers for classroom realities.

Professional Growth & Adaptation 1. Constructive feedback fostered reflective teaching practices. 2. Challenges (disengaged students, large classes) developed resilience and adaptability. 3. Gained confidence in classroom management and pedagogy over time.

Practical Demands & Coping Strategies 1. Struggled with overwhelming tasks (grading, lesson planning). 2. Learned time management, prioritization, and boundary-setting.

Table 3. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 1st School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Institutional Support & Guidance	"From Initiation to Mastery: The
2	Professional Growth & Adaptation	Transformational Journey of a New
3	Practical Demands & Coping Strategies	Teacher"
4		
5		

This theme captures the nonlinear progression of a newly hired teacher, where institutional, professional, and personal dimensions intersect to shape identity and competence. Initiation (Structures and Systems), 1. New teachers enter a predefined system (DepEd's recruitment, training, mentorship). 2. Bureaucratic hurdles and unclear guidelines create initial friction, but institutional support (colleagues, workshops) acts as a lifeline. Example: Mentorship helps decode unspoken rules of classroom management.

Crisis and Adaptation (Challenges as Catalysts), 1. Early struggles (disengaged students, workload) force improvisation and resilience. 2. Feedback loops (from supervisors, peers) turn failures into reflective practice. Example: A failed lesson plan leads to experimenting with student engagement techniques.

Integration (Sustainable Practice), 1. Teachers develop practical wisdom—balancing ideals with constraints (time, resources). 2. Confidence emerges not from perfection, but from managed vulnerability (e.g., admitting limits, asking for help). Example: Saying "no" to extra tasks to protect well-being.

Emerging Mastery (Identity Formation), 1. The teacher transitions from "following rules" to "owning their craft" through: Agency: Adapting policies to local classroom needs. Community: Contributing back to the support system (e.g., mentoring newer teachers).

The emergent theme—'From Initiation to Mastery'—reflects Fuller's (1969) stages of teacher concerns, wherein novice teachers transition from survival to self-efficacy through structured support (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and transformative challenges (Mezirow, 1991). In the Philippine setting, DepEd's PPST (2017) provides a framework for this progression, though bureaucratic delays complicate early experiences.

The significant statements capture the key emotions, challenges, and reflections during the recruitment process for the second school of participants.

Table 4. *Significant statements to Themes from the 2nd School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/ Or Themes
1	It is both a stressful and exciting experience,	Anticipation and Emotional Contrast
2	I felt a mixture of excitement and anxiety	Meticulous Preparation
3	The forms and requirements were clear, but I had to be meticulous in ensuring no documents were overlooked."	Uncertainty of Waiting Rigorous Evaluation Process
4	The waiting period was a time filled with uncertainty	
5	the wait was still nerve-wracking	
6	The feeling of receiving an email for an interview was exhilarating	
7	Preparation for the interview was extensive	
8	The interview was a blend of emotions	

Based on the significant statements provided, several key themes emerge regarding the experiences of newly hired teachers in the recruitment and employment process. Anticipation and Emotional Contrast stands out, as applicants describe a mix of excitement and anxiety—eager to begin their teaching careers yet stressed by competition and uncertainty. Another prominent theme is Meticulous Preparation, where candidates emphasize the need for careful attention to documentation and thorough interview readiness, including self-reflection on teaching philosophies and practical strategies. The Uncertainty of Waiting also surfaces as a recurring challenge, with applicants acknowledging the psychological toll of prolonged timelines despite institutional guidelines.

Lastly, the Rigorous Evaluation Process highlights the depth of scrutiny from hiring panels, which extends beyond academic credentials to assess pedagogical adaptability, classroom management skills, and technological integration—revealing DepEd's holistic approach to selecting educators. Together, these themes illustrate the recruitment process as a transformative yet demanding journey, shaping candidates' professional entry into the education sector.

Table 5. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 2nd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Anticipation and Emotional Contrast	Emotional Rollercoaster
2	Meticulous Preparation	Preparation and Attention to Detail
3	Uncertainty of Waiting	Institutional Scrutiny and Expectations
4	Rigorous Evaluation Process	

The formulated themes were clustered into three core themes that capture the essence of newly hired teachers' experiences in the recruitment process:

Emotional Rollercoaster – This theme encompasses the mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety, the exhilaration of progressing to the interview stage, and the nervous anticipation during waiting periods. It highlights the psychological impact of the hiring process on applicants.

Preparation and Attention to Detail – This cluster focuses on the meticulous efforts in document submission, thorough interview preparation, and the need to align with institutional expectations. It underscores the importance of organization, self-reflection, and readiness in securing a teaching position.

Institutional Scrutiny and Expectations – This theme reflects the rigorous evaluation by hiring panels, including probing questions on classroom management, student engagement, and technology integration. It reveals the high standards set by DepEd and the demand for well-rounded educators beyond academic qualifications.

These clustered themes streamline the original insights into broader, interconnected patterns, emphasizing emotional resilience, procedural diligence, and professional expectations in the teacher recruitment journey.

Table 6. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the Second School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Emotional Rollercoaster	The Transformational Journey from Applicant to Educator
2	Preparation and Attention to Detail	
3	Institutional Scrutiny and Expectations	

From the clustered themes, an overarching pattern emerges: the recruitment process is not merely a procedural hurdle but a transformational journey that shapes aspiring teachers both professionally and personally. The Emotional Rollercoaster reflects the vulnerability and self-doubt candidates face, while the Preparation and Attention to Detail phase forces introspection, reinforcing their commitment to teaching.

Finally, the Institutional Scrutiny and Expectations stage acts as a rite of passage, where candidates internalize the realities of the profession—moving beyond theoretical knowledge to demonstrating adaptability, problem-solving, and pedagogical creativity. This emergent theme suggests that DepEd's hiring process functions as a transitional space, where individuals evolve from hopeful applicants into confident educators, mentally and strategically prepared for the demands of the classroom. The process, while stressful, ultimately serves as a foundational experience in their teaching careers.

Table 7. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 3rd School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/ Or Themes
1	Use of Technology for Efficiency	Technology and efficiency
2	Patience and Coping with Waiting Periods	Patience and resilience
3	Resilience and Positive Mindset	Self-care and stress management
4	Self-Care and Stress Management	Organization and preparation
5	Organization and Preparation	Support systems and networking
6	Seeking Support and Networking	Adaptability and flexibility
7	Adaptability and Flexibility	
8	Continuous Learning and Skill Enhancement	
9	Celebrating Milestones	

From the significant statements provided, several key themes emerge regarding the experiences of newly hired teachers in the recruitment and employment process.

The first prominent theme is technology and efficiency, where teachers utilized digital tools, online resources, and virtual communities to streamline applications, stay updated, and reduce administrative burdens. Another central theme is patience and resilience, as applicants acknowledged the lengthy and uncertain nature of the process, requiring emotional endurance and a positive mindset to cope with delays and challenges. Self-care and stress management also played a crucial role, with teachers emphasizing the importance of maintaining physical and mental well-being through exercise, healthy habits, and mindfulness practices.

Additionally, organization and preparation were critical, as structured planning—through checklists, tracking deadlines, and staying

informed—helped applicants navigate the process smoothly. Support systems and networking emerged as another key theme, with new teachers seeking guidance from HR, colleagues, mentors, and online communities to alleviate isolation and gain insights. Adaptability and flexibility were essential in responding to unexpected changes, such as scheduling delays or policy adjustments.

Finally, themes of continuous learning and skill development were evident, as teachers engaged in professional growth through workshops and feedback, while celebrating milestones helped sustain motivation and a sense of progress. Together, these themes illustrate a multifaceted experience where practical strategies, emotional resilience, and community support all contribute to successfully navigating the teacher recruitment process.

Table 8. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 3rd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Technology and efficiency	Strategic Preparation and Adaptability
2	Patience and resilience	Emotional Resilience and Well-being
3	Self-care and stress management	Community and Continuous Growth
4	Organization and preparation	
5	Support systems and networking	
6	Adaptability and flexibility	

The clustered themes—Strategic Preparation and Adaptability, Emotional Resilience and Well-being, and Community and Continuous Growth—were developed by grouping related individual themes based on their underlying connections and overarching focus.

Strategic Preparation and Adaptability combines Organization and preparation with Adaptability and flexibility, as both emphasize proactive planning and the ability to adjust to changing circumstances. Efficient Technology and efficiency also fit here, as it supports structured workflows while enabling quick adaptation.

Emotional Resilience and Well-being merges Patience and resilience with Self-care and stress management, recognizing that enduring challenges requires both mental fortitude and intentional self-preservation. This cluster highlights the balance between perseverance and personal health.

Finally, Community and Continuous Growth links Support systems and networking with the broader idea of lifelong development, acknowledging that growth is often fueled by collaboration, mentorship, and shared knowledge. Together, these clusters provide a structured yet dynamic framework for navigating professional and personal challenges.

Table 9. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 3rd School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Strategic Preparation and Adaptability	"Navigating Uncertainty Through Proactive Resilience and Support."
2	Emotional Resilience and Well-being	
3	Community and Continuous Growth	

The emergent theme that arises from the clustered themes is "Navigating Uncertainty Through Proactive Resilience and Support." This overarching concept captures the dynamic interplay between strategic preparation, emotional endurance, and community reliance that defines the newly hired teacher's journey. The recruitment process, with its bureaucratic complexities and unpredictable timelines, demands more than just technical competence—it requires a holistic adaptability where candidates must simultaneously organize their efforts (e.g., digital tools, checklists), sustain their motivation (e.g., reframing setbacks, self-care), and lean on collective wisdom (e.g., mentors, peer networks).

At its core, this emergent theme reflects a transformative process—one where applicants evolve from passive participants into proactive agents of their own success. Rather than merely enduring the hiring system, they learn to navigate its ambiguities by blending practical efficiency with emotional agility, all while drawing strength from professional and social support structures.

This synthesis suggests that successful recruitment is not just about meeting formal requirements but about cultivating a mindset of resourceful perseverance, where challenges become opportunities for growth. Ultimately, the emergent theme underscores teaching not just as a career but as a vocation that begins with resilience—a quality mirrored in the very classrooms these new educators will soon lead.

The final emergent theme that synthesizes the three clustered themes—"From Initiation to Mastery," "Navigating Uncertainty Through Proactive Resilience and Support," and "The Transformational Journey from Applicant to Educator"—could be articulated as:

"Becoming and Belonging: The Transformational Odyssey of a New Teacher"

This unified theme captures:

The Process of Becoming

 The nonlinear progression from novice to self-efficacious educator

The evolution of identity, from external validation (meeting institutional benchmarks) to internal confidence (owning one's craft).

The Role of Belonging

The interplay of individual resilience and systemic support (mentorship, peer networks, bureaucratic structures).

The transition from isolation ("surviving" the hiring process) to community (contributing back as a mentor).

The Odyssey Metaphor

The recruitment process as a rite of passage, marked by challenges (bureaucracy, emotional toll) that test and refine professional identity.

The classroom as the ultimate destination, where the lessons of the journey (adaptability, vulnerability, resourcefulness) are applied.

Theoretical Alignment:

Bridges Fuller's (1969) stages, Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning, and Bandura's self-efficacy theory.

Reflects the Philippine context (DepEd's PPST framework) while acknowledging systemic gaps (delays, unclear guidelines).

2. What are your coping mechanisms as newly hired teacher in order to get through the process?

Table 10. *Significant statements to Themes from the 1st School*

Participant	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/ Or Themes
P1	Emotional & Psychological Coping Mechanisms	Emotional Resilience and Self-Reflection
P2	Practical & Organizational Strategies	Structured Preparation and Adaptability
P3	Proactive Problem-Solving & Communication	Proactive Communication and Continuous Learning
P4	Social & Professional Support Systems	Social and Professional Support Networks
P5	Adapting to Teaching Demands	Workload Management and Boundary-Setting

From the significant statements provided, several qualitative themes emerge that reflect the coping mechanisms of a newly hired teacher navigating the recruitment process and early career challenges.

Emotional Resilience and Self-Reflection

A prominent theme is the use of emotional regulation strategies to manage stress and uncertainty. Teachers cope by journaling their experiences, practicing visualization for motivation, and reminding themselves of their passion for teaching. Patience and acceptance are also key, as they acknowledge that setbacks are part of the process. This suggests that self-awareness and positive reinforcement help sustain motivation during difficult phases.

Structured Preparation and Adaptability

Another theme revolves around practical preparedness, where teachers proactively familiarize themselves with teaching standards, break tasks into manageable steps, and create contingency plans for technical or procedural issues. This highlights the importance of organization and adaptability in reducing anxiety and maintaining control in an unpredictable hiring process.

Proactive Communication and Continuous Learning

Teachers emphasize seeking clarity when uncertain, whether by asking questions or engaging in professional development (e.g., workshops, webinars). This reflects a growth mindset, where continuous learning and open communication are seen as tools for confidence-building and avoiding mistakes.

Social and Professional Support Networks

A strong theme is the reliance on peer and mentor support to combat isolation. Teachers connect with others in the same situation, seek guidance from career counselors, and network within professional communities. This underscores the role of collaborative resilience, where shared experiences and advice help individuals navigate challenges more effectively.

Workload Management and Boundary-Setting

Finally, as new teachers transition into their roles, they face time management struggles due to lesson planning, grading, and extracurricular demands. The development of prioritization skills and setting boundaries emerges as a crucial coping strategy, indicating that self-care and efficiency are necessary for long-term sustainability in the profession.

These themes collectively illustrate how newly hired teachers employ a combination of emotional, practical, and social strategies to navigate the pressures of recruitment and early career demands. The findings suggest that institutional support, mentorship programs,

and structured onboarding processes could further ease this transition for future educators.

Table 11. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 1st School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Emotional Resilience and Self-Reflection	Emotional Regulation and Mindset
2	Structured Preparation and Adaptability	Strategic Preparation and Adaptability
3	Proactive Communication and Continuous Learning	Collaborative Growth and Support Systems
4	Social and Professional Support Networks	Sustainable Work Practices
5	Workload Management and Boundary-Setting	

From the themes reduction of overlap and grouping the themes related ideas for conciseness while maintaining depth was done.

Emotional Regulation and Mindset

This cluster combines emotional resilience, self-reflection, and motivation strategies. Teachers manage stress through journaling, visualization, and reaffirming their passion for teaching, fostering patience and acceptance of setbacks. The emphasis on self-awareness and positive reinforcement highlights the psychological strategies used to maintain perseverance during challenges.

Strategic Preparation and Adaptability

This theme merges structured planning, problem-solving, and flexibility. Teachers cope by learning teaching standards, breaking tasks into smaller goals, and preparing backup plans for technical or procedural hurdles. The focus on organization and adaptability demonstrates how proactive preparation mitigates anxiety in uncertain situations.

Collaborative Growth and Support Systems

In this clustered theme, proactive communication, continuous learning, and professional networking are interconnected. Teachers actively seek clarification, attend training sessions, and build mentor/peer relationships to combat isolation and gain insights. This reflects a growth mindset and underscores the value of shared resilience—leveraging community support to navigate challenges.

Sustainable Work Practices

This cluster combines time management, boundary-setting, and self-care. New teachers face overwhelming demands (grading, lesson planning, etc.) and cope by prioritizing tasks, setting limits, and refining efficiency. The theme highlights the need for practical self-preservation strategies to balance professional effectiveness with personal well-being.

Table 12. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 1st School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Emotional Regulation and Mindset	"Holistic Self-Empowerment
2	Strategic Preparation and Adaptability	Through Adaptive Resilience"
3	Collaborative Growth and Support Systems	
4	Sustainable Work Practices	

One overarching theme that emerges from the data is the concept of self-empowerment through adaptive resilience—a dynamic process where newly hired teachers actively cultivate emotional, cognitive, and social strategies to navigate challenges. This theme integrates emotional regulation (mindset), proactive problem-solving (action), and collaborative support (connection) into a unified coping framework. Teachers do not merely react to stress; they reframe setbacks as growth opportunities (e.g., journaling, visualization), strategize to regain control (e.g., task breakdown, contingency planning), and leverage relationships for shared learning (e.g., mentorship, peer networks). Crucially, this resilience is not static but adapts to shifting demands, such as transitioning from recruitment stresses to classroom realities. The theme suggests that successful coping hinges on agency—teachers' ability to blend introspection, preparation, and community engagement to sustain their professional and personal well-being.

The emergent theme lens could inform teacher training programs, emphasizing self-empowerment as a teachable skill alongside pedagogical techniques. Institutions might foster it through structured reflection exercises, scenario-based preparedness training, and strengthened peer-support systems.

Table 13. *Significant statements to Themes from the 2nd School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	Effective Time Management	Structured Planning and Efficiency
2	Organization	Emotional and Mental Well-Being
3	Self-Care and Stress Management	Growth Mindset and Resilience
4	Self-Compassion and Seeking Support	
5	Positive Mindset and Motivation	
6	Learning from Others	

These statements highlight key strategies for coping with the challenges of being a newly hired teacher, emphasizing planning, emotional resilience, support systems, and adaptability were developed into themes. The significant statements on coping mechanisms reveal several overarching themes that highlight how newly hired teachers navigate challenges in their professional transition. These themes reflect both practical and emotional strategies that contribute to resilience and success in the teaching profession.

Structured Planning and Efficiency (Time Management & Organization)

The emphasis on effective time management and organization underscores the importance of structured planning in managing the demands of teaching. By breaking tasks into manageable steps, maintaining checklists, and organizing documents systematically, new teachers reduce overwhelm and increase productivity. This theme suggests that proactive preparation is crucial in handling bureaucratic processes (e.g., recruitment, paperwork) while balancing teaching responsibilities.

Emotional and Mental Well-Being (Self-Care & Stress Management)

The focus on self-care and stress management highlights the emotional toll of transitioning into teaching. Strategies such as exercise, deep breathing, and leisure activities serve as coping mechanisms for anxiety, reinforcing the idea that sustaining mental health is as important as professional competence. This theme aligns with broader discussions on teacher burnout prevention, emphasizing that self-care is not indulgence but necessity for long-term effectiveness.

Growth Mindset and Resilience (Self-Compassion & Positive Mindset)

The recognition that "it's okay not to have everything figured out" and the practice of maintaining a positive mindset reflect resilience and self-compassion. Instead of fixating on setbacks, new teachers benefit from framing challenges as learning opportunities. This theme connects to growth mindset theory (Dweck, 2006), where perseverance and adaptability are key to professional development.

Collaborative Learning and Mentorship (Seeking Support & Learning from Others)

The reliance on mentorship and peer support illustrates the social and collaborative nature of teaching. New teachers who seek guidance from experienced colleagues demonstrate humility and a willingness to learn, accelerating their adjustment. This theme reinforces the idea that teaching is not an isolated profession—strong support networks enhance confidence and competence.

Table 14. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 2nd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Structured Planning and Efficiency	Proactive Preparedness
2	Emotional and Mental Well-Being	Emotional Resilience
3	Growth Mindset and Resilience	Collaborative Adaptation

The themes were further distilled into three interconnected clusters:

Proactive Preparedness

This cluster combines structured planning and efficiency as foundational strategies for handling the demands of teaching. By integrating time management (scheduling, task breakdowns) with organization (checklists, document systems), new teachers create a systematic approach to workload management. This reduces stress by preventing last-minute rushes and ensuring clarity in responsibilities. Proactive preparedness is especially crucial in bureaucratic environments (e.g., recruitment, grading, paperwork), where disorganization can amplify stress.

Emotional Resilience

These themes merge into a psychological and emotional toolkit for sustaining well-being. Self-care (exercise, breaks) addresses immediate stress, while self-compassion (accepting imperfections) and a positive mindset (focusing on growth) foster long-term resilience. Together, they help teachers reframe challenges (e.g., lesson failures, classroom management struggles) as part of the learning process rather than personal shortcomings. This cluster aligns with research on teacher burnout prevention, emphasizing that emotional health underpins professional effectiveness.

Collaborative Adaptation

This cluster highlights the social dimension of professional growth. New teachers who actively seek mentorship, feedback, and peer support accelerate their adaptation by leveraging collective experience. Rather than reinventing strategies alone, they integrate institutional knowledge (e.g., veteran teachers' tips) and build confidence through validation. Collaborative adaptation also mitigates isolation, a common issue in early-career teaching, by fostering communities of practice.

Table 15. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the Second School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Proactive Preparedness	Sustainable Professional Agency

2	Emotional Resilience	in Early-Career Teaching
3	Collaborative Adaptation	

From the three clustered themes, Proactive Preparedness, Emotional Resilience, and Collaborative Adaptation, an overarching emergent theme arises, Sustainable Professional Agency. This concept captures how new teachers actively navigate challenges by integrating practical systems, psychological self-regulation, and communal learning to maintain long-term effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Professional agency refers to a teacher's ability to make intentional choices, adapt strategies, and exert control over their work environment. When combined with sustainability—the capacity to endure stressors without burnout—this agency becomes a dynamic process where teachers anticipate demands (via proactive preparedness), Regulate emotional responses (via resilience), and leverage collective wisdom (via collaboration) to thrive rather than merely survive.

The interdependence of the clusters reveals that no single strategy (e.g., time management alone) is sufficient. Instead:

Proactive preparedness prevents chaos but risks rigidity without resilience to adapt when plans fail.

Emotional resilience buffers stress but is strengthened by collaboration (e.g., mentors normalizing struggles).

Collaborative adaptation provides solutions but requires preparedness to implement them effectively.

Thus, sustainable agency emerges as the meta-competency that binds these elements, enabling teachers to Problem-solve systematically (e.g., reorganize a lesson plan after observing a colleague), Recover from setbacks (e.g., reframing a failed lesson as a learning opportunity), and evolve their practice through ongoing dialogue with peers.

This theme shifts the focus from isolated coping tricks to holistic professional growth. It suggests that teacher retention and effectiveness depend on:

Institutional support: Schools should foster agency by providing mentorship programs, mental health resources, and training in adaptive planning (e.g., flexible scheduling tools).

Teacher education: Prep programs should emphasize agency development—teaching candidates how to self-reflect, seek help, and design personalized systems.

In essence, sustainable professional agency reframes the transition into teaching as an active, iterative process—one where teachers harness both internal and external resources to grow into their roles with confidence and longevity.

Table 16. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 3rd School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	Districts use social media, online job boards, and alternative certification programs to attract teachers.	Recruitment Strategies
2	Highlighting positive work environments to draw top talent.	Promoting School Culture
3	Offering part-time or temporary roles to meet staffing needs.	Flexible Hiring Practices
4	Assessing teaching style, classroom management, and cultural fit.	Interview & Selection Process
5	Using performance and turnover data to inform decisions.	Data-Driven Hiring
6	Internships and residency programs to train and evaluate new teachers.	Pipeline Development

The statements do not directly answer the question, "What are your coping mechanisms as a newly hired teacher in order to get through the process?" Instead, they focus on district hiring strategies for recruiting teachers rather than coping strategies for new educators.

The key themes in these statements include recruitment strategies, such as using social media, online job boards, and alternative certification programs to attract candidates. Additionally, districts emphasize promoting school culture by showcasing positive work environments to appeal to top talent. Other approaches involve flexible hiring practices, like offering part-time or temporary positions to address immediate staffing needs. The interview and selection process is also structured to assess teaching style, classroom management skills, and cultural fit. Furthermore, many districts employ data-driven hiring, using metrics on student performance, teacher effectiveness, and turnover rates to guide decisions.

Finally, some develop pipeline programs, such as internships and residencies, to train and evaluate potential long-term hires. While these strategies highlight how districts recruit and retain teachers, they do not address the personal coping mechanisms that newly hired educators might use to navigate the challenges of their first teaching roles.

Table 17. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 3rd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Recruitment Strategies	Strategic Outreach and Recruitment
2	Promoting School Culture	Rigorous Selection and Retention

3	Flexible Hiring Practices	Diversity and Inclusivity in Hiring
4	Interview & Selection Process	
5	Data-Driven Hiring	
6	Pipeline Development	

Three themes were developed after reduction to clustered themes:

Strategic Outreach and Recruitment (Combining: Recruitment Strategies, Promoting School Culture, and Flexible Hiring Practices) Districts employ a multifaceted approach to attract qualified teachers by leveraging digital platforms, emphasizing workplace appeal, and offering adaptable employment options. Social media and online job boards expand their reach beyond local candidates, while showcasing a positive school culture helps position the district as an attractive employer. Flexible hiring practices, such as part-time or temporary roles, allow districts to address immediate staffing shortages while maintaining a pipeline of potential long-term hires. This cluster highlights how modern recruitment goes beyond traditional job postings, instead using targeted marketing and adaptable job structures to compete for top talent in a challenging educational landscape.

Rigorous Selection and Retention (Combining: Interview & Selection Process, Data-Driven Hiring, and Pipeline Development) To ensure high-quality hires, districts implement structured evaluation methods that assess not only credentials but also teaching philosophy and cultural alignment. Data analytics play a key role, with districts analyzing student performance and teacher retention rates to refine hiring priorities. Additionally, internship and residency programs serve as extended evaluation periods, allowing districts to mentor new teachers while assessing their long-term fit. This cluster demonstrates a shift from reactive hiring to a more strategic, evidence-based approach that prioritizes both immediate needs and sustainable staffing solutions.

Diversity and Inclusivity in Hiring (Implicit in: Culturally Competent Hiring, Alternative Certification Programs, and Support for Diverse Student Needs)

Districts increasingly prioritize cultural competence, seeking educators who can effectively engage with diverse student populations. By recruiting from alternative certification programs, they expand the pool of candidates, including career changers who bring real-world experience. This focus ensures that hiring aligns with the demographic and linguistic needs of students, fostering an inclusive learning environment. This cluster reflects the growing recognition that teacher diversity and adaptability are critical to addressing equity gaps and improving student outcomes.

These three clustered themes illustrate how districts are evolving their hiring practices—balancing recruitment innovation, data-informed decision-making, and commitment to diversity—to build stronger, more resilient teaching teams.

Table 18. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 3rd School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Strategic Outreach and Recruitment	Holistic and Adaptive Teacher Recruitment
2	Rigorous Selection and Retention	for Sustainable Educational Success
3	Diversity and Inclusivity in Hiring	

Holistic and Adaptive Teacher Recruitment for Sustainable Educational Success

From the significant statements, developed themes, and clustered themes, one overarching idea emerges: districts are moving toward a comprehensive, dynamic hiring approach that integrates strategic outreach, rigorous selection, and diversity-focused practices to secure high-quality teachers while addressing systemic challenges. This emergent theme reflects a shift from traditional, transactional hiring to a long-term, mission-driven recruitment philosophy—one that prioritizes not just filling vacancies but fostering a resilient, culturally responsive teaching workforce. By leveraging digital recruitment, data analytics, and alternative certification pathways, districts are adapting to teacher shortages and evolving student needs. Simultaneously, the emphasis on cultural competence and inclusive hiring ensures that educators are not only qualified but also equipped to support diverse learners. Ultimately, this holistic strategy underscores education systems' growing recognition that teacher recruitment and retention are foundational to student success, requiring innovation, flexibility, and a commitment to equity.

3. How and to what extent does the school district act strategically when hiring elementary school teachers?

Table 19. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 1st School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	Districts prioritize candidates with a history of staying in previous positions to minimize turnover rates.	Reducing Turnover
2	They build relationships with local businesses and community organizations to support and incentivize potential teachers	Community Partnerships Targeted Strategies for Hard-to-Fill Roles Data-Informed Hiring
3	Special education positions often require special recruiting efforts, specialized training, and higher pay.	Emphasizing Passion for Teaching Local Hiring Preference
4	Performance data from previous years guides hiring decisions to ensure teachers meet student achievement needs.	
5	Candidates are encouraged to demonstrate enthusiasm for working	

	with children and making a difference.
6	Districts sometimes hire teachers from within the community, believing local ties increase investment in student success.

The participant highlighted several key strategies that school districts use when hiring elementary school teachers. First, districts prioritize candidates with a history of staying in previous positions to minimize turnover. They also foster partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to attract and incentivize potential teachers, particularly within the area. For hard-to-fill roles, such as special education, districts implement targeted recruitment efforts, specialized training, and higher pay to attract qualified candidates. Additionally, hiring decisions are data-driven, with districts analyzing past performance metrics to ensure teachers are selected based on the needs of student achievement.

Enthusiasm for working with children and making a difference is a highly valued trait during recruitment. To support new hires, many districts offer mentoring programs, helping them acclimate and succeed in their roles. Some districts also maintain connections with former employees, encouraging alumni to return as a stable recruitment source. Another strategy involves hiring locally, as teachers with community ties are believed to be more invested in student success. Furthermore, diverse hiring committees are utilized to promote equitable decision-making, and beyond teaching credentials, districts assess soft skills like empathy, communication, and collaboration to ensure well-rounded candidates are selected.

Table 20. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 1st School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Reducing Turnover	Strategic Hiring for Stability and Quality
2	Community Partnerships	Community and Equity-Centered
3	Targeted Strategies for Hard-to-Fill Roles	
4	Data-Informed Hiring	
5	Emphasizing Passion for Teaching	
6	Local Hiring Preference	

The first theme, Strategic Hiring for Stability and Quality, encompasses efforts to minimize turnover by prioritizing experienced candidates, using performance data to guide hiring, and offering mentorship to retain teachers. It also includes targeted strategies for hard-to-fill roles, such as special education, through incentives like higher pay and specialized training. The second theme, Community and Equity-Centered Recruitment, highlights how districts build local partnerships, hire from within the community, and maintain alumni networks to foster long-term engagement. Additionally, diverse hiring committees and the assessment of soft skills ensure more inclusive and equitable hiring decisions. Together, these themes demonstrate a dual focus on maintaining a stable, high-quality teaching workforce while strengthening ties to the community and promoting fairness in hiring.

Table 21. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 1st School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Strategic Hiring for Stability and Quality	"Building a Sustainable and Impactful
2	Community and Equity-Centered Recruitment	Teaching Workforce Through Strategic and Community-Engaged Hiring Practices"

From the two clustered themes—Strategic Hiring for Stability and Quality and Community and Equity-Centered Recruitment—a broader, unifying theme emerges:

"Building a Sustainable and Impactful Teaching Workforce Through Strategic and Community-Engaged Hiring Practices"

This overarching theme captures the district's dual focus on long-term retention and effectiveness (by hiring strategically to reduce turnover and improve teacher quality) while also strengthening local ties and equity (by engaging the community, diversifying hiring, and fostering teacher commitment). Together, these approaches ensure that the district not only fills positions efficiently but also cultivates a dedicated, high-performing, and representative teaching workforce that positively impacts student success.

Table 22. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 2nd School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	The district strategically assesses areas with high student enrollment or teacher shortages to prioritize hiring in those schools by analyzing staffing needs.	Needs-Based Hiring Strategy
2	The district focuses on recruiting teachers for subjects or grade levels with chronic shortages, such as special education or STEM.	Diversity & Inclusion in Recruitment
3	School districts actively seek to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds to reflect the diversity of the student population.	Local Talent Development & Retention
4	To reduce relocation costs and foster community connections, districts often prioritize hiring teachers who are from the local area	Strategic Alignment with Educational Goals
5	Many districts partner with local universities to offer student-teacher placements, ensuring a pipeline of qualified teachers from the region	

6	The district hires teachers whose teaching philosophies and expertise align with its strategic educational goals, such as increasing literacy rates or improving social-emotional learning.	

Several key themes emerge from the significant statements about how the school district strategically hires elementary school teachers. First, targeted recruitment and staffing analysis play a crucial role, as the district identifies high-need areas—such as schools with growing enrollment or subject-specific shortages (e.g., special education and STEM)—to prioritize hiring. Second, diversity and representation are emphasized, with active efforts to recruit teachers who reflect the student population's demographics. A third theme is local investment and partnerships, including hiring teachers from the community to strengthen ties and collaborating with universities to create a sustainable pipeline of qualified educators. Finally, alignment with district goals ensures that new hires' teaching philosophies and expertise support broader initiatives, such as improving literacy or social-emotional learning. Together, these themes illustrate a multifaceted, intentional approach to teacher hiring that addresses immediate needs while fostering long-term educational success.

Table 23. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 2nd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Needs-Based Hiring Strategy	Strategic Hiring Aligned with District Needs & Goals
2	Diversity & Inclusion in Recruitment	
3	Local Talent Development & Retention	Equity-Driven & Community-Centered Talent Development
4	Strategic Alignment with Educational Goals	

The four themes were reduced and clustered into two (2) themes which are related to strategic priorities while preserving the core focus of the district's hiring approach.

Strategic Hiring Aligned with District Needs & Goals

This clustered theme would combine Needs-Based Hiring Strategy and Strategic Alignment with Educational Goals, as both focus on ensuring that hiring decisions directly support the district's priorities—whether addressing immediate staffing shortages (e.g., STEM, special education) or long-term objectives (e.g., literacy improvement, social-emotional learning). By merging these, the emphasis remains on data-driven, purposeful recruitment that serves both operational and pedagogical aims.

Equity-Driven & Community-Centered Talent Development

This theme would integrate Diversity & Inclusion in Recruitment and Local Talent Development & Retention, as both prioritize representation and sustainability in the workforce. Actively hiring diverse teachers ensures the staff reflects the student body, while local hiring and university partnerships create a stable, culturally connected pipeline of educators. Together, these strategies foster belonging, retention, and long-term community engagement.

Table 24. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the Second School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Strategic Hiring Aligned with District Needs & Goals	"Strategic and Equitable Teacher Workforce Development"
2	Equity-Driven & Community-Centered Talent Development	

This single unifying theme captures the district's dual focus on purposeful hiring (addressing immediate needs and long-term educational goals) and inclusive, community-rooted talent cultivation (prioritizing diversity and local retention). It reflects a holistic approach where hiring is not just about filling vacancies but intentionally shaping a teacher workforce that is responsive to student needs, aligned with district priorities, and reflective of the community it serves. By merging the original clusters, this theme emphasizes that the district's strategy is the Data-informed and goal-oriented (targeting shortages and pedagogical objectives), Equity-driven (ensuring representation and reducing barriers for local/diverse candidates), and Sustainable (building pipelines to retain talent long-term). This emergent theme underscores that effective teacher hiring is both a strategic operational function and a commitment to equitable, community-centered schools.

Table 25. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 3rdt School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	The district values candidates who continue enhancing their teaching skills through online courses or professional development workshops, even after submitting applications.	Needs-Based Hiring Strategy
2	Honesty about qualifications, experiences, and background gaps is important in the recruitment process.	Diversity & Inclusion in Recruitment
3	Understanding and aligning with the Department of Education's goals and values strengthens a candidate's fit during hiring.	Local Talent Development & Retention
4	The district utilizes online platforms for applications, exams, and communication, requiring candidates to be familiar with these systems.	Strategic Alignment with Educational Goals

The participant's response highlights several key strategies and attitudes that can enhance an applicant's chances of being hired by the

school district. First, they emphasize the importance of continuous professional development, suggesting that candidates should actively improve their teaching skills through online courses or workshops, even after submitting their applications. Persistence is also encouraged—if not hired immediately, applicants should continue applying while learning from each experience.

Transparency and honesty during the recruitment process are crucial, as openly discussing qualifications, experiences, and any gaps in one's background helps build trust with hiring committees. Additionally, maintaining a positive and enthusiastic attitude can leave a strong impression, demonstrating passion for teaching. Practical preparation is another significant point, including familiarity with online application systems, keeping resumes updated and tailored to the position, and budgeting for potential costs like transportation or documentation fees. Networking—through online groups, recruitment fairs, and teacher communities—can also create valuable opportunities. The participant also advises aligning with the Department of Education's values and goals, which can strengthen an applicant's candidacy during interviews. Finally, they recommend seeking feedback if unsuccessful at any stage, using it constructively to improve future applications. Overall, the response underscores a proactive, reflective, and adaptable approach to the hiring process.

Table 26. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 3rd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Continuous Skill Improvement Encouraged	Proactive Preparation and Continuous Growth
2	Transparency & Trust-Building	Professional Integrity and Positive Engagement
3	Alignment with DepEd Values	Logistical Readiness and Practical Adaptability
4	Digital Recruitment Systems	

The original themes from the participant's response were reduced to 3 clustered themes, the key ideas could be consolidated into broader categories while retaining their core meaning. Here's how they might be grouped and what would arise from this clustering:

Proactive Preparation and Continuous Growth

Includes: Continuous skill improvement (courses/workshops), persistence in applications, resume updating, researching DepEd values, and networking. This theme emphasizes self-driven effort—highlighting that success in hiring depends on an applicant's commitment to learning, adaptability, and strategic preparation.

Professional Integrity and Positive Engagement

Includes: Honesty about qualifications, transparency in communication, maintaining a positive attitude, and seeking feedback for improvement. This theme centers on ethical and interpersonal qualities, suggesting that trust, enthusiasm, and openness are just as critical as technical skills in the hiring process.

Logistical Readiness and Practical Adaptability

Includes: Familiarity with online systems, financial preparation for costs, and tailoring applications. This cluster highlights the administrative and practical aspects of job-seeking, ensuring candidates are efficient and well-prepared for procedural demands.

Table 27. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 3rd School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Proactive Preparation and Continuous Growth	Strategic and Adaptive Professionalism in Teacher Hiring
2	Professional Integrity and Positive Engagement	
3	Logistical Readiness and Practical Adaptability	

Strategic and Adaptive Professionalism in Teacher Hiring

This emergent theme captures the participant's core message: successful hiring depends on a candidate's ability to strategically prepare, adapt, and demonstrate professionalism at every stage. It merges the original clusters into a unified idea, emphasizing:

Proactive Growth: Continuously improving skills, staying persistent, and aligning with institutional values.

Authentic Engagement: Building trust through honesty, enthusiasm, and reflective learning from feedback.

Practical Preparedness: Navigating logistical and administrative demands efficiently.

The hiring process is not just about meeting qualifications but about proactively shaping one's professional identity—balancing self-development, interpersonal integrity, and operational readiness to stand out as a dynamic and reliable candidate. This theme reflects a holistic, adaptive approach to securing a teaching role in a competitive system.

4. What are the insights that you can share to the other newly hired teachers regarding the recruitment process?

Table 28. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 1st School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	"The recruitment process might not go exactly as expected. Be flexible and adapt to changes or delays in the process."	Adaptability and Flexibility

2	"If you are unsure about any aspect of the process or the requirements, don't hesitate to reach out to the DepEd or your local school district for clarification."	Professionalism in Communication and Conduct
3	"Sometimes additional documents or requirements will come up during the recruitment."	Proactive Engagement and Clarification
4	"Present yourself professionally in all communications and interactions. This includes dressing appropriately for interviews and speaking politely in all exchanges."	Awareness of Legal Rights and Contractual Details
5	"Before signing any employment contract, read it carefully to understand your rights, responsibilities, and benefits as a teacher."	Preparation for Additional Requirements
6	"Familiarize yourself with the rights and protections that teachers have under Philippine law, including benefits and job security."	
7	"The recruitment process may have unexpected turns, such as a change in interview dates or venue. Stay flexible and prepared to deal with changes."	
8	"Regularly check the DepEd website or the official communication channels to ensure your status."	

The themes collectively highlight the importance of preparation, patience, and professionalism in successfully navigating DepEd's recruitment process. By embracing adaptability, seeking clarity, maintaining professionalism, understanding legal rights, and staying updated, newly hired teachers can improve their chances of a smooth and successful hiring experience.

Adaptability and Flexibility in the Process

The recruitment process for teachers in DepEd may not always follow a fixed timeline or expected structure. Delays, sudden changes in schedules, or additional requirements can arise unexpectedly. Newly hired teachers should remain patient and adaptable, adjusting to these changes without becoming discouraged. Flexibility ensures that candidates can navigate uncertainties while maintaining a positive attitude toward the hiring process.

Proactive Communication and Seeking Clarifications

Uncertainty about requirements or procedures should not deter applicants from seeking guidance. The participant emphasizes the importance of reaching out to DepEd or local school districts for clarification when needed. Proactive communication helps avoid misunderstandings and ensures that applicants submit complete and accurate documents, improving their chances of success.

Professionalism in Presentation and Conduct

First impressions matter, and professionalism should be maintained throughout the recruitment process. This includes dressing appropriately for interviews, using polite and respectful language in all interactions, and ensuring that written communications (such as emails) are clear and formal. A professional demeanor reflects an applicant's seriousness about the teaching role and leaves a positive impression on hiring committees.

Awareness of Legal Rights and Contractual Obligations

Before signing an employment contract, newly hired teachers must thoroughly review its terms to understand their rights, responsibilities, and benefits. Additionally, they should familiarize themselves with legal protections under Philippine labor laws, including job security, benefits, and grievance procedures. This knowledge empowers teachers to advocate for fair treatment and avoid potential exploitation.

Staying Informed Through Official Channels

The recruitment process may involve updates, announcements, or additional steps that require prompt attention. Applicants are advised to regularly check DepEd's official website or communication platforms to monitor their application status and stay updated on any new requirements. Being well-informed prevents missed deadlines and ensures a smooth transition into the teaching position.

Table 29. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 1st School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Adaptability and Flexibility	Adaptability and Proactive Engagement in the Recruitment Process
2	Professionalism in Communication and Conduct	Professionalism and Legal Awareness in Employment Preparation
3	Proactive Engagement and Clarification	Vigilance and Self-Advocacy Through Official Channels
4	Awareness of Legal Rights and Contractual Details	
5	Preparation for Additional Requirements	

By condensing the themes, the core message remains intact: navigating DepEd's recruitment process effectively demands flexibility, professionalism, and informed vigilance.

Adaptability and Proactive Engagement in the Recruitment Process

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This cluster merges adaptability and flexibility with proactive communication and seeking clarifications. The recruitment process may involve unexpected changes, delays, or unclear requirements, making it essential for applicants to remain flexible while actively seeking guidance from DepEd or school officials. By staying adaptable and asking questions when uncertain, newly hired teachers can navigate uncertainties more effectively and avoid unnecessary setbacks.

Professionalism and Legal Awareness in Employment Preparation

This combines professionalism in presentation and conduct with awareness of legal rights and contractual obligations. Presenting oneself professionally—through attire, communication, and demeanor—creates a strong impression during interviews and interactions. Additionally, understanding employment contracts and teachers' legal protections ensures that candidates enter the profession informed and safeguarded against potential issues. Together, these elements emphasize the importance of both outward conduct and internal preparedness.

Vigilance and Self-Advocacy Through Official Channels

This cluster simplifies the original themes by focusing on the necessity of staying informed and taking responsibility for one's application status. Regularly checking DepEd's official updates ensures candidates meet deadlines and comply with new requirements, while also reinforcing the need for self-advocacy in a bureaucratic process. This theme underscores that successful applicants must be diligent in monitoring their progress rather than passively waiting for instructions.

Table 30. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 1st School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Adaptability and Proactive Engagement in the Recruitment Process	Proactive Resilience in Navigating
2	Professionalism and Legal Awareness in Employment Preparation	DepEd's Recruitment Process
3	Vigilance and Self-Advocacy Through Official Channels	

Proactive Resilience in Navigating DepEd's Recruitment Process

This overarching theme captures the essential mindset and actions needed for newly hired teachers to succeed in DepEd's recruitment system. "Proactive resilience" combines adaptability, professionalism, and self-advocacy into a singular approach, emphasizing that candidates must:

Anticipate and Adapt to Challenges

Accept that delays, changes, and additional requirements are part of the process, responding with flexibility rather than frustration.

Take Initiative in Communication and Preparation

Actively seek clarifications, present oneself professionally, and thoroughly review contracts instead of passively waiting for instructions.

Stay Informed and Assertive

Regularly monitor official updates while understanding legal rights to ensure fair treatment and timely progress. This theme reflects a dynamic balance between patience and agency—recognizing that while the system may be unpredictable, a teacher's preparedness and proactive attitude can significantly influence their hiring experience. Ultimately, it shifts the perspective from merely enduring the recruitment process to strategically navigating it with confidence.

Table 31. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 2nd School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	"The recruitment process can be slow and sometimes uncertain. Be patient, as it may take time to hear back after interviews or submit documents." (Highlights the need for patience due to delays and unpredictability.)	Patience and Persistence
2	"Carefully read and follow the recruitment guidelines provided by DepEd. Ensure you submit all the requirements." (Emphasizes strict adherence to DepEd's guidelines and completeness of submissions.)	Adherence to Guidelines and Procedures Organization and Documentation
3	"Keep all your application documents, certificates, and communication in an organized system to make the process easier to track." (Stresses the importance of organization for efficiency.)	Preparation for Multiple Stages Importance of Exam Readiness
4	"Ensure that all documents are complete, signed, and properly formatted. Missing or incorrect documents can delay your application." (Points out the impact of document accuracy on processing time.)	Attention to Detail
5	"Expect various stages in the recruitment process, including exams, interviews, and teaching demonstrations. Prepare thoroughly for each stage." (Indicates the multi-step nature of the process and the need for preparation.)	

Quitalla & Espiritu

6	"This exam is a critical part of the recruitment process, so make sure to study in advance using official DepEd review materials or other resources." (Underlines the importance of exam preparation with recommended materials.)

These significant statements provide key advice on patience, compliance, organization, document readiness, multi-stage preparation, and exam readiness for new teachers navigating DepEd's recruitment process.

Several key themes emerge from significant statements about the DepEd recruitment process for newly hired teachers:

Patience and Persistence

The process is slow and uncertain; applicants must manage expectations and remain patient. Delays are common, so persistence is necessary.

Adherence to Guidelines and Procedures

Strictly follow DepEd's recruitment guidelines to avoid disqualification. Submitting complete and correct documents is crucial for smooth processing.

Organization and Documentation

Keeping records well-organized helps track progress and avoid missteps. Proper filing of certificates, communications, and application materials is essential.

Preparation for Multiple Stages

The recruitment process involves several phases (exams, interviews, teaching demos). Thorough preparation for each stage increases chances of success.

Importance of Exam Readiness

The qualifying exam is a critical hurdle; studying official DepEd materials is recommended. Adequate preparation can make a significant difference in outcomes.

Attention to Detail

Errors or missing documents can cause delays or rejection. Proper formatting, signatures, and completeness are emphasized.

Table 32. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 2nd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Patience and Persistence	Preparation and Proactive Engagement
2	Adherence to Guidelines and Procedures	Compliance and Systematic Organization
3	Organization and Documentation	Resilience and Adaptability
4	Preparation for Multiple Stages	
5	Importance of Exam Readiness	
6	Attention to Detail	

The original themes are consolidated into three clustered themes, they can be grouped based on overarching similarities in focus and intent:

Preparation and Proactive Engagement

Includes: Exam readiness, multi-stage preparation, attention to detail (document completeness, formatting). All these emphasize the need for candidates to actively prepare—whether studying for exams, anticipating recruitment stages, or ensuring documents are error-free.

Compliance and Systematic Organization

Includes: Adherence to guidelines, documentation management, tracking communication. These highlight the importance of following DepEd's structured process systematically, from submitting requirements to maintaining organized records.

Resilience and Adaptability

Includes: Patience with delays, persistence despite uncertainty. The recruitment's slow and unpredictable nature requires emotional resilience and adaptability from applicants.

Table 33. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the Second School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Preparation and Proactive Engagement	"Strategic Readiness for a Structured Yet Uncertain Recruitment Process"

2	Compliance and Systematic Organization
3	Resilience and Adaptability

Strategic Preparedness in Navigating DepEd's Recruitment System

The participant's insights coalesce into a single unifying theme: strategic preparedness, which encapsulates the mindset and actions required to successfully navigate DepEd's recruitment process. This emergent theme underscores that success is not just about meeting qualifications but involves a deliberate, structured approach to overcoming bureaucratic, procedural, and psychological challenges. Strategic preparedness integrates three critical dimensions: proactive readiness (studying for exams, anticipating stages, perfecting documents), meticulous compliance (following guidelines, organizing submissions, avoiding errors), and patient persistence (enduring delays, adapting to uncertainty). Together, these elements form a holistic strategy where candidates must simultaneously act with diligence, adhere to rigid systems, and maintain resilience.

This theme reflects the reality that DepEd's recruitment is a test of both competence and endurance. Candidates must approach it like a long-term project—planning each step (e.g., gathering documents months in advance), troubleshooting obstacles (e.g., correcting paperwork), and managing emotional labor (e.g., coping with silence after interviews). The emphasis on strategy highlights that passive compliance is insufficient; applicants must actively align their efforts with institutional expectations while mentally bracing for unpredictability. Ultimately, strategic preparedness positions the recruitment process as a formative professional hurdle, where the ability to navigate complexity becomes an early indicator of a teacher's adaptability and commitment—qualities just as vital as pedagogical skill in the DepEd system.

Table 34. *Significant Statements to Themes from the 3rd School*

	Significant Statement	Formulated meanings/Or Themes
1	Even after submitting your application, continue to improve your teaching skills through online courses or professional development workshops."	Continuous Professional Development
2	"If you don't get hired right away, don't be discouraged. Keep applying and learning from the experience."	Resilience and Persistence
3	"During the recruitment process, be honest about your qualifications, experiences, and any gaps in your background. Transparency will help build trust."	Honesty and Transparency
4	A positive attitude goes a long way during the recruitment process. Being enthusiastic and showing passion for teaching can make a big difference."	Positive Attitude and Passion
5	"Familiarize yourself with online systems for submitting applications, taking exams, and communicating with the DepEd. This will save you time and effort."	Technical Preparedness Networking and Community Engagement
6	"Join online groups, attend recruitment fairs, and engage with other teachers. Networking can open doors and provide valuable opportunities."	

These themes provide valuable insights into the expectations, challenges, and strategies for success. Here's a discussion of the possible themes:

Continuous Professional Development

(Statement: "Even after submitting your application, continue to improve your teaching skills through online courses or professional development workshops.") The recruitment process can be competitive, and staying up-to-updated with new teaching methods, technologies, or certifications can make candidates more attractive to employers. This also shows initiative and dedication to the profession.

Resilience and Persistence

(Statement: "If you don't get hired right away, don't be discouraged. Keep applying and learning from the experience.") Many applicants face setbacks before securing a position. Rather than giving up, they should treat each application as a learning opportunity, refining their approach based on feedback or self-reflection.

Honesty and Transparency

(Statement: "During the recruitment process, be honest about your qualifications, experiences, and any gaps in your background. Transparency will help build trust.") Misrepresenting qualifications can lead to disqualification or future difficulties. Employers value candidates who are truthful about their strengths and areas for growth, as it fosters trust and professionalism.

Positive Attitude and Passion

(Statement: "A positive attitude goes a long way during the recruitment process. Being enthusiastic and showing passion for teaching

can make a big difference.") Hiring committees look for candidates who demonstrate genuine excitement for teaching. A positive demeanor during interviews or demo teaching can set an applicant apart from others with similar qualifications.

Technical Preparedness

(Statement: "Familiarize yourself with online systems for submitting applications, taking exams, and communicating with the DepEd. This will save you time and effort.") Efficiency in navigating administrative processes is crucial. Many recruitment systems are now digital. Applicants who are tech-savvy and proactive in understanding online platforms (e.g., application portals, exam systems) reduce delays and avoid unnecessary mistakes.

Networking and Community Engagement

(Statement: "Join online groups, attend recruitment fairs, and engage with other teachers. Networking can open doors and provide valuable opportunities.") Connections with peers, mentors, or DepEd personnel can lead to job referrals, insider tips on vacancies, or collaborative learning opportunities. Active participation in education-related communities enhances visibility and credibility.

Table 35. *Reduction of Themes to Clustered Themes from the 3rd School*

	Themes	Clustered Themes
1	Continuous Professional Development	Proactive Preparation & Continuous Growth
2	Resilience and Persistence	Resilience & Mindset
3	Honesty and Transparency	Integrity & Professional Engagement
4	Positive Attitude and Passion	
5	Technical Preparedness	
6	Networking and Community Engagement	

Below are the clustered themes that encompass the key insights from the participants' statements:

Proactive Preparation & Continuous Growth

(Includes: Continuous professional development, technical preparedness, and resume improvement.) Success in the recruitment process requires ongoing self-improvement, staying updated with digital systems, and presenting a well-prepared application. Employers seek candidates who demonstrate initiative, adaptability, and a commitment to lifelong learning—qualities essential for effective teaching.

Resilience & Mindset

(Includes: Persistence after rejection, maintaining a positive attitude, and handling feedback constructively.) The hiring process can be competitive and unpredictable; a resilient and enthusiastic mindset helps candidates navigate setbacks and stand out. Teaching is a demanding profession, and recruiters look for individuals who remain motivated, learn from challenges, and exhibit passion for the role.

Integrity & Professional Engagement

(Includes: Honesty in qualifications, networking, and aligning with institutional values.) Transparency, ethical conduct, and active participation in professional communities build trust and open opportunities. Schools value teachers who are not only qualified but also trustworthy, collaborative, and aligned with their mission.

These three themes, preparation, mindset, and integrity—provide a structured approach for newly hired teachers to navigate recruitment successfully while laying a foundation for long-term career growth.

Table 36. *Reduction of Clustered Themes to Emergent Themes from the 3rd School*

	Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
1	Proactive Preparation & Continuous Growth	"Holistic Readiness for Teaching Success"
2	Resilience & Mindset	
3	Integrity & Professional Engagement	

Holistic Readiness for Teaching Success

This theme captures the integration of professional preparedness, resilient mindset, and ethical professionalism needed to navigate the recruitment process and thrive as an educator. It emphasizes that becoming a successful teacher requires more than just meeting qualifications—it demands continuous self-improvement, adaptability to challenges, and genuine commitment to the values of the profession.

Essence

The essence of the phenomenological study, as drawn from the participants' experiences, centers on the profound and transformative journey of new teachers as they navigate the complexities of their professional identity and role. This journey is not simply about acquiring skills or adapting to institutional demands but involves a deeper process of unlearning idealized notions of teaching to

embrace a dialogical identity—one shaped by the interplay between personal aspirations and systemic realities. The emergent themes—"From Initiation to Mastery," "Navigating Uncertainty Through Proactive Resilience and Support," and "The Transformational Journey from Applicant to Educator"—culminate in the overarching theme of "Becoming and Belonging," which captures the liminal nature of the experience. Teachers exist in a state of "in-between," continuously mastering established roles while confronting new challenges, a process sustained through shared struggle and communal support.

At its core, the phenomenological experience reflects dynamic self-actualization within a supportive ecosystem, where resilience, agency, and professional growth emerge from the interplay between internal mastery and external collaboration. This transformational adaptation moves teachers from mere survival to thriving, aligning with humanistic and existential theories that emphasize meaning-making, autonomy, and interconnectedness as key to fulfillment. The phenomenon is also relational, highlighting how institutional goals and individual identities intersect through equity, adaptability, and shared purpose, transforming education from within.

Ultimately, the essence is one of "strategic resilience"—a lived reality where new teachers actively shape their success within rigid structures. Rather than passive adaptation, this process is a professional metamorphosis, where navigating bureaucratic constraints becomes a foundational lesson in their growth. The phenomenological core lies in the tension between institutional limitations and the teacher's evolving capacity to thrive, illustrating that the journey is not just about doing but about becoming—a continuous, meaning-laden odyssey of identity, belonging, and transformation.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) The newly hired teachers have experienced stress, anxiety and mixed emotions during the recruitment process in the Department of Education. (2) Some of the newly hired teachers were given support and offered with opportunities during application or during the recruitment process. (3) The newly hired teachers found the recruitment process challenging in terms of the guidelines being used. (4) Effective time management reduces stress, which supports mental well-being, while a positive mindset encourages seeking mentorship, further improving efficiency. Together, they form a holistic framework for new teachers to thrive. Institutions can support this by providing structured onboarding programs, mental health resources, and mentorship opportunities, ensuring that new hires transition smoothly into their roles.

Based on the conclusions that were drawn from the results of the study, the following are hereby recommended: (1)The lived experiences of the newly hired teachers may be used as significant instruments to further improve or strengthen the recruitment process in the Department of Education. (2) The challenges that the newly hired teachers encountered may be used as eye opener to brainstorm and discover new ideas and provide opportunities for themselves to become better in various aspects of teaching. (3) Future researchers may conduct similar study on the lived experiences of the newly hired teachers in the recruitment process considering other variables.

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