



Challenging the Limitations: Lived Experiences of College Instructors in Calbayog City, Philippines

T.L.V. Panela^{1*}, J.P.M. Deniega²

^{1,2}College of Education, Northwest Samar State University, Calbayog City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author: teodylester.panela@nwssu.edu.ph, Tel.: +63-93556-23990

Available online at: www.isroset.org

Received: 04/Aug/2021, Accepted: 20/Sept/2021, Online: 30/Sept/2021

Abstract— Teacher empowerment is a broad topic expanding to different areas contributing to the totality of what makes teachers work and the quality of their work. This research study employed a Phenomenological Research Design, With the aid of a semi-structured interview and utilizing the Colaizzi process, to explore and understand the challenges encountered by thirteen (13) college instructors in delivering quality teaching to students. This study is guided by the Empowerment Theory of Perkins and Zimmerman, Self-Efficacy Theory of Bandura, and Motivation-Hygiene Theory of Herzberg. After data analysis, three themes emerged: (1) Professionalism and Politics; (2) Assignment and Amount of Work; and (3) Facilities and Funds. The results showed that teachers shared experiences of being bombarded with task despite limited resources. To add more to the concoction, is wide array of contrasting personalities in the. As a recommendation, the tertiary institutions should be able to determine the root cause of the challenges encountered and implement doable and lasting solutions. Likewise, further studies and a more in-depth investigation of the college instructors' life experiences is also recommended.

Keywords— Problems Encountered, Limitation, Teaching, Designation, Resources

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher empowerment is a broad topic expanding to different areas contributing to the totality of what makes teachers work and the quality of their work. It is defined as providing teachers with the right to take part in the crafting and determination of educational policies and school goals where the exercise of professional judgment is advocated especially on what and how to teach^[1].

Over the years, there has been an increasing attention and interest in studying teacher empowerment. Researches had pitted teacher empowerment to organizational citizenship and professional commitment^[2]; correlating it to the research participation of teachers^[3]; improvement of teacher leadership^{[4][5]}; teacher autonomy^[6]; effect of trust to empowerment^[7]; the importance of job satisfaction^[8]; interrelation with student characteristics and teacher behavior^{[9][10]}; and other psychological correlates and structural antecedents^[11].

Though a multitude of researches were and is currently being conducted, there are still lacking studies that dig into the inner most sanctum of experience of a phenomenon. The most recent study conducted focused on the identification of empowerment-facilitating and empowerment-impeding behaviors by various members of the academe and other stakeholders^[12]. Of which also, other studies that were released over the years, though qualitative in nature, focused on theory testing and model building.

Since the reality of the situation prevails, there is a need to look into the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of college teachers in terms of their perceived empowerment status. Explore, in the process, situations which proved to nurture or impede their autonomy in deciding the flow and outcome of their work, hence the conduct of this study.

II. OBJECTIVES

With its main objective of exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges of college teachers in the context of teacher empowerment, this study would like to answer the following questions;

1. What are experiences of the participants;
2. What is their perception about the factors affecting their empowerment; and
3. What are their aspirations.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This qualitative study, was anchored on Empowerment Theory of Perkins and Zimmerman, Self-Efficacy Theory of Bandura, and Motivation-Hygiene Theory of Herzberg, utilized phenomenological approach that aimed to investigate the experience of college instructors - how their professional time as well as personal engagements intertwine and coexist with each other. A qualitative research study aimed to examine a phenomenon that impact on the lived reality of individuals or groups in a particular cultural or social context^{[13][14][15]}. A qualitative

research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem ^[16]. The researcher builds a complicated and holistic picture, analyse words, report comprehensive takes of participants, and does it in situ. Phenomenology aimed to accurately describe the phenomenon without a pre-existing knowledge to a framework, but remaining truth to the facts ^{[17][18][19][20]}. More so, using a qualitative research, the researcher would be able to connect with their participants and to see the world from their viewpoints ^[21]. The researcher found this method most suitable to the inquiry in order to provide a comprehensive analysis on the college instructors' life experiences.

Participants and Sampling. Purposive sampling was used to identify the study's participants. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select people who are appropriate for the study ^[22]. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience ^[23]. Eleven (11) individuals took part in the study. Participants met the description of a career changer: 1) a college instructor; 2) currently employed; 3) a resident of Calbayog city; and 4) willing to take part in the study.

Data Collection. In gathering the appropriate data for the study, semi structured interview was used. Semi-structured interview is a type of interview that has become the most familiar strategy in collecting qualitative data ^{[24][25][26]}. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research approach that combines a prepared set of open questions with the opportunity for researchers to dig deeper into specific responses; it's used to figure out how interventions work and how they might be improved. It also enables for clarification by asking follow-up questions. Two experts in the field of psychology validated the content of the interview guide. The researcher also offered an agreement that covered gaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, making time and location commitments, granting authorization to record, and outlining research ethical principles. The researcher employed note taking and dialogic form as data storage strategies. To each deeper response of the respondents.

Data Analysis. The Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis is illustrated in the following steps ^[27]. (1) Each transcript should be read and reread several times to get a general idea of the material. (2) Significant statements on the topic under investigation should be taken from each transcript. These assertions must be written down on a separate sheet with page and line numbers. (3) From these crucial statements, meaning should be derived. (4) Sort the formulated meanings into categories, clusters of themes, and subthemes. (5) The study's findings should be incorporated into a comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation. (6) The phenomenon's essential structure should be described. (7) Finally, study participants should

be asked to validate the findings by comparing the researcher's descriptive results to their own experiences.

Research Reflexivity. In the study, the researcher's approach is different in terms of other researchers' perspectives. As persons who know the life of a college instructor and their aspiration, the researcher understands his stand that might lead to a different development and an equally valid understanding of the particular situation under study. The study has a preconception with a tone of positivity of eventually creating meaning during the entire process. The position and the background of the researcher will affect the choices made in the investigation, from an angle, with the methods that best judged the sole purpose of the study, framing, coming up with themes and the overall conclusion of it. With the intent of sharing the results to the participants of the study. Furthermore, preconception is not equated in any form of bias unless the researcher fails to mention them ^[28].

Ethical Consideration. The study focused on college instructors' life experiences, their self-regard and aspirations. Therefore, the ethical considerations centered around the situations depicted solely from participants' experiences, interactions and actions observed. The issues of theoretical, theological, situational, critical and covenantal situational approach to research ethics were irrelevant to the overall study ^{[29][30][31]}. If literal transcriptions and summary were used in the narratives.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Significant information on the current experience of college teachers were generated on the premise of teacher empowerment and the perceived factors affecting it. Current knowledge on higher education scenarios, potential of exploring other means of coping and aspiration for academic path were noted. The generated information can help in establishing not only springboard for subsequent research but also a platform for the college students feeling left out to be heard and show the cacophony of their experiences.

From the data analyses with implementation of the Colaizzi Process, three major themes emerged: (1) Professionalism and Politics; (2) Assignment and Amount of Work; and (3) Facilities and Funds.

4.1. Professionalism and Politics

Almost all of the participants had episodes where they feel that their professional integrity is undermined with the organization's politics aka the culture, way of doing things, and apt of the norm within the workplace. It was seen as impeding experience by the participants and is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

- ❖ "The so-called working ethics of other faculty members is a sorry excuse for double standards in the workplace which prove to be less motivating to say the least."

- ❖ “Work professionalism is gravely affected by a faulty office politics, often in favor to those who are the top or in-command.”
- ❖ “The administration is not supportive in terms of professional development and is quite narrow if suggestions are given to them.”

4.2. Assignment and Amount of Work

Sometimes, participants claimed that the amount of work they are getting is proving to be too much for them that oftentimes it disrupt their normal routine and overshadows their true responsibility as a teacher. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

- ❖ “There are many interventions like: accreditation preparation of documents/COPC compliance/etc. that I have no time to meet my students.”
- ❖ “In terms of instruction, the different activities like accreditation affects the schedule of classes. There are conflicts in the scheduling at works and classes.”
- ❖ “Lot of school activities that is interrupting the main task of the instructor.”
- ❖ “Workload for the designations hinder the good performance in the mandated functions on instruction, research, extension and production.”
- ❖ “There are multiple designations given, that it overlaps with one another, not to mention affecting my teaching responsibility.”

4.3. Facilities and Funds

All of the participants self-confessed that aside from politics and workload, the lack of appropriate facilities, a manifestation of low funds allocated, affects their perceived empowerment. If the participants feel limited in the sense that they cannot teach well or execute their responsibilities, not because they are not resourceful but the lesson requires then to have such amenities and enabling tools. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

- ❖ “Procurement of items necessary in carrying out activities and lack of references in some courses..”
- ❖ “The need of updated journals/references and manuals..”
- ❖ “Like brownout where in I have difficulty of conducting class becoming dependent on the use of powerpoint..”
- ❖ “Early finalization of subject assignments to have plenty of time in preparing instructional materials, lessons, among others. Provisions of ICT equipments for classroom integration..”
- ❖ “Facilities to accommodate the courses of students, specially on computer laboratory.”
- ❖ “The unavailability or insufficiency of learning materials books w/ latest edition both local and foreign to be particular and other equipment for instruction.”
- ❖ “Working environment ventilation, sometimes it is not conducive for working conditions. Likewise, the

availability of projectors for discussion and activities.”

Teacher empowerment is a broad topic expanding to different areas contributing to the totality of what makes teachers work and the quality of their work^[32]. As it was observed and stated by the participants, the culture of any work environment greatly influence their level of empowerment in such a way that they detach themselves as a form of escape to the harsh reality. The interest of providing innovative ideas and suggestions are impede if the administration or those in power struggles to accept opinions from other that can greatly scar the morale of the teacher^{[33][34]}.

Likewise, often due to limited workforce, college teachers tend to take on multiple responsibilities or designations. Doning a variety of mantles of functions can disrupt to the true nature of the work, the reason why teachers are hired in the first place, which is to teach and form better learners. With these responsibilities overshadowing the true essence of being a teacher, they feel that they are not motivated in the process, fading teacher autonomy in the process^{[35][36][37]}.

Finally, the lack of facilities and funds impede the sincerest and simplest function of a teacher, which is to make the learning experience as meaningful and worthwhile for any students^{[38][39][40]}. Limitations brought about by this predicaments inhibits even the most resourceful teacher. By providing actual materials and equipment, teachers are creating a genuine and organic experience to the students which cannot be replicated if used with imagination or just pictures / illustrations for that matter^{[41][42][43][44]}.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

College teachers shared experiences of being bombarded with task despite limited resources. To add more to the concoction, is wide array of contrasting personalities in the. As a recommendation, the tertiary institutions should be able to determine the root cause of the challenges encountered and implement doable and lasting solutions. Likewise, further studies and a more in-depth investigation of the college instructors; life experiences is also recommended.

REFERENCES

- [1] A. Balyer, K. Ozcan & A. Yildiz, “Teacher Empowerment: School Administrators Roles.” *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, **2017a**.
- [2] R. Bogler & A. Somech, “Influence of teacher empowerment on teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in schools.” *Teaching and Teacher Education*, **2004**.
- [3] R. K. Henson, “The effects of participation in teacher research on teacher efficacy.” *Teaching and Teacher Education*, **2001**.
- [4] D. Muijs & A. Harris, “Teacher Leadership—Improvement through Empowerment?” *Educational Management & Administration*, **2003**.

- [5] D. Muijs & A. Harris, "Teacher led school improvement: Teacher leadership in the UK." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, **2006**.
- [6] L. C. Pearson & W. Moomaw, "The Relationship between Teacher Autonomy and Stress, Work Satisfaction, Empowerment, and Professionalism." *Educational Research Quarterly*, **2005**.
- [7] H. B. Yin, J. C. K. Lee, Y. Jin, Le & Z. H. Zhang, "The effect of trust on teacher empowerment: The mediation of teacher efficacy." *Educational Studies*, **2013**.
- [8] M. Zembylas & E. G. Papanastasiou, "Modeling teacher empowerment: The role of job satisfaction." *Educational Research and Evaluation*, **2005**.
- [9] M. L. Houser & A. B. Frymier, "The role of student characteristics and teacher behaviors in students' learner empowerment." *Communication Education*, **2009**.
- [10] P. Schrodt, P. L. Witt, S. A. Myers, P. D. Turman, M. H. Barton & K. A. Jernberg, "Learner empowerment and teacher evaluations as functions of teacher power use in the college classroom." *Communication Education*, **2008**.
- [11] J. R. Dee, A. B. Henkin & L. Duemer, "Structural antecedents and psychological correlates of teacher empowerment." *Journal of Educational Administration*, **2003**.
- [12] S. Thomas, "Teacher empowerment: A focused ethnographic study in Brunei Darussalam." *Qualitative Report*, **2017**.
- [13] J. Mills, M. Birks, J. Mills & M. Birks, "Introducing Qualitative Research." In *Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide*, **2017**.
- [14] J. Mills & M. Birks, "Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide." In *Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide*, **2017**.
- [15] J. Ritchie & R. Ormston, "The applications of qualitative methods to social research." In *Qualitative Research Practice: a Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, **2014**.
- [16] J. W. Creswell, "Research design Qualitative quantitative and mixed methods approaches." *Research Design Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, **2003**.
- [17] D. R. Cerbone, "Understanding phenomenology." In *Understanding Phenomenology*, **2010**.
- [18] L. M. Connelly, "What is phenomenology?" In *Med Surg nursing: official journal of the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses*, **2010**.
- [19] A. K. Dalal & K. R. Priya, "Introduction to qualitative research." In *Qualitative Research on Illness, Wellbeing and Self-Growth: Contemporary Indian Perspectives*, **2016**.
- [20] B. E. Neubauer, C. T. Witkop & L. Varpio, "How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others." *Perspectives on Medical Education*, **2019**.
- [21] J. Corbin & A. Strauss, "Basics of Qualitative Research (3rd ed.): Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory." In *Basics of Qualitative Research (3rd ed.): Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, **2012**.
- [22] J. R. Fraenkel & N. E. Wallen, "The Basic of Educational Research." In *How to design and evaluate research in education with PowerWeb*, **2006**.
- [23] M. Dolores & C. Tongco, "Purposive Sampling as a Tool for Informant Selection." *Ethnobotany Research & Applications*, **2016**.
- [24] W. C. Adams, "Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews." In *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation: Fourth Edition*, **2015**.
- [25] H. Kallio, A. M. Pietilä, M. Johnson & M. Kangasniemi, "Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide." In *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **2016**.
- [26] C. Wilson, "Semi-Structured Interviews." In *Interview Techniques for UX Practitioners*, **2014**.
- [27] R. Morrow, A. Rodriguez & N. King, "Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method." *The Psychologist*, **2015**.
- [28] K. Malterud, "Systematic text condensation: A strategy for qualitative analysis." *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, **2012**.
- [29] S. R. M. Arifin, "Ethical considerations in qualitative study." *International Journal of Care Scholars*, **2018**.
- [30] L. D. Roberts, "Ethical Issues in Conducting Qualitative Research in Online Communities." *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, **2015Z**.
- [31] O. C. Robinson, "Sampling in Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide." *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, **2014**.
- [32] A. BALYER, K. OZCAN & A. YILDIZ, "Teacher Empowerment: School Administrators Roles." *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, **2017b**.
- [33] R. Bogler & A. E. Nir, "The importance of teachers' perceived organizational support to job satisfaction: What's empowerment got to do with it?" *Journal of Educational Administration*, **2012**.
- [34] Y. J. Lin, "Teacher Involvement in School Decision Making." *Journal of Studies in Education*, **2014**.
- [35] E. Liu, S. M. Johnson & H. G. Peske, "New teachers and the Massachusetts signing bonus: The limits of inducements." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, **2004**.
- [36] H. L. Lujan & S. E. DiCarlo, "Too much teaching, not enough learning: What is the solution?" In *American Journal of Physiology - Advances in Physiology Education*, **2006**.
- [37] T. Unterbrink, A. Hack, R. Pfeifer, V. Buhl-Griehaber, U. Müller, H. Wesche, M. Frommhold, K. Scheuch, R. Seibt, M. Wirsching & J. Bauer, "Burnout and effort-reward-imbalance in a sample of 949 German teachers." *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, **2007**.
- [38] I. P. Asiabaka, "The Need for Effective Facility Management in Schools in Nigeria." *New York Science Journal* *New York Science Journal*, **2008**.
- [39] W. J. Hall, M. Schneider, D. Thompson, S. L. Volpe, A. Steckler, J. M. Hall & M. R. Fisher, "School factors as barriers to and facilitators of a preventive intervention for pediatric type 2 diabetes." *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, **2014**.
- [40] M. R. Limon, "The Effect of the Adequacy of School Facilities on Students' Performance and Achievement in Technology and Livelihood Education." *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, **2016**.
- [41] M. Casserly, M. Lachlan-Hache & M. Naik, "Facility Needs and Costs in America's Great City Schools." *Council of the Great City Schools*. **20 Pp. Peer Reviewed: N/A Publication Date: 2011 Descriptors: Urban Schools, **2011**.**
- [42] M. Filardo, J. M. Vincent & K. Sullivan, "How crumbling school facilities perpetuate inequality." *Phi Delta Kappan*, **2019**.
- [43] B. N. Okafor & D. C. Onuoha, "Facility management in educational institutions: a study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka." *Journal of Resources Development and Management*, **2016**.
- [44] W. F. Stier, R. C. Schneider, S. Kampf, G. E. Wilding & S. Haines, "The Financial and Facility Status of Campus Recreation Programs at NIRSA Colleges and Universities." *Recreational Sports Journal*, **2005**.