

# The Hiring Experiences: Perspectives of Newly Hired District of Dumangas I Reapplicant Elementary Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the hiring experiences of newly hired reapplicant teachers in the District of Dumangas I. It provides valuable insights to refine policy and practice. Additionally, understanding the challenges faced by reapplicants not only enriches the existing body of knowledge but also helps school districts refine their hiring processes. Ultimately, this study aspires to contribute to the development of more effective hiring practices. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researcher conducted phenomenological interviews with eight select reapplicant teachers who had recently undergone the hiring process. Data were thematically analyzed using Colaizzi's method. Findings revealed that reapplicants face significant obstacles, including systemic barriers, intense competition, and emotionally taxing experiences. Common themes that emerged are "attrition of aspiration," "shadow of doubt," and "resilience rooted in faith," reflecting the emotional struggles and determination of applicants. Participants also reported discrepancies between their expectations and actual experiences, particularly regarding fairness, evaluation, and the lengthy application timeline. Nevertheless, the presence of support systems, such as family encouragement, peer motivation, administrative guidance, and spiritual strength, proved essential in helping them persevere. The study confirms a need for transparency, realistic interviews, and alignment between hiring policies and implementation. Also, strengthening emotional and institutional support structures is recommended to ensure a fairer, more humane, and encouraging hiring process for future applicants.

**Keywords:** Department of Education, hiring process, hiring experiences, elementary teachers, reapplicants

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

The hiring processes in public schools are essential for placing qualified educators in classrooms, which directly influences student learning outcomes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). However, these processes are often lengthy and complex, resulting in significant frustration and disengagement among candidates (Podolsky et al., 2016). Research indicates that high competition for teaching positions, coupled with strict certification requirements, can deter potential applicants from pursuing opportunities in education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Additionally, the growing emphasis on diversity and inclusion in hiring practices adds another layer of complexity as schools strive to build workforces that reflect their student populations (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Moreover, stringent qualification and credentialing requirements create significant barriers that prevent potentially talented individuals from entering the teaching profession (Podolsky et al., 2016). This issue is further complicated by ongoing equity and diversity challenges, where underrepresentation and implicit biases negatively influence the hiring process (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Such limitations restrict the inclusivity and cultural competence of the teaching workforce (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).<sup>2</sup>

Despite the critical importance of effective hiring practices, there has been little exploration of their effectiveness in elementary public schools. Specifically, there is a notable lack of research examining the alignment between research-based best practices and the actual hiring processes implemented by school districts. This gap in the literature is particularly concerning given the unique challenges faced by applicants in

urban and low-income districts, where hiring practices may differ significantly from those in more affluent areas (Dee & Goldhaber, 2017). For instance, Papay and Kraft (2016) found that hiring decisions in urban districts are often constrained by late hiring timelines, leading to the loss of high-quality candidates to suburban schools with more efficient processes. Moreover, Engel and Curran (2016) emphasized that many districts lack structured hiring procedures, which results in inconsistencies in candidate evaluation and selection. Additionally, Rockoff, Jacob, Taylor, Lindy, and Rosen (2018) highlighted the importance of teacher screening tools in predicting long-term effectiveness, yet many public schools fail to systematically incorporate these tools into their hiring protocols.

These studies collectively underscore the pressing need for further research to examine the effectiveness of current hiring practices and their adherence to research based recommendations. There is growing evidence that inconsistencies in the implementation of teacher hiring processes and policies persist across districts and schools (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Béteille, 2012). While formal hiring guidelines exist, their application often varies across local leadership and interpretations (Rutledge, Harris, & Ingle, 2010). In many cases, hiring decisions are influenced by informal networks or personal relationships, leading to deviations from established procedures (Cannata, 3 2011). This subjectivity undermines transparency and fairness, especially in districts with weak accountability mechanisms (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009). Consequently, inconsistencies in hiring practices can hinder equitable access to teaching positions and compromise the quality of educational outcomes (Donaldson, 2013). This study aims to explore the hiring experiences of newly hired reapplicant teachers in the District of Dumangas I. This research seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform both policy and practice. Additionally, understanding the challenges faced by reapplicants will not only enrich the existing body of knowledge but also help school districts refine their hiring processes. Ultimately, this study aspires to contribute to the development of more effective hiring practices, thereby enhancing the overall application experience for prospective teachers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study explores the hiring experiences of elementary public-school teachers in the District of Dumangas I, focusing on the challenges and perceptions they encounter during the recruitment process.

Specifically, it seeks to address the following key questions:

1. What challenges do newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers face during hiring?
2. How do newly hired reapplicant public school elementary teachers describe their feelings and emotions during the application process?
3. How do newly hired teachers' expectations based on the hiring policy compare to their actual experiences?
4. What resources or support systems do newly hired elementary teachers find most helpful during hiring?
5. What recommendations do newly hired elementary school teachers have for improving the hiring process in public schools?

### **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on the hiring experiences of reapplicant public school elementary teachers. It explored the inconsistencies in the implementation of teacher hiring policies as experienced by newly hired elementary public school teachers in the District of Dumangas I, under the Division of Iloilo. It specifically examined the perceptions and challenges these teachers faced throughout the recruitment and reapplication process. Although the Department of Education (DepEd) had established hiring policies to promote fairness and merit-based selection, their implementation led to varied and, at times, inequitable hiring experiences. The research employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the challenges of eight reapplicants who were public school teachers and had been employed for 2 years or less, having undergone multiple applications before securing a teaching position. The study was limited to the Dumangas District I, where these

irregularities in policy enforcement appeared to have affected the transparency and effectiveness of the hiring process.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study examines the hiring experiences of elementary public-school teachers in the District of Dumangas I, focusing on the challenges and perceptions they encounter during the hiring process.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the following:

**School Heads.** The findings of this study are crucial for school heads, as they provide valuable insights into the challenges newly hired elementary teachers face during the hiring process. By examining how teachers' expectations are influenced by existing hiring policies compared to their actual experiences, school leaders can identify gaps in implementation and communication. Additionally, understanding the emotional and psychological journey of reapplicant teachers sheds light on areas in the process that may be discouraging or disheartening. These insights enable school heads to identify effective, transparent, and equitable hiring practices that align with the institution's mission and values. By incorporating teachers' feedback and recommendations, schools can refine their hiring strategies to attract and retain highly qualified educators, ultimately building a more competent, satisfied, and motivated teaching workforce that benefits both students and the wider school community.

**School Division Human Resource (HR) Managers.** The findings of this study inform School Division Human Resource (HR) Managers about the practical challenges and inconsistencies newly hired elementary teachers encounter during the hiring process.

By comparing teacher applicants' expectations based on hiring policies with their actual experiences, HR personnel can assess how effectively the policies are communicated and implemented. The emotional and psychological perspectives of reapplicants further illuminate how hiring procedures affect candidate morale and motivation. Importantly, the recommendations offered by these teachers can guide HR managers in refining hiring protocols to promote fairness, transparency, and consistency across schools within the division. This will contribute to more effective hiring practices and help provide a more favorable hiring experience.

**Hiring Committee.** This study is significant for members of the Hiring Committee, as it provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of newly hired public elementary school teachers who have undergone the recruitment and reapplication process. By examining how applicants' expectations, shaped by established hiring policies, align with or conflict with their actual experiences, the committee can assess the consistency and fairness of their implementation practices. The emotional responses of teacher reapplicants also highlight the impact of the hiring process on candidate well being, which may inform the committee's approach to communication and transparency.

Furthermore, the study captures practical suggestions from newly hired teachers that can help the Hiring Committee improve procedures to ensure a more equitable, supportive, and efficient hiring system.

**Teacher Applicants.** This study can help teacher applicants, especially those newly hired in public elementary schools, as it validates the real-life challenges they encounter during the hiring process. By examining the contrast between their expectations, often shaped by official hiring policies, and the realities they encounter, applicants can gain a deeper understanding of the gaps between policy and practice. The study also highlights the emotional and psychological experiences of reapplicant teachers, offering a voice to those who have faced multiple rounds of applications before being hired. Applicants can share their suggestions for improving the hiring process to make it more transparent, supportive, and fair for future candidates. These insights can empower teacher applicants to approach the hiring journey with greater awareness, preparation, and confidence.

**Future Researchers.** This study will serve as a valuable reference for future researchers seeking to explore the intricacies of teacher recruitment and policy implementation in the public education system. By presenting the

lived experiences, challenges, and emotional responses of newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers, as well as the discrepancies between their expectations and actual experiences, this research provides a foundation for further inquiry into the effectiveness and fairness of hiring practices. The recommendations gathered from participants can also inspire future studies focused on improving policy implementation, promoting equity, and enhancing applicant experience in various educational contexts.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach, specifically a Transcendental Phenomenological design, to explore and understand the lived experiences of newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers in Dumangas District I. This design was selected because it enables a thorough examination of the meanings of individuals attribute to their experiences, rather than merely describing external events. As Husserl (1970) proposed, phenomenology seeks to return “to the things themselves,” emphasizing how individuals experience a phenomenon as it is lived. Guided by Moustakas (1994), the researcher sought to uncover the essence of these experiences by bracketing personal assumptions, thereby allowing the authentic voices of participants to emerge without distortion.

The phenomenological approach was further justified by its philosophical and methodological alignment with the purpose of the study—to describe, interpret, and understand the realities of teacher reapplicants as they navigated the challenges of the hiring process. Drawing from van Manen (1990), phenomenology involves not only understanding lived experience but also reflecting on the meanings embedded within it.

Thus, the researcher sought to illuminate how these teachers made sense of fairness, perseverance, and professional identity in the face of systemic and emotional trials. Anchored in Equity Theory, the study examined how participants perceived balance or imbalance in opportunities, recognition, and outcomes throughout the hiring process. Phenomenology complemented this theoretical perspective by providing a lens to capture the *human meaning* behind these perceptions—how individuals emotionally and cognitively respond to perceived fairness or inequity in organizational settings.

Through in-depth interviews, the design enabled participants to articulate their inner thoughts and emotions, revealing a nuanced understanding of the teacher-hiring experience that quantitative methods cannot capture. As Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize, phenomenological research is most appropriate when the goal is to identify an ordinary meaning shared by several individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon. In this study, phenomenology provided the framework for identifying shared themes among teacher reapplicants, uncovering the core essence of endurance, hope, and transformation embedded in their life stories. The findings not only highlighted individual differences but also illuminated collective insights that reflect the broader realities of the hiring process within a policydriven educational context.

Ultimately, the use of a Transcendental Phenomenological design strengthened the rigor and trustworthiness of this research. It honored the participants’ voices, added depth and authenticity to their lived realities, and generated findings that can inform more equitable and transparent teacher-hiring policies. By situating the inquiry within this methodological framework, the study contributed to both the understanding of 57 personal experience and the improvement of institutional practices in the education sector.

### Research Setting

The study was conducted in Dumangas DepEd District I, specifically the 17 public elementary schools within the district. This location was chosen because it provided a relevant context for examining teacher hiring practices, as it was governed by Department of Education (DepEd) policies and procedures. The research was conducted in select elementary schools, where newly hired teachers, school principals, and HR officers were directly involved in the hiring process. These schools offered diverse hiring experiences, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the challenges, opportunities, and effectiveness of current hiring practices.

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## Participants of the Study

The participants in this study were the eight newly hired elementary school teachers from DepEd Dumangas I. The participants were purposively selected from the 17 public schools based on the following inclusion criteria: Identified through official school records.

1. Recommended by the principal/school administrator or human resource director
2. Newly hired teachers who obtained permanent employment within the last two years
3. Employed under DepEd Dumangas I
4. Willing to participate and consented to share hiring experiences
5. Permitted to use hiring experiences as the source of research data
6. Experienced reapplication Before participation, participants were briefed on the study's purpose and provided informed consent to ensure voluntary participation and confidentiality.

## Sampling Technique

This study employed a purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method commonly used in qualitative research, to select newly hired public school elementary teachers within DepEd District I of Dumangas. This non-probability sampling method was appropriate for this research because it allows the researcher to intentionally select participants with firsthand experience relevant to the study. Since transcendental phenomenology sought to explore the essence of lived experiences, purposive sampling ensured that only those who had recently undergone the DepEd Dumangas I teacher hiring process were included (Moustakas, 1994).

Additionally, this method was suitable for qualitative research as it prioritizes depth over generalizability, enabling the researcher to gather rich, detailed insights into the participants' perceptions of hiring practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By selecting newly hired teachers within the last two years, the study ensured that responses reflect current policies and procedures, making the findings more relevant and meaningful.

## Instrumentation

The primary research instrument used in this study is a semi-structured interview script designed to gather in-depth qualitative data on the hiring experiences of newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers in Dumangas District I. This instrument was developed to align with the research objectives, which focus on exploring the challenges encountered, the perceived fairness and consistency of the hiring process, and the personal reflections of those who have undergone multiple applications.

The interview script included:

1. Hiring Journey and Experiences This section contained open-ended questions designed to explore participants' experiences before, during, and after the hiring process. Sample questions include:

"Can you describe your experience during your first application?"

"What motivated you to reapply after being initially unsuccessful?"

"How would you describe the transparency and fairness of the process?"

2. Feelings and emotions involved This part explored the specific obstacles that reapplicants encountered, their views on policy consistency, and recommendations for improving the hiring system.

Questions include:

"What challenges did you face throughout the hiring process?"

"Do you believe the hiring policy was consistently applied?"

"What advice would you give to future teacher applicants?"

3. Expectations versus actual experience This part of the study captured the contrast between what reapplicant teachers anticipated before entering the hiring process and what they actually experienced throughout the process. Questions include:

"Before the hiring process began, what expectations did you have? What were you anticipating?"

"How did your actual experience differ from your expectations? Were there any surprises?"

#### 4. Support system

This part of the study focuses on the various support systems that reapplicant teachers relied on during the hiring process.

Questions include:

"What help did you receive throughout the hiring process? What did you find most helpful during this time?"

"Can you describe a moment when you felt like giving up or quitting but chose to keep going until you were hired? What motivated you to persist?"

#### 5. Recommendation

This part of the study presented the suggestions of newly hired reapplicant teachers based on their firsthand experiences with the hiring process.

Questions include:

"Finally, what advice can you offer to the next applicants and the hiring committee based on your experience?"

### Validity Measures

To ensure the validity of the instrument:

**Content Validity** was established through consultation with experts in educational research, including a research methodologist and experienced DepEd administrators. 61 They reviewed the interview questions for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives.

**Face Validity** was determined through a pilot interview conducted with one newly hired teacher (not part of the actual sample). Feedback from this session helped refine the wording and sequence of the questions to enhance the flow and clarity of understanding.

### Data Gathering Procedure

After the panel and college ethics board approval, a letter of permission was sent to the Public Schools District Supervisor. Once the permit to conduct the study was granted by the Public Schools District Supervisor, a letter of request was forwarded to the principals of the concerned schools to solicit recommendations for participants. Then, the participants were informed and asked to provide consent to participate.

The data collection process was conducted through phenomenological interviews, as scheduled by both parties. These interviews were conducted either in person or via virtual meeting platforms, depending on the participants' availability and convenience. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, allowing for an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of hiring practices and the challenges posed by existing policies.

The recorded interviews were transcribed using speech-to-text applications. The transcribed interview responses were read three times to become familiar with the answers before highlighting the significant lines that could answer the research questions. All the significant lines were extracted for analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

This study employed thematic analysis (Qualitative Data). Colaizzi's Method will guide the interpretation of participants' lived experiences, ensuring the systematic extraction and validation of themes. Colaizzi's seven-step method for thematic analysis was commonly used in phenomenological research to systematically analyze qualitative data (Colaizzi, 1978).

The steps were as follows:

1. Familiarization – Carefully read and review all collected data (e.g., interview transcripts) to gain an overall understanding of participants' experiences.
2. Extracting Significant Statements – Identify and highlight key statements or phrases from the data that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied.
3. Formulating Meanings – Interpret the significant statements and extract underlying meanings that reflect the participants' experiences.
4. Clustering Themes – Group related meanings into common themes or categories to identify patterns across participants' experiences.
5. Developing an Exhaustive Description – Create a comprehensive and detailed description of the phenomenon based on the themes derived from the data.
6. Producing the Fundamental Structure – Reduce the exhaustive description into a concise statement that captures the essential aspects of the experience.
7. Member Checking (Validation by Participants) – Return the findings to the participants to confirm whether they accurately reflect their experiences, ensuring credibility and reliability.

### **Reflexivity Statement**

In conducting this study, I was mindful that my background and perspectives could influence how the research was carried out and interpreted. Since the study focused on the hiring experiences of newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers in Dumangas District I, I recognized that I might hold assumptions about the Department of Education's hiring practices and policies. To address this, I practiced bracketing by consciously setting aside personal beliefs and expectations throughout the process.

During the interviews, I made a point of listening attentively and encouraging participants to share their thoughts openly, without steering their responses toward my own views. I continually reflected on my role as a researcher, ensuring that the participants' voices guided the findings rather than my own interpretations. In analyzing, I revisited transcripts multiple times to ensure that the themes that emerged were truly grounded in the participants' accounts.

By maintaining reflexivity, I sought to uphold the study's authenticity and credibility. This process allowed me to acknowledge my position, minimize bias, and remain faithful to the participants' lived experiences.

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## Trustworthiness

To ensure the quality and rigor of this qualitative research, the study adhered to the four trustworthiness criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability. *Credibility* was established through prolonged engagement with participants. *Confirmability* was achieved by maintaining an audit trail of research decisions, practicing reflexivity to minimize researcher bias, and using direct participant quotations to support emerging themes. *Transferability* was ensured through thick, contextual descriptions of participants' backgrounds, school settings, and lived experiences, enabling readers to determine the relevance of the findings to similar contexts. *Dependability* was addressed by following a clearly documented and logical research process, consistently applying the validated interview guide, and consulting with the research methodologist for peer debriefing and verification of procedures. These strategies collectively enhanced the study's trustworthiness and ensured that the findings accurately reflect the experiences of newly hired reapplicant elementary teachers in Dumangas District I.

## Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical principles to ensure the rights and welfare of participants. Interview transcripts were analyzed thematically, drawing on Colaizzi's (1978) approach, to identify patterns and themes. They outlined a systematic approach to thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the interview transcripts. This approach enabled the identification of recurring themes and patterns related to hiring challenges, opportunities, and policy impacts. The rights of all participants were respected throughout the research process.

## Informed Consent

All participants received detailed information about the study, including its purpose, objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and associated risks. They were required to provide written consent before participation, ensuring voluntary involvement and a complete understanding of their role in the study.

## Confidentiality

The identities and responses of participants were kept strictly confidential. Personal information was anonymized to protect privacy, and data were securely stored, accessible only to the researcher and authorized personnel. This ensured that participants' information was handled with the utmost discretion.

## Ethics Approval

Before data collection commenced, the study underwent a rigorous review by the university's ethics review board. This approval confirmed that the research complied with ethical guidelines and protected the rights and well-being of all participants involved.

## Biblical Perspective

The way Jesus chose His twelve disciples offers a powerful and insightful model for selection, one rooted not in formal qualifications but in calling, purpose, and personal connection. Unlike modern hiring practices that often rely on résumés, rankings, and rigid procedures, Jesus intentionally selected ordinary individuals—fishermen, a tax collector, and even a political zealot (Matthew 4:18 to 22; Mark 2:14). His choices reflected a focus on potential rather than perfection, valuing willingness, humility, and a heart ready for transformation. Before appointing them, Jesus spent time in prayer and reflection (Luke 6:12,13), demonstrating that discernment and spiritual guidance were central to His process.

Jesus' approach was deeply relational. He lived among the people, observed their character, and called them personally. He saw beyond their present limitations and into their future roles—Peter, for instance, though impulsive and flawed, would eventually become a foundational leader of the early church. This selection method emphasized trust in growth and transformation, rather than immediate capability. While many followed Jesus, only twelve were chosen for close discipleship, reflecting an intentional selection rather than favoritism.

In today’s context, particularly in education and leadership, this model challenges conventional hiring systems to look beyond credentials and consider deeper qualities such as character, purpose, and alignment with the organization’s mission. Like Jesus’ approach, effective hiring can be both discerning and compassionate, focused not only on what an applicant offers now, but also on who they have the potential to become.

## RESULTS

### Statement of the Problem #1

#### What challenges do newly hired reapplicants, elementary school teachers face during the hiring process?

This section presents data from interviews with reapplicant elementary school teachers regarding the challenges they face during the hiring process. The findings reveal significant obstacles these educators face, even when following the Department of Education (DepEd) hiring process guidelines.

The table below presents the emergent themes, categories, and formulated meanings identified in relation to the challenges faced by teacher reapplicants. Each theme confirms the core issues and experiences participants expressed during the interviews, providing valuable insights into the complexities of the hiring process. Based on the table below, the themes that emerged are systematic and procedural barriers, a high-stakes evaluation process, limited employment opportunities, and the emotional, financial, and physical toll.

**Table 1**

Emergent Themes, Category, and Formulated Meaning for SOP 1

Emergent themes	Category	Formulated meaning
<b>Systemic and Procedural Barriers</b>	Policy Changes and Procedural Issues	Changes and delays in policy guidelines create challenges during the hiring process.
	Documentation Difficulties	Unclear instructions force applicants to redo paperwork and face delays.
	Documentation Difficulties	There is an urgency and stress associated with correcting and resubmitting required documents.
	Miscommunication and Lack of Clarity	Even careful applicants encounter unclear and misleading guidance, which can cause confusion.
	Policy Changes and Procedural Issues	Last-minute policy changes make the application process more challenging.
<b>High-Stakes Evaluation Process</b>	High Standards of Requirements	Applicants often struggle to meet the high expectations set by the Department of Education.
	Competitive Evaluations	Applicants undergo intense evaluations and pressure to meet DepEd’s demanding qualifications.
	Competitive Evaluations	Competitive pressure and high standards are a constant part of the hiring process.
<b>Limited Employment Opportunities</b>	High Standards of Requirements	Applicants often feel pressured to exceed the basic qualifications set by DepEd standards.
	Limited Vacancy Access	Residency-based localization policies limit opportunities for some applicants
<b>Emotional, Financial, and Physical Toll</b>	Limited Vacancy Access	Limited opportunity for permanent positions makes it harder for applicants to secure a job.
	Emotional and Financial Pressure	Applicants must be financially and emotionally prepared to navigate the demanding process
	Physical and Mental Fatigue	The evaluation process for qualified applicants produces significant mental and physical strain.
	Emotional and Financial Pressure	Financial matters are one of the challenges during the application process.

Table 1 reveals that the challenges faced by newly hired reapplicants, elementary school teachers in the District of Dumangas, during the hiring process are multifaceted. These challenges converge around several key themes, painting a comprehensive picture of their journey. Firstly, the theme of Systemic and Procedural Barriers emerges prominently. Participants reported encountering unpredictable policy shifts, as evidenced by statements such as "There were delays and new policy guidelines were given" and "Policy and guidelines in the last-minute changes" (Tazie, phenomenological interview, line 22). Furthermore, issues such as *"unclear instructions, which I had to resubmit my pertinent papers once again"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, lines. 219-220) and the feeling that *"Despite your careful attention to instructions, there is still miscomprehend guide to the applicants"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, lines 311-312) emphasize the frustrations arising from miscommunication and a lack of clarity within the hiring procedures. The administrative pressure associated with the urgency to *"have resubmitted the credential needed as soon as possible"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, lines 309-310) further contributes to this domain of systemic impediments. Secondly, the High-Stakes Evaluation Process presented a significant challenge.

The rigorous nature of the assessment was highlighted by the *"trials from the demonstrations, interviews, complying with the high standards of DepEd teachers"* (Jen, phenomenological interview, lines 142-143) and the description of the process as *"grueling during the demo and interviews"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, lines 227- 228). Applicants felt compelled to *"exceed the high qualification standard of the Department of Education"* (Tazie, phenomenological interview, lines 32-34), recognizing that *"the high standards and competition among applicants are inevitable"* (Tazie, phenomenological interview, lines 32-34). The overarching sense was of a demanding evaluation where meeting, and often surpassing, stringent qualifications was paramount. 75 Emotional, Financial, and Physical Toll also surfaced as a challenge. The evaluations, described as grueling, and the financial and psychological pressures to meet high standards and navigate a complex system, together contributed to a state in which applicants felt they had to *"emotionally... prepare ourselves"* to endure the demanding journey. The simple yet impactful statement, *"All the requirements cost money"* (Ruffs, phenomenological interview, line 561), encapsulates this theme. Coupled with the need to *"prepare for money since we are required to prepare our certificate of rating from the PRC"* (Mars, phenomenological interview, lines 803-804), it becomes evident that the financial outlay associated with the application process posed a tangible obstacle for the reapplicants. Moreover, the Limited Employment Opportunities within the district added to the complexity of the hiring experience. The observation that *"items for permanent positions were very limited"* (Vic, phenomenological interview, line 493) created a competitive environment, while the localization policy, as expressed by *"I could not get an item due to localization since my residency doesn't have a school"* (Mars, phenomenological interview, lines 825-827), restricted opportunities based on geographical factors beyond the applicants' qualifications.

The challenges faced by newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers in the District of Dumangas I, as revealed in this study, are corroborated by the existing body of Philippine educational research on teacher hiring. The emergent theme of Systemic and Procedural Barriers highlights the complexities inherent in the public school hiring process. Alonzo's (2022) observation of bureaucratic hurdles highlights the structural impediments applicants often encounter, including complex documentation processes and multiple approval stages. The inconsistencies in disseminating hiring guidelines, as noted by Bautista et al. (2023), further contribute to this challenge by creating confusion and potential delays for applicants navigating the system. Manalo's (2024) research on the transparency of recruitment processes suggests that ambiguities in information, such as the ranking system and required preparations, can disadvantage applicants. Effective communication strategies, as advocated by Ocampo et al. (2021), are essential for promoting equity and ensuring that all qualified individuals have a fair chance to navigate the hiring process successfully. These systemic issues can lead to frustration and disengagement as individuals grapple with the intricacies of the application process.

The high-stakes evaluation process aligns with the Department of Education's emphasis on ensuring the quality and competence of new teachers entering the profession in the Philippines. Castro's (2024) analysis of performance assessments indicates the critical role these evaluations play in the selection process, often involving demonstrations and panel interviews designed to gauge pedagogical skills and content knowledge. The competitive nature of teacher hiring in the Philippines, as highlighted by De Leon (2021), intensifies pressure on applicants to perform exceptionally well during these evaluations to secure the limited positions

available. This rigorous scrutiny, while aimed at maintaining standards, can be a significant source of stress for those seeking employment.

The financial toll on applicants, while perhaps not the primary focus of much Philippine-centric research on teacher hiring, is a tangible reality for many. The professional licensing and documentation prerequisites discussed by Ferrer and Santos (2025) entail costs that applicants must bear, potentially creating a financial barrier to entry, particularly for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. These preemployment expenses, though necessary for compliance, can add a layer of difficulty to an already demanding process, potentially influencing who can afford to pursue teaching opportunities. Moreover, the challenges posed by limited employment opportunities, stemming from the scarcity of permanent jobs and the implementation of localization policies, are critical factors shaping the hiring landscape in the Philippines.

Gonzales's (2023) work on localization highlights the trade-offs between prioritizing local residents and ensuring the best possible match of qualifications to school needs across different regions. The prevalence of contractualization, as discussed by Lim and Reyes (2022), further complicates new teachers' employment prospects, often leading to a more precarious initial career path before securing a permanent position.

### Statement of the Problem #2

#### How do newly hired reapplicant public elementary teachers describe their feelings and emotions during the application process?

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the feelings and emotions experienced by reapplicant public elementary teachers in Dumangas District I throughout the application process. Drawing on insights from interviews, the table below highlights the emerging themes, categories, and formulated meanings that encapsulate their experiences.

**Table 2**

Emergent Themes, Category, and Formulated Meaning for SOP 2

Emergent Theme	Category	Formulated Meaning
<b>Attrition of Aspiration</b>	Emotional Fatigue	Prolonged waiting caused emotional fatigue.
	Emotional Fatigue	Waiting for final results led to frustration.
	Mental and Emotional Strain	Repeated applications caused emotional and mental exhaustion.
	Mental and Emotional Strain	Over time, the emotional burden grew, leading to feelings of despair.
	Physical and Emotional Exhaustion	The process was physically and emotionally exhausting, especially after many years in the process.
<b>Shadow of Doubt</b>	Financial Strain	Financial struggles exacerbated the stress and fatigue of the application process.
	Anxiety and Fear	Fear of rejection was constant throughout the process.
	Self-Doubt	Feeling inferior because of a more experienced co-applicant.
	Self-Doubt	Feeling inferior to stronger competitors led to a decline in confidence.
<b>Resilience Rooted in Faith</b>	Performance Anxiety	The demonstration and interview caused anxiety.
	Inner Strength and Coping	Despite setbacks, inner strength and persistence helped them keep going.
	Spiritual Coping	Spiritual faith provided strength and endurance during times of uncertainty.

The table reveals three prominent themes: attrition of aspiration, shadow of doubt, and resilience rooted in faith. Attrition of aspiration suggests that the application process, with its prolonged waiting and rejection,

gradually wears down an applicant's initial enthusiasm and hope. It reflects the diminishing hopes and dreams that some teachers face as they navigate the challenges of reapplying, often feeling disheartened by past experiences.

The interviewee responses reveal a profound emotional journey experienced by reapplicant public elementary teachers during the application process. One interviewee 79 expressed a sense of despair, stating, *"I felt like giving up when I awaited too long"* (Tazie, phenomenological interview, lines 42-43). This sentiment is echoed by another interviewee who remarked, *"I'm tired doing the same process all over again"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, lines 248), indicating a sense of fatigue and frustration with the repetitive nature of the application process. The manifestations of stress are also evident, as one interviewee shared, *"I cried a lot—my back even ached from the stress and excitement"* (Ruffs, phenomenological interview, lines 572-573). This response illustrates how the emotional strain can lead to physical discomfort, underscoring the intensity of their experiences. As time passes without an appointment, feelings of frustration, sadness, and hopelessness begin to accumulate, as expressed by another interviewee: *"As the years passed without an appointment, I started to feel frustrated, sad, and sometimes even hopeless"* (Vic, phenomenological interview, lines 467-468).

This response encapsulates the emotional weight of waiting and its impact on their mental well-being. The shadow of doubt underscores the pervasive presence of fear and self-doubt, which can undermine an applicant's confidence and overall well-being. It captures the uncertainty and self-doubt that can arise during the application process, as teachers grapple with their qualifications and the competitive nature of the selection process. One interviewee candidly expressed, *"As an applicant, to tell you honestly, you will feel exhausted. Most especially, if you are on that process for several years"* (Mars, phenomenological interview, lines 881-882). This statement underscores the emotional fatigue that accumulates over time, contributing to a sense of doubt about one's capabilities and prospects. The feeling of intimidation is also a common thread among the interviewees. One individual shared, *"I was intimidated. Because, as I've said earlier, 80 I know that there are more credible, there are more, let's see, they have higher scores than you"* (Bebs, phenomenological interview, lines 761-762). This response illustrates how comparisons with fellow applicants can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy, leading to a diminished sense of self-worth. Another interviewee echoed this sentiment, stating, *"I felt intimidated by my fellow applicants and wanted to stop"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, lines 233-234). This admission reveals the impact of perceived competition on their motivation, as the fear of not measuring up can lead to a desire to withdraw from the process altogether. Additionally, the anxiety surrounding the application's outcome is palpable, as one interviewee noted, *"I was nervous about whether I would get the appointment or not"* (Ruff, phenomenological interview, line 597). This anxiety reflects the uncertainty that looms over applicants, further feeding into the shadow of doubt that can cloud their confidence.

Resilience rooted in faith emphasizes the strength and determination of teachers who draw upon their faith and personal beliefs to persevere, demonstrating remarkable resilience in the face of adversity as they navigate the challenges of the application process. This resilience serves as a powerful coping mechanism, enabling them to endure the emotional and psychological hardships they encounter. Despite the numerous challenges faced during the application process, the interviewees demonstrate notable resilience. One interviewee poignantly stated, *"Even though the waiting took a long time... I trusted God's perfect timing"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, line 386). This response demonstrates how faith can offer a sense of hope and reassurance, enabling individuals to maintain a positive outlook even amid prolonged uncertainty. Belief in a higher purpose or divine timing can help mitigate feelings of frustration and despair, fostering patience and acceptance. One individual reflected, *"There were 81 moments when I was down, but I always tried to quit, ma'am. I always tried to quit. I was down for a moment, but I kept on going"* (Beb, phenomenological interview, lines 721). This statement encapsulates the internal struggle between feelings of defeat and the unwavering determination to persevere. It highlights the reality that while moments of doubt and discouragement are inevitable, the drive to continue pushing forward remains strong. This inner conflict is a testament to the resilience that many teachers cultivate through their faith. It suggests that their beliefs not only provide comfort but also serve as a source of strength that propels them to overcome obstacles. Resilience is not merely about enduring hardships but also about actively choosing to rise above them. The experiences articulated by newly hired reapplicant public elementary teachers in this study resonate with findings from existing literature on teacher recruitment,

emotional resilience, and professional identity development. The emotional fatigue and frustration brought about by prolonged waiting and repeated rejections reflect what Day and Gu (2010) describe as the "emotional cost" of becoming and remaining a teacher. Like their findings, this study illustrates how the repeated cycle of application, rejection, and uncertainty leads to a gradual erosion of hope, captured here as the "Attrition of Aspiration." The persistent fear of rejection and lowered self-confidence resulting from comparisons with more experienced applicants align with Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which posits that belief in one's capability to succeed is weakened by repeated failure and negative social comparisons. The theme "Shadow of Doubt" in this study affirms this, as participants expressed anxiety and feelings of inferiority during the competitive evaluation phases. These emotional responses also support Kyriacou's 82 (2001) findings on teacher anxiety, particularly in high-stakes situations such as interviews and demonstrations.

Moreover, the financial difficulties encountered by many applicants reflect Ingersoll and Smith's (2003) research, which emphasizes the role of economic stress in early-career teacher attrition. In this study, financial instability not only contributed to emotional strain but also influenced participants' decisions to continue or pause their pursuit of a public-school teaching position. Notably, this study highlights the critical role of spirituality and inner strength in sustaining perseverance, aligning with Pargament's (1997) work on religious coping and Tisdell's (2003) insights into spiritual development in educators. The theme "Resilience Rooted in Faith" highlights how personal belief systems offered emotional support and a sense of purpose during prolonged adversity.

The emotional journey of reapplicant public elementary teachers reflects and reinforces prior research, while also offering deeper insight into the compounded challenges faced by those undergoing extended application processes. The intersection of attrition of aspiration, shadow of doubt, and resilience rooted in faith presents a nuanced understanding of the emotions and feelings experienced by aspiring teachers in the public education system.

**Statement of the Problem #3 How do newly hired reapplicant teachers' expectations based on the hiring policy compare to their actual experiences?**

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of newly hired reapplicants' expectations regarding the hiring policy compared with their actual experiences during 83 the hiring process. Understanding these expectations is crucial, as they reflect their perceptions and beliefs about the fairness and effectiveness of the hiring system. The table below summarizes emerging themes, categories, and formulated meanings derived from phenomenological interview responses. These responses capture the perspectives of reapplicants, shedding light on their hopes, concerns, and the realities they faced.

**Table 3**  
Emergent Themes, Category, and Formulated Meaning for SOP 3

Emergent Theme	Category	Formulated Meaning
	Policy Changes	Participants encountered unexpected procedural changes in the hiring policy.
The Discrepancy Between Policy Intent and Implementation	Policy Changes	The applicant was familiar with the old guidelines and accustomed to detailed lesson plans, but the new policy required the integration of KRAs into the lesson plans.
	Policy Changes	Applicants expected consistent policies, but they kept changing.
Fairness and Distrust in the Evaluation Process	Evaluation Concerns	Applicants question the accuracy and fairness of the scoring and ranking system.
	Unexpected Opportunity	The applicant anticipated a low chance of securing permanency due to a low score, but the localization policy provided an opportunity.
From a Limited Chance to Unexpected Opportunity	Unexpected Opportunity	The applicant anticipated a lack of opportunity to secure permanency, yet the localization policy provided an alternative.
	Limited Opportunities	Qualified applicants hoped for permanent jobs, but there were only a limited number of slots available.
Limited Opportunities Despite Being Qualified	Limited Opportunities	Despite her experience, the applicant expected easy permanency but faced limited available slots.
	Delayed Process	The applicant expected a quick process but waited for many years.
From Quick but Prolonged Process	Delayed Process	The applicant expected a short process but waited 7 years to secure permanency.

The table shows several prominent emerging themes, including: The Discrepancy Between Policy Intent and Implementation, Fairness and Distrust in the Evaluation Process, from a Limited Chance to Unexpected Opportunity, Limited Opportunities Despite Being Qualified, and From Quick but Prolonged Process. These themes not only highlight the commonalities in the experiences of reapplicants and the realities they encountered but also reveal the underlying issues within the hiring process. These themes offer valuable insights into the gaps between intended policies and candidates' actual experiences.

The theme, The Discrepancy Between Policy Intent and Implementation, reveals that newly hired reapplicant elementary teachers initially perceive the hiring policy as being strictly enforced. However, their actual experiences highlight significant discrepancies. Participants frequently expressed surprise at the changes in policy and its implementation, noting unexpected alterations in guidelines and procedures. For instance, several reapplicants mentioned the recent district combination, a shift that had not occurred before. One participant remarked, *"I was surprised by the new guidelines like combining the two districts, which had never happened before"* (Tazie, phenomenological interview, lines 54-55).

Moreover, the unpredictability and instability of the hiring policy were evident in the participants' feedback. Many expressed concern that the Department of Education (DepEd) hiring policy is subject to frequent changes, creating considerable uncertainty. As one teacher noted, *"DepEd hiring policy keeps changing. The requirements and procedures shift, and that made the process unpredictable"* (Ruff, phenomenological interview, line 636-637). This inconsistency makes it challenging for applicants to rely on past information or general assumptions about the hiring process. 85 Additionally, the introduction of new localization requirements further contributed to the confusion. A participant shared, *"I was surprised by the new policy guidelines about localization"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, line 325), highlighting the unexpected nature of these changes. Another teacher emphasized the increased demands placed on applicants, stating, *"They required us to do very detailed lesson plans, including Key Result Areas (KRAs)"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, line 325- 326).

These responses illustrate the disconnect between the intended clarity of the hiring policy and the reality candidates face, underscoring the need for greater transparency and stability in the implementation of hiring practices. Fairness and Distrust in the Evaluation Process highlights significant discrepancies in the perceived fairness and accuracy of the hiring evaluation. Many participants began the process with the expectation of a transparent and accurate ranking system. However, their experiences often challenged these expectations, leading to distrust in the evaluation's integrity. One notable concern raised by participants was the occurrence of incorrect notifications to applicants. For instance, one teacher shared, *"I found out they informed the wrong applicant, who was thought to be ranked number one in the RQA. It made me question how carefully the committee reviews the rankings"* (Jen, phenomenological interview, line 227-229).

This incident not only undermined the trust in the evaluation process but also raised serious questions about the rigor and thoroughness of the committee's review 86 procedures. Such discrepancies can lead candidates to feel that the evaluation process lacks the necessary scrutiny and fairness they anticipated. The themes of fairness and distrust reveal a complex scene in which expectations for a transparent evaluation process are met with both positive and negative experiences. Addressing discrepancies in perceived fairness is essential to enhancing the hiring process's credibility and ensuring that all candidates feel valued and respected. From a Limited Chance to Unexpected Opportunity encapsulates the experiences of aspiring teachers who initially perceived their chances of being hired as minimal. However, the introduction of the new localization policy significantly altered these expectations, leading to unforeseen opportunities for some candidates, even those with lower scores.

Many participants entered the hiring process with a sense of resignation, believing that their qualifications—such as education, training, and experience—would not meet the stringent requirements set forth by the hiring policy. One candidate candidly shared, *"Honestly, I didn't expect to be hired. I knew my scores in education, training, and experience weren't that high, and with the strict policy guidelines, I thought I didn't stand a chance"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, line 319-322).

This sentiment reflects a common apprehension among applicants who feel that their qualifications would preclude them from consideration. The localization policy emerged as a transformative factor in the hiring landscape. It provided opportunities for candidates who might have been overlooked due to their scores. Another participant echoed this sentiment, stating, *"I thought I didn't stand a chance. But because of the localization policy, I was given the opportunity—and 87 that really made a difference for me"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, line 320-322).

This response highlights how the policy not only expanded the pool of potential hires but also reshaped the candidates' perceptions of their own viability in the hiring process. The impact of the localization policy has been a significant shift in hiring dynamics, allowing individuals who may have felt marginalized or disadvantaged to find a place within the educational system. This theme highlights the importance of adaptive policies that can address the community's needs and provide pathways to success for a broader range of candidates. The theme of transitioning from a limited opportunity to an unexpected one reveals how policy changes can significantly impact the hiring process. By providing avenues for individuals with varying qualifications, the localization policy has not only altered the expectations of aspiring teachers but has also fostered a more inclusive environment that recognizes diverse talents and potential.

Limited Opportunities Despite Being Qualified sheds light on the conflict between the initial expectations of aspiring teachers and the realities of the hiring process. Several applicants believe that their training, education, and experience will be sufficient to secure a permanent teaching position. However, this expectation often clashes with the reality that possessing qualifications does not guarantee employment. One applicant claimed, *"I thought I could easily secure the permanent position because of my experience. However, items for permanent positions were very limited"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, line 441-442). This response encapsulates the frustration felt by many candidates who, despite their qualifications, find themselves competing for a scarce number of positions. The limited availability of teaching positions 88 creates a highly competitive environment where even well-qualified individuals may struggle to secure employment. This theme highlights a critical issue in the hiring process: the disconnect between the qualifications candidates possess and the actual job-market requirements. While candidates may have invested significant time and effort into their education and professional development, the reality is that the number of available positions often does not align with the pool of qualified applicants. This situation can lead to feelings of disillusionment and inadequacy among candidates who believed that their qualifications would automatically lead to job offers.

Moreover, the competitive nature of the hiring process can exacerbate feelings of frustration and disappointment. Candidates may find themselves qualified on paper but still face rejection due to factors beyond their control, such as limited openings or specific criteria set by hiring committees. This can create a sense of helplessness, knowing that their hard-earned qualifications may not be enough to secure a position.

This theme suggests a need for a more holistic approach to candidate evaluation, one that considers not only formal qualifications but also each individual's unique strengths and potential contributions. This theme highlights the gap between expectations and reality, revealing the challenges qualified candidates face in securing employment. Addressing these challenges requires a reevaluation of hiring practices to ensure that the process is equitable and inclusive, ultimately allowing for a diverse range of educators to enter the profession. 89 The theme From Quick but Prolonged Process reflects the initial expectations of teacher applicants regarding the hiring timeline. Some applicants expect that securing a teaching position will be a swift endeavor, anticipating a relatively quick turnaround from applying to being hired. However, reality often presents a contrast, as the hiring process frequently extends far beyond applicants' expectations. A common and notable discrepancy highlighted by participants was the extended hiring process, which often involved lengthy wait times and numerous procedural steps.

One applicant confirmed, *"What surprised me the most about the hiring process was how long it really took"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, line 449-450). This response underscores the frustration experienced by candidates who anticipated a more efficient process, only to find themselves undergoing delays and a lengthy process. The prolonged hiring process can create significant uncertainty and anxiety for applicants. As they

wait for updates on their applications, candidates may doubt and experience insecurity. The extended timeline can also disrupt their plans, unable to make decisions about their future employment or other opportunities.

The disconnection between the expectation of a quick hiring process and the reality of prolonged delays raises important questions about the efficiency of the recruitment system. It suggests a need for a more organized process that respects applicants' time and provides clearer communication throughout. From Quick but Prolonged Process highlights the challenges faced by teacher applicants as they navigate an unexpectedly lengthy hiring process. This theme underscores the importance of transparency and efficiency in recruitment practices, as well as the need for educational institutions to manage candidates' expectations effectively.

The divergence between newly hired teachers' expectations of the hiring policy and their actual experiences, as highlighted in this study, is corroborated by existing literature from both international and local contexts. The surprise expressed by participants regarding policy changes and the implementation of new guidelines, such as district combinations and specific localization requirements, aligns with the findings of scholars who have noted the dynamic and sometimes unpredictable nature of educational policies (Chen et al., 2023; Dela Cruz, 2024). These unexpected shifts can create instability for applicants who rely on prior knowledge or general assumptions about the hiring process, leading to a mismatch between their anticipated and actual realities (Kim & Lee, 2022; Santos, 2025). Additionally, participants' concerns about the perceived fairness and accuracy of the ranking system, particularly regarding incorrect notifications, align with studies examining the challenges of ensuring equitable and transparent evaluation processes in large-scale public-sector hiring (Johnson, 2021; Reyes et al., 2023). When applicants question the integrity of the review committee's procedures, it can erode trust in the system and amplify the gap between the policy's expected meritocratic principles and the realities of its application (Tan, 2022; Williams, 2024). Such perceptions can significantly affect the overall experience of the hiring process and newly hired teachers' attitudes toward the institution.

Moreover, the significant impact of the localization policy on applicants' expectations and outcomes, providing unforeseen opportunities for some, highlights the complex interplay between broad policy directives and localized implementation. While localization can be intended to address specific needs or promote equity, its novelty or unexpected application can lead to surprises and altered expectations among applicants, as observed in this study (Garcia & Lopez, 2023; Valdez, 2025). This highlights the importance of clear communication about the nuances of such policies to effectively manage applicant expectations and ensure a comprehensive understanding of their potential impact on hiring outcomes (Li & Wang, 2024). Likewise, the consistently reported extended hiring process, often far exceeding applicants' expectations, aligns with research indicating that bureaucratic processes in public education can be timeconsuming and contribute to applicant frustration (Brown et al., 2022; Ferrer, 2025). The numerous procedural steps and prolonged waiting times not only deviate from the expectation of a more streamlined process but can also impose high personal and professional costs on aspiring teachers (Nguyen & Park, 2023; Silva, 2021). This temporal discrepancy is a critical aspect where actual experiences often fall short of initial expectations.

The perception of unpredictability and instability in the DepEd hiring policy, with frequently changing requirements, mirrors findings that highlight the challenges of maintaining consistency and clarity in evolving policy environments (Chang, 2024; Morales, 2022). When applicants cannot rely on stable guidelines, it exacerbates the gap between their expectations, shaped by past experiences or general knowledge, and the fluid realities of the current hiring landscape (O'Malley & Zhao, 2023; Pascual, 2025).

This uncertainty can contribute to anxiety and a diminished sense of control over the application process. Conversely, the instances where participants experienced the hiring policy being implemented as expected, characterized by transparency, impartiality, and adherence to guidelines, are important counterpoints. These positive experiences align with the intended goals of well-structured hiring policies and reinforce the expectation that the process should be fair and equitable (Chen, 2021; Martinez & Rodriguez, 2024).

Such accounts emphasize the importance of consistent and transparent policy implementation in meeting applicant expectations and promoting a positive perception of the hiring process and the employing institution (Smith & Jones, 2022; Tan, 2023)

**Statement of the Problem #4**

**What resources or support systems do newly hired elementary teachers find most helpful during the hiring process?**

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the resources and support systems available to newly hired applicants during the hiring process. The application journey can often be overwhelming and exhausting, leaving candidates feeling drained and uncertain. However, many applicants find solace and strength through various resources and support networks that help them navigate this challenging experience. The significance of these support systems cannot be overstated, as they play a crucial role in bolstering candidates' confidence and resilience throughout the application process. The availability of such support not only alleviates some of the burdens of the application process but also fosters a sense of community among applicants, reinforcing the idea that they are not alone on their journey.

The table presents emerging themes, categories, and formulated meanings derived from the interview responses, illustrating the diverse ways applicants have engaged with these resources. It emphasizes the critical role that resources and support systems play in the hiring process for newly hired applicants.

**Table 4**

**Emergent Themes, Categories, and Formulated Meaning for SOP 4**

<b>Emergent Theme</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Formulated Meaning</b>
<b>Spiritual Strength</b>	Spiritual Support	Spiritual support from faculty and staff helped sustain the applicant's morale.
	Spiritual Support	Faith in God served as the applicant's primary source of strength and support.
	Spiritual Support	Prayer and trust in divine timing, along with support from loved ones, fostered perseverance.
	Spiritual Support	Personal faith provided a source of inner peace and trust throughout the process.
	Spiritual Support	Combined support and shared faith sustained emotional strength during the application process.
<b>Peer Motivation</b>	Peer Support	Support from peers served as motivation to complete the application process.
<b>Admin Support</b>	Administrative Support	The approachability of administrative officers made the application process easier for the applicant.
	Administrative Support	The approachability of administrative officers made the process smoother and less stressful.
	Administrative Support	Guidance from a supervisor or higher authority provided direction and reassurance during the application process.
<b>Family Support</b>	Family Support	The applicant's support from family and friends sustained them throughout the process.
	Family Support	Support from family and friends played a significant role in helping the applicant navigate the application process.
	Family Support	Parental support played a vital emotional and motivational role in the applicant's journey.
<b>Personal Independence</b>	Personal Independence	Being independent during the application process was a strong personal advantage.

The table presents several emerging themes that highlight the various sources of support experienced by newly hired applicants. These themes include Peer Motivation, Administrative Support, Family Support, Spiritual

Strength, and Personal Independence. Each of these themes reflects the diverse ways in which candidates draw upon their networks and inner resources to navigate the challenges of the hiring process.

Peer Motivation confirms the vital role that colleagues and fellow educators play in supporting newly hired applicants throughout the hiring process. Several aspiring educators reported that the encouragement and support from their peers significantly boosted their confidence and determination, making them more hopeful in the face of uncertainty. One participant noted, *"I also received support from my family and friends and co-teachers"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, lines 3545). This statement highlights the multifaceted nature of support systems, where peers, along with family and friends, contribute to a candidate's resilience. The healthy relationship among fellow teachers creates an environment where individuals can share their experiences, challenges, and strategies necessary for the application process. This sense of community fosters a supportive atmosphere that can alleviate feelings of isolation and anxiety.

Another applicant emphasized the practical assistance provided by colleagues, stating, *"Fellow teachers also gave advice and helped me with my requirements"* (Vic, phenomenological interview, lines 475). This peer support is crucial, as it not only offers emotional encouragement but also provides tangible help in meeting the demands of the hiring process. Whether it involves sharing insights on crafting effective application materials, preparing for interviews, or understanding the nuances of the hiring policies, the guidance from experienced colleagues can make a significant difference in an applicant's journey.

Furthermore, peer encouragement can be a powerful motivator. As one candidate expressed, *"They encouraged me to keep going and not to give up"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, line 420-421). This affirmation from fellow educators can instill a sense of hope and determination, particularly during moments of doubt or frustration.

Peer Motivation highlights the essential support that newly hired applicants receive from their colleagues. The encouragement, advice, and practical assistance provided by fellow teachers not only enhance candidates' confidence but also foster a sense of belonging within the educational community. By recognizing the importance of peer support, educational institutions can further cultivate collaborative environments that empower aspiring educators to thrive.

The Administrative Support highlights the crucial role that administrative officers and supervisors play in facilitating the hiring process for newly hired applicants. Many candidates expressed appreciation for the accessibility and guidance provided by administrative personnel, which significantly contributed to their overall experience. One participant noted, *"Admin officers are sometimes approachable"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, lines 243). This statement reflects a positive perception of the administrative staff, indicating that their willingness to engage with candidates can create a more welcoming and supportive environment. When administrative officers are approachable, candidates feel more comfortable seeking assistance and clarification regarding the hiring process. This accessibility can alleviate some of the stress and uncertainty that often accompany job applications, allowing candidates to navigate the process with greater confidence.

Additionally, the sentiment expressed in the phrase, *"The help, of course, of the AOs who are very approachable"* (Beb, phenomenological interview, lines 727-728), underscores the significance of having supportive administrative staff. When 96 administrative officers are perceived as approachable and willing to assist, it encourages candidates to reach out for help when needed. This support can take many forms, from answering questions about application procedures to providing insights into the organizational culture and values. Another applicant emphasized the importance of guidance from supervisors, stating, *"A supervisor guided me"* (Ruff, phenomenological interview, line 574). This highlights the value of mentorship and support from leaders. When supervisors take the time to provide direction and advice, it not only helps candidates understand the expectations of the hiring process but also fosters a sense of trust and respect. Such guidance can be instrumental in helping applicants refine their applications, prepare for interviews, and ultimately secure a position. Peer motivation also proved critical, as interactions with fellow applicants or recently hired colleagues created a sense of shared experience and mutual encouragement that fueled perseverance.

The Administrative Support emphasizes the importance of approachable and supportive administrative personnel in the hiring process. The guidance and assistance provided by supervisors and administrative officers can significantly enhance the experience of newly hired applicants, helping them navigate the complexities of the application process more easily. By fostering a culture of accessibility and support, educational institutions can create an environment that empowers candidates and promotes their success. Administrative support, especially from approachable HR personnel and administrative officers, eased logistical stress by providing clear communication and guidance. Additionally, direction and reassurance from supervisors or higher-ups gave applicants strategic insight into how to present themselves and make confident decisions. Family Support affirms the significant impact that familial encouragement and assistance have on newly hired applicants during the hiring process. Many applicants highlighted the vital role their family members, friends, and loved ones played in providing emotional and practical support, helping them navigate the challenges of securing a teaching position.

One participant remarked, *"I also received support from my family, friends, and co-teachers. They encouraged me to keep going and not to give up"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, lines 3545). This statement illustrates the importance of a strong support network, where family and friends serve as pillars of motivation and reassurance. The encouragement to persevere, especially during moments of doubt or frustration, can be a powerful motivator for candidates. Knowing that loved ones believe in their potential can instill confidence and determination, enabling applicants to overcome obstacles in the hiring process. Another candidate emphasized the significant role of their parents, *"The support of my parents"* (Beb, phenomenological interview, lines 726). This highlights the foundational influence that family can have on an individual's aspirations and self-esteem. Parental support often encompasses not only emotional encouragement but also practical assistance, such as helping with application materials or providing a listening ear during stressful times. The presence of supportive parents can create a nurturing environment that fosters resilience and a positive outlook, which are essential qualities for navigating the application process. Additionally, the phrase *"Help coming from your loved ones like your family and friends"* (Mars, phenomenological interview, lines 1117-1118), reinforces the idea that support from close relationships is crucial. This help can manifest in various ways, from offering advice and sharing experiences to simply being there to listen and provide comfort. The emotional backing from family and friends can alleviate feelings of isolation and anxiety, making the hiring process feel less daunting.

Family Support highlights the critical role that loved ones play in the journey of newly hired applicants. The support provided by family and friends can significantly enhance candidates' resilience and determination. Family and friends were another vital source of emotional and practical support, offering encouragement, belief in the applicant's abilities, and help in managing responsibilities. Parental support played a key role in emotions and motivation. Underpinning all of these external factors was personal independence—the applicant's own drive, discipline, and ability to take initiative without constant reliance on others.

Spiritual Strength highlights the profound impact that faith and spiritual support have on newly hired applicants during the hiring process. Many applicants expressed that their spiritual beliefs and the prayers of those around them provided a source of comfort and resilience in the face of uncertainty. One participant noted, *"The people who supported me—the faculty and staff who always prayed for me"* (Jen, phenomenological interview, lines 406-161). This statement proves the importance of a supportive community that shares similar spiritual values. The act of prayer and colleagues' collective faith can create a nurturing environment that fosters hope and encouragement.

Knowing that others are praying for their success can instill a sense of belonging and reassurance, helping candidates to feel less isolated during the stressful hiring process. Another candidate shared, *"My faith in God helped me to leave everything to Him and be at peace"* (Jen, phenomenological interview, line 162). This highlights the role of personal faith in providing inner strength and tranquility. For many applicants, trusting in a higher power allows them to relinquish control over the outcome and find peace amidst the uncertainty.

This spiritual foundation can be particularly beneficial during times of waiting and anticipation, as it encourages candidates to focus on their personal growth rather than solely on the results of their applications.

The sentiment expressed in the statement, *"I prayed and trusted His timing"* (Vic, phenomenological interview lines 474-475), further emphasizes the importance of patience and faith in the process. Candidates who rely on their spiritual beliefs often find solace in the idea that everything happens for a reason and that the right opportunity will come at the right time. This perspective can alleviate anxiety and foster a more positive outlook, enabling applicants to approach the hiring process with hope and confidence. Spiritual support played a foundational role, with many applicants drawing strength from faith in God, prayer, and encouragement from spiritually grounded mentors or faculty. This spiritual foundation provided inner peace, emotional balance, and a sense of purpose amid uncertainty.

Lastly, the phrase, *"The most helpful thing was their support and faith in God, which gave me strength through the waiting"* (Vic, phenomenological interview, lines 475-477), encapsulates the essence of spiritual strength. The combination of personal faith and community support can empower candidates to overcome the challenges of the hiring process, reinforcing their resilience and determination. 100 Personal Independence emphasizes the importance of self-reliance and individuality in the hiring process. One participant shared, *"You have to help yourself"* (Mars, phenomenological interview, lines 1110). This statement reflects the understanding that, while support from others is valuable, ultimately, candidates must take responsibility for their own journey and actively engage in the process. Personal independence involves recognizing one's strengths and capabilities, as well as the necessity of taking initiative. Applicants who are independent often approach the hiring process proactively, seeking out resources, networking opportunities, and strategies to enhance their applications. This self-driven approach not only empowers individuals to take charge of their own success but also fosters confidence and self-efficacy. Selfmotivation enabled them to manage tasks efficiently, remain focused, and take ownership of their journey.

Several previous studies confirm that support systems play a vital role in applicants' grit during the application process. For instance, Klassen and Chiu (2010) emphasized that personal belief systems and intrinsic motivations, such as spirituality, can enhance resilience and coping during stressful professional transitions, such as job entry. Similarly, Day and Gu (2009) noted that teachers' professional commitment is often sustained by deeply held personal values and spiritual beliefs. Moreover, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that novice teachers benefit greatly from emotional support systems, especially from peers and family, which help reduce feelings of isolation and burnout during the early phases of their career. Additionally, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) confirmed that mentoring and collegial support play crucial roles in facilitating teachers' entry into the profession by enhancing job satisfaction and retention. Tait (2008) 101 asserted that successful teacher induction involves not only external support but also the individual's agency, resilience, and proactive attitude. Lastly, Goldrick (2016) argued that school-based administrative support, such as accessible human resources and approachable school leadership, significantly contributes to the adjustment and success of new teachers.

Together, these layers of support—spiritual, social, institutional, and personal—formed an interconnected system that sustained, guided, and empowered newly hired individuals throughout each phase of the hiring process.

## **Statement of the Problem #5**

### **What recommendations do newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers have for improving the hiring process in public schools?**

This section outlines recommendations from newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers aimed at improving the hiring process to create a more positive and efficient experience for future applicants. Drawing on their own experiences, these educators have identified key areas for improvement that could significantly benefit applicants navigating the complexities of the hiring process. These recommendations serve as valuable guidance for educational institutions seeking to refine their recruitment practices.

**Table 5**

**Emergent Themes, Categories, and Formulated Meaning for SOP 5**

<b>Emergent Theme</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Formulated Meaning</b>
<b>Clear and Transparent Communication with Applicants</b>	Communication	Use plain, easy-to-understand language in instructions.
	Communication	Have a post-briefing for qualified and unqualified applicants to clarify the results.
	Communication	Timely update to every applicant.
	Communication	Give enough time for briefing the applicant.
	Communication	Develop clear communication.
	Communication	Regular updates for applicant status.
	Communication	Proper and clear communication with the applicant.
<b>Commitment to Fairness in the Selection Process</b>	Communication	A clearer and timely update to the applicant.
	Communication	Have a clear and updated hiring policy.
	Fairness	Transparency and fairness to all.
	Fairness	Consideration is given to every applicant.
	Fairness	Be transparent and equitable to applicants.
<b>Supportive and Approachable Hiring Environment</b>	Fairness	Standardized evaluation for a free, unbiased selection.
	Fairness	Consideration is given to every private school teacher applicant.
	Quality Assurance	Quality check for RQA.
	Support	A more approachable way of dealing with the applicant.
<b>Realistic Interview</b>	Support	The hiring committee should be approachable.
	Support	Encourage applicants.
<b>Realistic Interview</b>	Interview Design	Real classroom scenarios should be included in the interview.
	Interview Design	Realistic Interview

The table presents the emerging themes derived from the recommendations of newly hired reapplicant elementary school teachers, reflecting their insights and experiences throughout the hiring and application process. These themes encapsulate the key areas identified by the educators as essential for enhancing the overall experience for future applicants. The emerging themes include: Clear and Transparent Communication with Applicants, Commitment to Fairness in the Selection Process, Supportive and 103 Approachable Hiring Environment, and Realistic Interview Practices. These recommendations may not only improve the applicant experience but also enhance the overall effectiveness and integrity of the hiring process.

Clear and Transparent Communication with Applicants emphasizes the need for open lines of communication. This theme highlights the importance of providing candidates with timely updates and clear information regarding the hiring process.

Transparent communication can alleviate anxiety and uncertainty, allowing applicants to feel more informed and engaged. Clear and Transparent Communication with Applicants emerged as a significant concern among participants in this study. As one participant articulated, *"Please give clear instructions for the guidelines, not telling the applicant to read it"* (Tazie, phenomenological interview, lines 90-91). This statement highlights the importance of hiring committees presenting information clearly and concisely, so all candidates can understand the requirements and expectations without undue stress. Another teacher noted, *"Clear communication and timely updates make a big difference"* (Vic, phenomenological interview, lines 512-513). This sentiment reflects a collective desire for transparency and clarity, which can significantly impact candidates' perceptions of the hiring process.

One participant highlighted the importance of understanding the rationale behind hiring decisions, *"Especially the results of the RQA, the whats and whys they were not hired even though they ranked high and the hired applicant ranked next to them"* (Tazie, phenomenological interview, lines 93-95). This feedback highlights the need for transparency regarding selection criteria and outcomes, which could help candidates better understand their standing and the committee's decision-making process. 104 Additionally, participants suggested that the hiring committee improve its communication practices by providing regular updates on application statuses. As one teacher pointed out, *"They should provide regular updates to applicants regarding their application status"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, lines 273-274). Also, one participant remarked, *"DepEd hiring policy should be clearer and updated in a timely manner"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, lines 399-400). This highlights the need for educational institutions to ensure that their policies are not only transparent but also reflective of current practices, thereby attracting and retaining high-quality teachers.

Clear and Transparent Communication with Applicants shapes the hiring experience for applicants. The insights shared by participants convey the importance of using plain language, providing timely updates, and fostering transparency in decision making. By addressing these communication gaps, educational institutions can create a more equitable and supportive hiring process that ultimately benefits both candidates and the organization.

A commitment to Fairness in the selection process underscores the critical need for an equitable and unbiased hiring framework within educational institutions. Newly hired teachers strongly advocate for the establishment of standardized evaluation criteria and practices that not only promote diversity and inclusivity but also foster a sense of trust among candidates. This commitment to fairness is essential for creating a hiring environment where all applicants feel valued and respected.

Participants in the study expressed particular concern regarding the treatment of applicants from private schools, emphasizing the importance of equity in evaluating all candidates. Many believed that private school teachers should receive the same consideration as their public school counterparts. As one participant noted, *"Fairness to 105 all and be empathetic to applicants"* (Ruff, phenomenological interview, lines 766-767).

Moreover, participants highlighted the necessity of conducting thorough quality checks for the Ranking of Qualified Applicants (RQA). They stressed that errors in the ranking process can lead to significant frustration and a pervasive sense of unfairness among candidates. One teacher remarked, *"I hope they double-check the RQA before informing everyone"* (Jen, phenomenological interview, lines 147-148). This sentiment was echoed by another participant who urged, *"Please be strict and careful when computing scores"* (Ruff, phenomenological interview, lines 607).

To further enhance fairness in the selection process, participants called for the implementation of standardized evaluation criteria. One teacher suggested, *"Implement standardized evaluation criteria to help reduce bias and promote fairness in the selection process"* (Ren, phenomenological interview, lines 274-275). This recommendation emphasizes the importance of a consistent framework that guides evaluators in their assessments, thereby minimizing the potential for subjective judgments that could skew the results. By establishing clear and objective criteria, educational institutions can create a more equitable hiring process that ensures all candidates are assessed equally and fairly. Ultimately, participants expressed a collective aspiration for a more transparent and equitable hiring process, stating, *"Create more transparent and equitable hiring that attracts and retains high-quality teachers"* (Grace, phenomenological interview, lines 406-407). This overarching goal reflects a commitment to not only valuing fairness but also actively working to eliminate biases and discrepancies in the hiring process. By prioritizing transparency and equity, educational institutions can build trust with applicants and enhance their reputation as fair employers. 106 Commitment to Fairness in the Selection Process is vital to shaping applicants' experiences during the hiring process. The insights shared by participants underscore the importance of equitable treatment, thorough evaluations, and standardized criteria to ensure that all candidates are assessed fairly. By addressing these concerns, educational institutions can create a more just and inclusive hiring environment that attracts and retains high-quality educators, ultimately benefiting the entire educational community.

Supportive and Approachable Hiring Environment underscores the critical importance of fostering a welcoming atmosphere during the hiring process. The candidate collectively desires a hiring environment where they feel comfortable seeking assistance and asking questions. A supportive approach not only enhances candidates' confidence but also significantly improves their overall experience throughout the application process. Participants in the study expressed a strong need for a more approachable hiring committee. Many emphasized that a friendly and welcoming demeanor from committee members would alleviate the intimidation often associated with the hiring process. As one participant noted, *"I also hope they can be more open and approachable when we have questions. Sometimes, it feels like we're left in the dark"* (Jen, phenomenological interview, lines 84-85). Additionally, participants noted that respectful, empathetic communication promotes a positive environment, enabling them to feel valued and respected regardless of their application status. A supportive atmosphere can significantly reduce anxiety, enabling applicants to present their best selves during interviews. As one teacher remarked, *"A friendly, welcoming approach helps candidates feel more comfortable and do their best"* (Vic, phenomenological interview, lines 518-107 519). This highlights the impact that a positive interaction can have on candidates' performance and overall perception of the hiring process.

Additionally, participants expressed a desire for the hiring committee to offer motivational support, such as providing advice and tips throughout the process. As one candidate suggested, *"Motivate applicants like giving advice, tips"* (Beb, phenomenological interview, lines 766). This kind of encouragement can further enhance candidates' confidence and help them navigate the complexities of the hiring process more easily. The insights shared by participants emphasize the importance of friendly interactions in a welcoming atmosphere. Realistic Interview Practices emphasizes the necessity for interview processes that authentically reflect the realities of the teaching profession. Newly hired teachers advocate for a shift toward incorporating practical scenarios and authentic assessments that enable candidates to showcase their skills and competencies in meaningful, relevant

ways. Participants in the study highlighted the importance of designing interview questions that focus on real classroom situations. By presenting candidates with scenarios that they are likely to encounter in their teaching careers, interviewers can better assess how applicants would respond to various challenges and opportunities in a real-world context. This method enables candidates to showcase their problem-solving abilities, adaptability, and pedagogical knowledge in a manner that traditional interview questions may not fully capture. As one participant noted, *"Interview questions should reflect actual classroom situations"* (Beb, phenomenological interview, lines 727-728).

Incorporating realistic scenarios into the interview process not only benefits the hiring committee by providing a clearer picture of a candidate's capabilities but also empowers applicants to engage in the interview more authentically. Candidates are more likely to feel confident and prepared when they can relate their responses to genuine teaching experiences. This alignment between the interview process and the realities of teaching can lead to more informed hiring decisions, ultimately resulting in a better fit between educators and the schools they serve.

By incorporating practical scenarios and focusing on real classroom situations, educational institutions can create a more effective and relevant interview process. This approach not only enhances the assessment of candidates' skills and competencies but also prepares them for the realities they will face as educators, ultimately contributing to a more successful and impactful teaching workforce.

The recommendations offered by newly hired elementary school teachers in this study align with the existing literature, which emphasizes the critical role of clear communication and transparency in effective recruitment processes. The participants' call for plain, easily understandable instructions, rather than simply directing applicants to read the guidelines, resonates with findings that show how clarity in recruitment materials enhances applicants' understanding and reduces anxiety (Anderson, 2023; Woods et al., 2021). Furthermore, the suggestion for post-briefing sessions to clarify hiring decisions, particularly regarding the RQA, underscores the importance of providing feedback and rationale to candidates, which can foster a sense of fairness and respect, even among unsuccessful applicants (Highhouse, 2022; Ryan & Ployhart, 2024).

The emphasis on fairness and equity, particularly regarding the consideration of private school applicants, aligns with broader discussions on inclusivity in hiring practices (Chung et al., 2021; Shore et al., 2022). The participants' desire for a quality check of the RQA to ensure accuracy directly addresses concerns about procedural justice and the need for reliable evaluation mechanisms in selection processes (Gilliland, 109 2023; Ployhart, 2021). Ensuring that ranking processes are meticulous and error-free is crucial for maintaining applicant trust and the perceived legitimacy of hiring outcomes.

Moreover, the recommendation for a more approachable, empathetic hiring committee underscores the importance of interpersonal dynamics in the applicant experience. Research suggests that a welcoming and supportive demeanor from recruiters can positively influence candidate perceptions of the organization and their likelihood of recommending it to others (Bauer, 2024; Chapman et al., 2022). The participants' desire to feel comfortable asking questions and to receive respectful interactions highlights the human element in recruitment and its impact on candidate well-being throughout the process.

Additionally, the expressed need for timely updates on application status is consistently cited in recruitment literature as a key factor in positive candidate experience (Breugh, 2023; Saks & Taylor, 2021). Delays in communication can lead to applicant frustration and negative perceptions of the hiring organization. Providing regular updates demonstrates respect for the applicants' time and effort, contributing to a more favorable overall experience. The suggestion to incorporate real classroom scenarios into interview questions aligns with competency-based interviewing practices, which aim to assess candidates' skills and abilities relevant to the job (Huffcutt et al., 2022; Pulakos et al., 2024). Utilizing authentic, job-related questions can provide a more accurate evaluation of a candidate's preparedness for the demands of teaching in a realworld setting, moving beyond purely theoretical inquiries. Finally, the call for a more standardized and transparent evaluation process, along with clear, up-to-date hiring policies, reflects a desire for procedural fairness and predictability (Cropanzano et al., 2021; Steiner, 2023). When applicants understand the criteria by which they are being assessed and perceive the process as consistent and transparent, they are more likely to view the outcomes as fair, whether or not they are hired. Clear, up-to-date policies further contribute to this sense of fairness and transparency, ensuring that all applicants are evaluated under the same framework.

## DISCUSSION

### Summary of Findings

1. The hiring experiences of newly reapplicant elementary school teachers in the District of Dumangas I were marked by several significant challenges, which can be summarized in the following themes: systematic and procedural barriers, a high-stakes evaluation process, limited employment opportunities, and the emotional, financial, and physical toll of the application requirements. The systematic and procedural barriers, including unpredictable policy changes and delays, unclear instructions, and the need for resubmitting required documents with urgency, complicated the application process. The high-stakes evaluation process, marked by rigorous demonstrations and interviews alongside stringent qualification demands, placed significant pressure on applicants. Additionally, limited employment opportunities due to a scarcity of permanent positions and localization policies posed tangible obstacles. The emotional, financial, and physical toll of application requirements further compounded these challenges.

2. Newly hired reapplicant public elementary teachers describe their feelings during the application process through three key themes: attrition of aspiration, which reflects the diminishing enthusiasm and hope of applicants; shadow of doubt, highlighting the pervasive fear and self-doubt they experience; and resilience rooted in faith, emphasizing the strength and determination of teachers who rely on their faith and personal beliefs to persevere.

3. The comparison between newly hired teachers' expectations based on the hiring policy and their actual experiences reveals significant discrepancies, primarily reflected in themes: The Discrepancy Between Policy Intent and Implementation, Fairness and Distrust in the Evaluation Process, and From a Limited Chance to Unexpected Opportunity, Limited Opportunities Despite Being Qualified, and From Quick but Prolonged Process. The Discrepancy Between Policy Intent and Implementation reveals that newly hired reapplicant

elementary teachers initially perceive the hiring policy as being strictly enforced. However, their actual experiences highlight significant discrepancies. Fairness and Distrust in the Evaluation Process reveals discrepancies in perceived fairness and accuracy in the hiring evaluation, which can lead to distrust. From a Limited Chance to Unexpected Opportunity presents a transformed perspective, shifting from minimal hiring chances to unexpected opportunities. Limited Opportunities Despite Being Qualified conveys teachers' perception that they possess the necessary qualifications, yet are not selected for positions. From 'Quick but Prolonged Process', it is evident that the applicant expects a quick process, but it turns out to be lengthy.

4. The findings indicate that the support system for newly hired individuals played a crucial role in their successful navigation of the hiring process. Key components of this support system include: Peer Motivation, Administrative Support, Family Support, Spiritual Strength, and Personal Independence.

Peer motivation emerged as a significant factor, as encouragement and shared experiences from fellow applicants helped maintain persistence and alleviate feelings of isolation. Administrative support was also vital, providing clear guidance and simplifying the procedural complexities of the hiring process, which in turn reduced stress. Family and social support offered emotional reassurance and practical assistance, bolstering applicants' confidence and stability throughout the transition. Spiritual strength, encompassing faith and encouragement from spiritually grounded mentors, played a significant role in sustaining emotional resilience and morale. Complementing these external supports was the individual's personal independence, characterized by self motivation, proactive problem-solving, and effective time management.

This internal drive empowered newly hired individuals to take ownership of the process, stay organized, and maintain focus without excessive reliance on others. Together, these elements formed a comprehensive support system that enabled new hires to navigate the challenges of securing and starting their new roles with confidence and resilience. 5. The newly hired elementary school teachers provided several important recommendations to enhance the public-school hiring process. These recommendations focus on clear and transparent communication with applicants, a commitment to fairness in the selection process, a supportive and approachable hiring environment, and realistic interview practices. Clear and transparent communication with applicants is essential for maintaining open lines of dialogue throughout the hiring process. Teachers suggested providing detailed information about application timelines, selection criteria, and feedback mechanisms, along with regular updates on the status of applications to help reduce anxiety. A commitment to fairness in the selection process prioritizes equity by implementing standardized evaluation criteria. This approach can help eliminate biases and promote inclusivity. Teachers recommended that hiring panels be friendly and open to questions, which would help candidates feel more comfortable and valued. Lastly, teachers called for incorporating practical demonstrations of teaching skills and situational questions that allow candidates to showcase their problem-solving abilities. By aligning interview practices with actual classroom scenarios, schools can better assess candidates' readiness for the challenges they will face. By implementing these recommendations, the public school hiring process can be significantly improved, leading to a more positive experience for applicants and the selection of well-qualified teachers.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the hiring experiences of newly hired elementary school teachers in the District of Dumangas I. First, the hiring experiences of newly reapplicant teachers are fraught with significant challenges, including systematic barriers, high-stakes evaluations, and limited job opportunities. These factors create a stressful environment that can deter qualified candidates from pursuing teaching positions. The emotional, financial, and physical toll of the application process further exacerbates these challenges, highlighting the need for a more streamlined and supportive approach.

Second, the feelings expressed by newly hired teachers during the application process reveal a complex emotional landscape. The themes of attrition of aspiration, shadow of doubt, and resilience rooted in faith illustrate the psychological struggles faced by applicants. While many experience diminishing hope and self-doubt, others draw strength from their faith and personal beliefs, indicating the importance of emotional support systems during the hiring process.

Third, there are notable discrepancies between the expectations set by hiring policies and the actual experiences of applicants. These discrepancies manifest in various ways, including perceived unfairness in the evaluation process and the unexpected length of the hiring timeline. Such inconsistencies can lead to distrust in the system and may discourage future applicants, underscoring the need for better alignment between policy intent and implementation. Also, the findings highlight the critical role of support systems in helping applicants navigate the hiring process. Peer motivation, administrative support, family encouragement, spiritual strength, and personal independence all contribute to applicants' resilience and success. Lastly, the recommendations provided by newly hired teachers emphasize the need for clear communication, fairness, a supportive environment, and realistic interview practices.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered to the identified societal groups:

1. **School Heads.** To foster a more positive recruitment environment, school heads should prioritize clear and consistent communication with potential hires, ensuring that guidelines and expectations are transparent and easily understood. They should also work to foster a supportive atmosphere during the hiring process, acknowledging the emotional and practical challenges applicants face. Furthermore, school leaders should actively engage with feedback from newly hired teachers to identify areas where school-level practices can be improved to better align with fairness and equity principles, ultimately aiming to build a more satisfied and effective teaching staff.
2. **School Division Human Resource (HR) Managers.** HR managers should focus on streamlining and clarifying hiring policies and procedures to minimize unpredictability and enhance transparency for applicants. This includes ensuring timely, accurate communication about application status and policy updates. Given the emotional and financial burdens applicants face, HR should explore ways to provide clearer guidance on requirements and timelines to alleviate them. Critically, the recommendations from newly hired teachers regarding standardization, fairness, and communication should be carefully considered to refine division-wide hiring protocols, aiming for a more equitable and efficient recruitment process that attracts high-quality educators.
3. **Hiring Committee.** Members of the Hiring Committee should strive to create a more approachable and empathetic environment for applicants, being mindful of the inherent stress associated with the process. Efforts should be made to ensure consistent, fair evaluation practices, with transparent communication of the criteria and rationale behind hiring decisions. The committee should also consider feedback from newly hired teachers, particularly regarding the need for clarity in instructions, the importance of considering diverse applicant backgrounds, and the value of a standardized and transparent evaluation system, to continually improve their practices.
4. **Teacher Applicants.** This study serves to validate the experiences of teacher applicants and encourages them to approach the hiring process with awareness of potential challenges, including procedural complexities and emotional demands. Applicants should proactively seek clarification on any unclear guidelines and prepare for a potentially lengthy and competitive process. Furthermore, this research empowers applicants to advocate for improvements in the hiring system by providing them with information about the common issues faced by their peers and by articulating their needs for clearer communication, fairness, and support throughout their application journey. Keep improving, keep believing, and keep going. Strengthen your qualifications, seek proper guidance, nurture your faith, and draw strength from the people who believe in you. The process may be long, but your calling as an educator is worth every step.
5. **Future Researchers.** This study provides a foundation for further investigation into specific aspects of the teacher hiring process. Future research could delve deeper into the impact of policy changes on applicant experience, the effectiveness of different communication strategies, or the long-term retention rates of teachers hired through varying processes. Exploring the role of localization policies and developing interventions to mitigate applicant stress and financial burden are also potential avenues for future inquiry. Additionally,

replicating this study in different geographical contexts or educational levels could offer valuable comparative insights.

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