

# Lived Experiences of Filipino Teachers and Learners in Five Resettlement Schools

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**Abstract**— Resettlement areas in the Philippines have continued to provide the necessary education to children of the marginalized families. Thus, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences of two stakeholders, the teachers and learners, in five elementary schools situated in resettlement areas in Pandi, Bulacan. Employing a qualitative research design and a purposive sampling, only those who studied or taught for a minimum of two to three years were selected. A pilot test of the interview guide was administered to further ensure that the questions were appropriate to the target participants. Individual interviews were conducted with 50 teachers and focus group discussions with 50 learners. Thematic analysis was utilized to generate themes that described the typical experiences of the participants. Results revealed two major themes – learners’ experiences and teachers’ experiences. The themes for learners’ experiences were identified as culture shock, proximity benefits, good teachers, and positive learning environment, while the themes for teachers’ experiences were lack of school facilities, low academic performance of learners, misbehavior, and parents as role models. Conclusions relative to the themes were drawn and specific areas of concern were determined resulting in the preparation of intervention programs recommended for such concerns.

**Keywords** — *lived experiences, resettlement areas, stakeholders, intervention programs, marginalized sector*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines has a total population of 106,512,074 [1]. Due to the ballooning population, the government developed an agency, the National Housing Authority (NHA), that caters to the housing needs of the marginalized families in urban and rural communities. Thus, a total of 913 resettlements had been constructed in the entire Philippines from 2010 to 2017. This idea of resettlement, according to Palafox [2], is to help families rise from subsistence level to lower middle-income status. It has been an

answer to the problems on informal settlers in the slums of Metro Manila and neighboring towns and provinces. Among these are in nearby areas like Cavite, Laguna, Bulacan, and Pampanga [3].

Based on the Philippine Statistics Authority [1], a fraction of 1.22 % or 11 of these resettlement areas are found in Pandi, a town in the province of Bulacan. Pandi is a small town with a total land area of 3,120 hectares and a total population of 92,120 as of 2017. The town has 22 barangays, divided into two educational districts, namely, Pandi North District and Pandi South District, both headed and supervised by a district supervisor deployed by the Schools Division of Bulacan.

Pandi North District has a total of 13 schools where five (5) are found in resettlement areas [4]. These five schools have a total population of 7,724 students and 212 teachers for the school year 2018-2019 [5]. Each school is led by a school principal who is under the supervision of the district supervisor.

The present study explored the lived experiences of two major stakeholders, the teachers and learners at the five schools in the resettlement areas of Pandi, Bulacan. A dearth of studies has been conducted in the Philippines involving such stakeholders located in a resettlement area; hence, this study will be a contribution to phenomenological studies in the said area.

### A. Theoretical Framework

The study is primarily anchored on the Theory of Relocation by Cathy Goodwin [6]. She believes that a relocation involves a radical change from one social context and physical setting to another. The individual experiences new contacts and role models and undergoes role transitions.

Another theory is the Sociocultural Theoretical Framework to learning and development of Lev Vygotsky [7]. This theory is centered on how others such as parents and peers influence individuals’ learning, as well as how cultural contexts, beliefs, and attitudes influence how instruction and learning transpire.

### B. Objective

This study aims to investigate the lived experiences of the teachers and the learner- resettlers in selected schools in the resettlement areas of Pandi North District in Pandi, Bulacan.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### A. Research Design

According to Kerlinger [8], as cited in Jongbo [9], a research design, is "a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance." (p. 1). This study employed Equations qualitative research design. A qualitative researcher is especially interested in "how things occur particularly in the perspectives of the subjects of the study"[10], p. 440. Other researchers in the field support this idea [11-14],

### B. Participants and Sampling Procedures

The study involved 100 participants from five schools in Pandi which are within the resettlement areas in the town proper. These include Pandi Residences Elementary School, San Antonio Abad Elementary School, Pandi Heights Elementary School, Cacarong Bata Elementary School, and Eusebio Roque Elementary School. From each of these schools, groups of participants were identified through purposive sampling. They have to meet certain criteria before they are chosen as participants. Ten (10) selected faculty members (male or female) with one to two years of previous teaching experience in other schools and have been teaching for two (2) to three (3) years in each of the said five resettlement schools were requested to share their experiences. Aside from the teachers, 10 grade 6 pupils from each school who have resided in the relocation sites for two to three years were also requested to share their experiences.

### C. Instrument

The interview protocol served as the instrument used in gathering relevant data in this study. The researchers followed Patton's [11], naturalistic inquiry approach where real-world situations unfold naturally as the interview goes on. They asked one main research question followed by probing questions to get an in-depth information about the experiences of the stakeholders.

In addition, a pilot test of the instrument was conducted in a school in a resettlement area at Bulacan Heights outside Pandi North District to further ensure that the questions were appropriate to the target participants.

### D. Data Gathering Procedures

#### 1. Letter of Consent

In order to capture the lived experiences of the participants, the researchers submitted a letter to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Bulacan seeking permission for the

conduct of the study in the five relocation schools in Pandi North District. Upon approval, the researcher asked the School Head from each school about the most convenient time the interview may be done with him/her and with the teachers and learners. It was ensured that the teaching time of the faculty members would not be sacrificed because of the interview. Likewise, the learners' learning time was also considered in the conduct of the interview. Prior to the interview with the learners, a letter asking permission from the parents of the identified students were secured with the help of the learners' advisers. Only the students with consent from their parents participated in the interview. The learners were interviewed through focus group discussions. Two batches consisting of five learners had their focus group discussion in every school. Each session lasted for approximately twenty-five minutes. Confidentiality, anonymity, honesty, and respect were strictly followed.

### E. Data Analysis

The data collected for the study were taken from the interview transcripts. To process the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used. According to Fraenkel et al., [9] p. 485), "Other researchers prefer to use codes and themes as aids in organizing content and arriving at a narrative description of findings." In this study, codes and themes were used by the researchers adapted and patterned from Santos's [15] study. Other studies in the Philippines made use of codes and themes as well [16-17].

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The interviews with the participants were transcribed verbatim and were analyzed fully in order to look for significant statements, formulate their meanings, and classify them. Subsequently, all the significant information gathered from the data were scrutinized to form key words and phrases that fell into emergent themes.

### A. Experience of Teachers

Most of the teachers assigned in the school inside the relocation sites are no longer new in the department and even in the teaching profession. Also, a considerable number of them had experiences in private institutions wherein the situation is totally an opposite from their experiences in the resettlement schools. It was indeed a turning point in their career as educators when they started teaching in relocation schools. A few excerpts generated from the themes are shown below.

#### Theme 1: Lack of Facilities

schools, the schools in the resettlement areas are suffering from lack of classrooms, limited books, and insufficient supply of electricity and water provided by the department; hence, the stakeholders are greatly affected by such. This is very common among the responses of the

participant-teachers at the start of the school year.

T2: *"I have many experiences in this school and these are some: facilities are limited for it only has one building with 12 classrooms which are not enough to accommodate the big number of enrollees. Scarcity of resources such as electricity and water supply are always an issue; for we need to tap from the neighborhood to have electric supply."* T1: *"No books for the pupils and even the school furniture is also limited."* T2: *"The number of teachers deployed is not enough for the pupils. Therefore, we employed shifting of classes."*

These narrations of the two participants depict the real situations in resettlement areas that teachers face. On the onset, the situations in resettlement schools are really difficult, but through the leadership and resourcefulness of the school heads and spirit of voluntarism of the other stakeholders within the community, these problems are addressed.

#### *Theme 2: Poor performance of learners*

The performance of the learners is also at stake. While some of the teacher-participants uttered that there are learners performing well in class for the reason that they are being taught in advance, there are more students who need extra attention.

T2: *"Difficulties in understanding the lesson made pupils opt to work for a living than to attend schooling. Non-readers are prevalent."* T9: *"I need to exhaust my best efforts to prepare interventions and motivations to address the problems of non-readers."* T22: *"Not all the pupils are poor in terms of academic performance; there are some that excel too, but most of them are outnumbered by those poor in academic performance."*

Recognizably, the participants confirmed the prior assumptions concerning the learner-resettlers' situation. Teachers should implement intervention programs that will answer the recurring issue.

#### *Theme 3: Outrageous behavior of some learners*

Most of the learners come from different schools in different locations, and they come to these relocation schools because their parents require them to do so. Due to cultural diversity, misdemeanor becomes a common problem which is very difficult for teachers to handle.

T10: *"When I first entered the classroom, the pupils were chatting and shouting on top of their voices...Pieces of paper were thrown...Boys and girls were sitting on top of their desks...."* T10: *In my case, one pupil was even cursing and bragging that his father has a gun....pupils were running around inside without minding if their classmates were hurt. Other girls were yelling at each other as if they were not inside the classroom."* T19: *"Ma'am, the behavior of my pupils is extra ordinary, they are*

*good at cursing and bragging and even punching their classmates with no reasons."* T27: *"The attitudes they show at home are manifested here in our school. They are disrespectful of their teachers, too."*

As observed, negative behaviors are prominent among the learners. Their training at home is reflected in their behavior at school.

#### *Theme 4: Parents as role models*

Character speaks louder than words. It is often the result of an experience or upbringing from their parents. and they can have a powerful influence over behavior. While attitudes are enduring, they can also change. In this undertaking, attitude of the learner-resettlers is somewhat congruent to their behavior.

T37: *"I have few pupils who receive strong family support. The motivation given by the parents to their children counts the most for they are greatly influenced by their parents."* T3: *The environment is also a contributing factor why pupils drop from school. There are hindering factors that surround and attract them to drop out from school."*

The parents have a strong influence on the values of their children. Lack of support from parents may result in lack of interest and motivation to go to school which may lead to tendencies of dropping out.

#### *B. Experience of Learner Resettlers*

Learner-resettlers shared their experiences with the researchers. A few of the excerpts generated from the themes are shown below.

#### *Theme 1: Culture shock*

Culture shock is experienced by a majority of learners radically changing their environment. It makes one learn new things. It is inevitable. To deal with it successfully, one has to be flexible and think of better ways to adopt to the new situation.

L7: *"During my first month in this school, I am not comfortable with the sudden changes in the environment to which facilities are lacking. L7: There was no proper ventilation, and the rooms were narrow."* L7: *"The school has only 12 classrooms."* L5: *Electricity is not available; the classroom is quite dim that we cannot even read our books... we even use flashlights."*

#### *Theme 2: Proximity of benefits*

Despite the negative things happening among the stakeholders, there is still a positive light in the realm of the elementary schools situated in the resettlement areas of Pandi. Most of the learners enjoy the nearness of their households to their school.

L5: *"Our house is near our school here in this*



resettlement area. I can save time from travelling for I just walk to our school. Yes, it is near!"

### Theme 3: Good teachers

A good teacher should be one who puts her heart into teaching. This is because it is only by doing so that the students can feel their passion and hard work. When a teacher strives hard to teach his/her students, students would put in their best effort as well. If a teacher dislikes her job, goes to class in a bad mood, her teaching would also be affected, and students would not be able to enjoy their as well.

L8: "I learned many things from my teacher. I do better in class." L15: "I focus on my studies, so I get good grades. L15: "I listen very well to my teacher. L15: "I never cut classes. L10: "Teachers are very patient in teaching us especially in reading. We have learned many things from reading."

### Theme 4: Positive learning environment

All educators know that the atmosphere within a school contributes much to the success of the learners' performances inside the classroom. More importantly, it has a great bearing on a child's love for learning. The challenge of creating a positive learning atmosphere transcends the debate of whether schools need to become goal oriented or not. It is about making a school a place where children feel challenged but competent, where they work hard but enjoy it, where achievement is the product but not the sole objective.

L5: "I like it here even if we only have one building." L6: "Narrow classrooms are still safe and beautiful for me. There is peace and quiet that is why we can really study well." L11: "The school is very near our house... we could walk..." L11: "We have our groupings as part of our activities, and I enjoyed it the most." L11: "My grades are high. I've experienced being recognized." L1: "I actively participate in discussions and contests in our school... Our teacher patiently taught us."

Making schools enjoyable places for every learner is important. A happy classroom should always be the goal of every principal and teacher in resettlement schools.

### C. Areas of the Concerns of the Stakeholders

#### 1.) Teachers

The stakeholders in the resettlement schools have their respective concerns. The teachers are concerned about (1) communication and collaboration between the school and the parents; (2) parental involvement and cooperation; (3) improvement of self-discipline and efficiency among learners; (4) values formation of learners; (5) lack of instructional materials; (6) poor school performance; (7) prevalence of non-readers; (8) Family conflicts, (9) absenteeism and drop-out, and (10) Bullying and negative behavior exhibited by learners.

#### 2.) Learner-Resettlers

The learner-resettlers have their concerns as well. These are (1) crowded classrooms; (2) incomplete school facilities; (3) no supply of electricity and water; (4) limited time of parents to attend school meetings; (5) poor reading performance; and (6) bullying.

#### D. Proposed Intervention Program

To address the specific concerns of the two stakeholders, the researchers proposed an intervention program which is shown in the Appendix.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study shows a realization that in spite of the diversity of teachers and learner-resettlers in relocation schools, everybody's part contributes to the development of meaningful learning outcomes and a successful learning process.

The teachers' experiences on the lack of school facilities, low academic performance, and misbehavior of learners are evidences of passion and compassion as they deal with marginalized learner-resettlers with different family background. Passionate teachers are distinguished by their commitment to the achievement of their students. They are concerned with the welfare and development of their students and they profoundly struggle on how to motivate their students to learn.

Most of the learners surprisingly adapted to their new learning environment after experiencing culture shock with crowded classrooms and poor learning conditions. They appreciated proximity benefits such as living in a house of their own which are near their new school. They love their teachers, and despite the absence of good learning facilities, they continue to go to school to obtain good education.

Thus, more concentrated research on elementary schools in the heart of the relocation sites as a basis for a more in-depth intervention program may be performed by future researchers.

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**Appendix**  
**Intervention Program for the Specific Concerns of the Stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Concern	Activity	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Sources of Fund	Performance Indicator
Teachers	1. Communication and Collaboration Between the School and Parents	Parents' Assembly	Bi-monthly	Principal/ Teachers/ Parents	N.A.	80% of the communication and collaboration bet. school and parents is achieved.
	2. Parental Involvement and Cooperation	Parents' Invocation	Monthly	Principal/ Teachers/ Parents	1.1 Donations	75% of the parental involvement and cooperation is achieved.
	3. Improvement Of Self-Discipline and Efficacy Among Learners	Pupils' Org (YES-O, SPG, Math Club, Young Writers, Pupils' Choir and the like)	Monthly	Principal/ Teachers/ Parents/ Facilitators	1.2 Canteen Fund/Donations	75% of the learners' behavioral problems such as self-discipline and efficacy are improved.
	4. Values Formation of Learners	Values Integration in All Subject Areas Taught by the Teachers	Everyday (5x a week)	Teacher/Pupils/Principal/ Guidance Coordinator	1.3 Canteen Fund	85% of the activities for values formation for pupils is implemented.
		Pupils' Invocation	Monthly (1 <sup>st</sup> Monday of the month)	Pupils/Teachers/Principal/ Parents	N.A.	80% of the activities prepared by the teacher for values formation of pupils are presented during invocations.
	5. Lack of Instructional Materials	Procurement and Improvisation of Needed Instructional Materials	Quarterly	Principal/ Teachers	MOOE/SEF Fund/Canteen Fund	90% of the needed instructional materials are prepared and provided.
	6. Poor School Performance	Remediation /Peer and Parent Tutoring	Everyday	Parents/ Teachers/ Pupils	1.5 Canteen Fund	Pupils' school performance is increased by 80%.
	7. Prevalence of Non-Readers	Reading Camp	Everyday	Teachers/ Pupils/ Principal	SEF Fund	Non-readers in the school are decreased by

						10%.
	8. Family Conflicts	Family Counseling	As Need Arise	Parents/ Pupils/ Guidance Counsellor	Canteen Fund	75% of the family conflicts is settled.
	9. Absenteeism and Dropouts	Home Visitation	Monthly	Teachers/ PTAs/ Parents	N.A.	Absenteeism is reduced to 1% and zero dropout rate is achieved.
	10. Bullying and Negative Behavior Exhibited by Learners	Parents and Pupils' Recollection	Quarterly	Pupils/ Religion Teachers / Teachers	Canteen Fund	Bullying and negative behavior exhibited by learners is reduced to zero %.
Learners	1. Crowded Classrooms	Build and Construct	Year round	Principal/PT A/DepEd/ DPWH/Alumni	SEF/DepEd/ LGUs/NGOs	65% of crowded classrooms are resolved after two years.
	2. Incomplete School Facilities	Networking	Year round	Principal/ PTA/LGUs/ DepEd/NGOs	SEF/ Donations /LGUs/NGOs	25% of the school facilities are completed by end of the year.
	3. Insufficient Supply of Electricity and Water	File a Request From Proper Authorities	Year round	GUs/ NGOs/DepEd/Meralco/Alumni	MOOE/LGUs / Donation	80% of the required supply for electricity and water is provided.
	4. Quality Time With Parents	MiniMe/ Family Day	Quarterly	Principal/ PTA/Teacher / Parents/ Pupils and/ Donation	Canteen Fund/LGU	80% of parents' quality time was spent among the children.
	5. Poor Reading Performance	Reading Camp	Weekly	Team Leaders/ Volunteer PTA/Pupils	MOOE Fund/ Donation/ Alumni	Non-Readers are decreased by 80%.
	6. Bullying	Orientation on Bullying / Sportsfest	Weekly (Every Friday)	Principal/ Teachers / Pupils	Canteen Fund/ MOOE	Incidence of bullying inside the school campus is reduced by 80%.