

Exploring the Early Years: Stories and Narratives of Novice Teachers in Private Schools

Vince S. Pagutayao¹, Dr. James L. Paglinawan²

¹Graduate Student, Central Mindanao University

²Faculty, Central Mindanao University

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90400398>

Received: 12 April 2025; Accepted: 17 April 2025; Published: 19 May 2025

ABSTRACT

Novice teachers typically face various challenges; with lack of experience, they have difficulty navigating the complexities of the classroom. Despite the importance of understanding the experiences of novice teachers, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on private school settings. This study aims to explore the experiences and narratives of novice private school teachers during their initial years of teaching. Our findings show how heavy workloads and misaligned responsibilities pose significant challenges to novice private school teachers. To overcome these, strategies such as thorough lesson planning, professional development, and adaptability are crucial. The findings emphasize the need for targeted support to enhance teacher retention, improve educational outcomes, and foster a sustainable teaching environment.

Keywords: novice teachers, private schools, professional development, teacher challenges, teacher support, qualitative research

INTRODUCTION

We all started as beginners in all aspects of our lives. In every first, comes every how? when? and many why's. In the field of teaching, novice teachers are equipped with the knowledge of the 4 year rigid training of their teacher education program. But, beyond that knowledge comes a lack of experience about the real world of teaching. With them just entering the field, they experience a lot of new things specially in navigating the complexities of the classroom. This study aims to explore the experiences and narratives of novice private school teachers during their initial years of teaching.

Despite the importance of understanding the experiences of novice teachers, there is a lack of research specifically focusing on private school settings. Existing studies from Dias-Lacy & Guirguis (2017) highlights the challenges such as classroom management, workload, and adapting to diverse student needs, but more insight is needed into the specific narratives and strategies employed by novice teachers in private schools.

Infact, a study of Cakmak et al., (2018) emphasizes that the initial years of teaching are pivotal for new educators, as they face a variety of challenges and unfamiliar situations while acquiring fundamental teaching skills. This is also supported by a local study by Felicilda et al., (2024) which stated that novice teachers experience challenges related to classroom management which shows to a significant correlation with their seemingly low performance in areas like delivery of content and providing a space for favorable learning environment.

This study aims to explore the experiences of novice teachers in private school settings by addressing several key objectives. The primary objective is to identify the motivations that drive individuals to pursue teaching positions in private schools. Additionally, the study seeks to document the challenges faced by novice teachers in these environments and examine the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges, assessing their effectiveness. Finally, the research aims to gather recommendations from novice teachers for future educators entering private schools, providing valuable insights for improving teacher support and retention in these settings.

This research was conducted during the school year 2024-2025 at selected private school teachers in Bukidnon. By examining this demographic, the study sought to provide insights into novice teachers' experiences and stories as first-time teachers in a private institution and how these experiences affect them in navigating the classroom.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design that employs a phenomenological narrative inquiry approach to explore the experiences of novice teachers in private schools. This design focuses on collecting and analyzing personal stories and narratives to understand the challenges, successes, and overall transition into the teaching profession.

Moreover, Colaizzi's method is adopted as it emphasizes the role of qualitative data analysis approach commonly used in phenomenological research to explore and understand individuals' lived experiences. This research instrument is designed to explore the lived experiences of novice teachers in private schools in Bukidnon, focusing on their stories, challenges, and strategies. The instrument will facilitate in-depth qualitative data collection to gain insights into how these young educators face the challenges of being a novice teacher.

Locale of the Study

This qualitative research study will be conducted in Bukidnon, a province known for its diverse cultural landscape and geographical features. The study will focus on selected private schools across different municipalities in Bukidnon to explore educational experiences and community dynamics.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study are private high school teachers within the province of Bukidnon. One (1) teacher will be purposely selected from Xavier de Kibangay High School, one (1) from Nuestra Senora Del Pilar High School Inc, one (1) from San Isidro High School-Kadingilan Inc, one (1) from San Isidro High School of Malipayon Inc, one (1) from Kalilangan Pioneering Institute Inc and one (1) from Lake View Adventist Academy which gives a total of six (6) participants. The criteria for selection encompass teachers who are beginning or a novice teacher with less than 2 years of teaching experience and are willing to engage in interviews and discussions. This selection method ensures that the participants are fit to the research. To ensure clarity and relevance, the interview guide is anchored on the research objectives and will then be validated by experts.

Data Gathering Procedure

An ethical consideration was employed in the gathering of data. To test the validity of the questionnaires a sample was sent to 3 content experts. A certification of validity was then given as a sign of approval. Data collection will be conducted through google form with the selected participants. This is done in order for the participants to have a comfortable yet confidential manner to encourage open and honest communication.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews will be analyzed using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. This technique involves getting familiarized with interview transcripts, extracting significant statements, formulating meanings through coding the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns, developing comprehensive description, producing the fundamental structure, and seeking verification by returning the findings to the participants to validate the accuracy of the structure.

Research Ethics

The researchers are aware of the ethical considerations upon conducting the research study. An informed consent

from all participating private school teachers was obtained, ensuring confidentiality of their personal information and responses, guaranteeing voluntary participation with the right to withdraw at any time, and maintaining respect and sensitivity towards participants throughout the research process. All data collected will be anonymized and securely stored to protect participants' identities, and will be treated with dignity and honesty during interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Motivation For Teaching in a Private School

Generated Theme: Career Development and Practical Necessity The decision to apply for a teaching position in a private school setting is influenced by a combination of career development and practical necessity. This is supported by several responses from participants.

For instance, one participant shared, "Because financial help is urgently needed to support my family" (Key Informant 1). Another participant mentioned, "I think it's because of pressure and existential crisis after college and of course I couldn't afford to be broke" (Key Informant 2). Other participants emphasized their motivations as follows: "To earn, experience, and practice my profession" (Key Informant 3); "I was given an opportunity when the school TIC called me and asked if I had applied to any other schools. She informed me that the school needed a science teacher, and I saw it as a gateway to begin my teaching career. Therefore, I decided to grab the opportunity and become part of the institution" (Key Informant 4); "I decided to apply in a private school to hone my abilities in teaching and this serves as my review as well in my board exam" (Key Informant 5); and "For experience and to earn points I can use once I enter DepEd" (Key Informant 6).

Analyzing this theme reveals that novice teachers are driven by both personal financial needs and professional growth aspirations when choosing to work in private schools. This highlights the importance of schools offering supportive environments that foster career development and address practical needs, such as financial stability and opportunities for professional advancement. The implication is that private schools must focus on retaining teachers by providing competitive compensation, opportunities for growth, and a supportive work environment.

In the Philippine context, studies have shown that private schools play a significant role in providing employment opportunities for novice teachers, often serving as training grounds before transitioning to public schools (Ching et al., 2023). Financial constraints and the need for professional experience are common motivators among Filipino teachers (Philippine Business for Education [PBE], 2025). Internationally, similar trends are observed. For instance, research in Vietnam highlights how private schools attract novice teachers by offering immediate employment opportunities despite lower pay compared to public institutions (Vietnam Teaching Jobs, 2022). These findings align with global challenges in teacher retention and emphasize the need for strategic reforms in teacher education and employment policies.

Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers in Private Schools **Generated Theme: Heavy Workload and Misaligned Responsibilities** Novice teachers in private schools face significant challenges related to heavy workloads and teaching responsibilities that do not align with their areas of expertise. To support this, several participants shared their struggles with these issues.

One respondent mentioned, "There are a lot of challenges that I've encountered here in our school. First, the teaching loads since I have a lot of subjects that doesn't align with my field. Second, the students, I am having a hard time in teaching with them, I cannot say that I am not knowledgeable or capable enough but even the basics they don't remember it so you really have to double the effort, repeat again enable to really transfer the learning effectively. Lastly, the exams, the school conduct 8 examinations per year 1 unit test and 1 quarter exam, and with lots of subjects I cannot cram it" (Key Informant 2). Another teacher echoed this, highlighting the exhaustion caused by teaching responsibilities, stating, "One of the main challenges I faced was managing student behavior, as the attitudes of students today differ significantly from the past. Additionally, I struggled with the heavy workload since I was required to teach seven subjects every day. This schedule was exhausting and demanded extensive preparation, especially because some subjects were outside my area of specialization" (Key Informant 4). Other participants noted challenges such as handling subjects outside their field (Key

Informant 3), managing diverse student needs (Key Informant 1), dealing with classroom management and inclusivity issues due to lack of experience (Key Informant 5), and handling paperwork alongside difficult students (Key Informant 6). These challenges often leave teachers feeling overwhelmed and stretched thin.

The theme of heavy workload and misaligned responsibilities highlights the systemic issues within private school settings. Teachers are often tasked with handling multiple subjects or duties beyond their expertise, leading to diminished teaching efficiency and increased stress. This misalignment not only affects the teachers' well-being but also impacts the quality of education delivered to students. Furthermore, the excessive workload can result in burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and higher turnover rates among novice teachers. Addressing these challenges requires school administrators to provide adequate support systems, such as assigning subjects aligned with teachers' specializations and offering professional development opportunities. Additionally, reducing administrative tasks and ensuring manageable teaching loads could significantly improve teachers' performance and morale.

Local literature underscores similar findings, Barrios et al. (2023) revealed that intensified workloads among high school teachers in Southern Philippines decreased teaching efficiency. Teachers often take on multiple subjects to increase their salaries, but this practice negatively impacts their performance and well-being. Bongco and Ancho (2019) also noted that Filipino teachers frequently work beyond official hours, taking home unfinished tasks, which leads to stress and compromises personal relationships.

Internationally, Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) highlighted that novice teachers face challenges such as misaligned responsibilities and heavy workloads globally. These factors contribute to difficulties in classroom management and lesson delivery, ultimately affecting student outcomes. Similarly, Allen et al. (2021), which highlights that excessive workloads remain a key issue for teachers, particularly in the early stages of their careers.

Effective Strategies for Novice Teachers in Private Schools

Generated Theme: Preparation and Adaptation Strategies Novice teachers in private schools have employed diverse preparation and adaptation strategies to address the challenges of their roles. Participants shared various approaches, such as using multimedia presentations and game-based activities to engage students.

To support this, one teacher noted, "I used multimedia presentations during my lessons and active game-based activities for them" (Key Informant 1). Another teacher emphasized studying lessons in advance and ensuring students grasp concepts before progressing, stating, "With regards to the challenges being mentioned above, the strategies that I have used is studying my lessons though I can't say that I am prepared enough. Then, my goal is not to teach really the whole assigned topics in CG I have to make sure first if they really get the concept before moving to the next lessons since most of them were passive learner. Lastly, I recycle examinations from online sources that is aligned to my topic so I really don't need to create like all items" (Key Informant 2). Teachers also highlighted the importance of preparing lessons and activities ahead of time to foster active student participation, as seen in the approach of conducting home visits or one-on-one sessions for students requiring special attention, described as, "I study and prepare my lessons and activities ahead of time so that during class lecture students will actively participate. Additionally, I conducted home visitation and one-on-one session with students who lacks discipline and needs attention" (Key Informant 3). Establishing clear classroom rules, improving time management, seeking advice from experienced colleagues, and conducting extra research were noted as effective methods for managing workloads and boosting confidence, as one teacher explained, "To address these challenges, I established clear classroom rules and consistently enforced while working to build strong rapport with my students. I also improved my time management by creating a detailed schedule for lesson planning and grading. Additionally, I sought advice from experienced colleagues and conducted extra research to better understand subjects outside my specialization. These strategies have been very effective in managing my workload and boosting my teaching confidence" (Key Informant 4). Some teachers adapted their strategies to meet the needs of children requiring special attention by practicing patience and inclusivity, as noted, "Being a private teacher in my early year changes me a lot, I got to prolong my patience and practice different strategies in a classroom setting for them to feel that they are included. Especially that inside of my classroom I have children who are needing special attention. These experiences have help me to be equipped not just my expertise

in teaching but also how to properly handle them" (Key Informant 5). Finally, prioritizing tasks, setting schedules, and maintaining open communication with students were identified as key strategies for fostering discipline and respect, as described, "I managed my time by prioritizing urgent tasks, setting schedules, and working on paperwork gradually to avoid last-minute stress while seeking support from my co-teacher. For hardheaded students, I imposed clear rules with consistent consequences and maintained open communication to encourage discipline and respect" (Key Informant 6).

The theme of preparation and adaptation highlights the proactive measures novice teachers take to overcome challenges in private school settings. These strategies demonstrate their commitment to improving teaching effectiveness despite limited experience. The emphasis on preparation, such as studying lessons in advance or creating detailed schedules, underscores the importance of organization in managing workloads. Adaptation strategies, including multimedia use and personalized interventions like home visits, reveal how teachers tailor their approaches to meet diverse student needs. The implication is that novice teachers must be resourceful and flexible to succeed in private schools, where expectations can be high, and resources may be limited. Schools can support these efforts by providing professional development opportunities focused on time management, inclusive teaching practices, and effective classroom management.

Local literature from the Philippines highlights similar challenges faced by novice teachers. For instance, a study by Almerino et al. (2020) found that Filipino beginning teachers often struggle with classroom management and lesson preparation but adapt by seeking mentorship from colleagues and using innovative teaching methods. International literature echoes these findings; a study by Flores (2019) emphasized that novice teachers globally rely on preparation and adaptability as critical tools for overcoming initial challenges. Furthermore, research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2021) suggests that professional development programs focusing on these areas significantly enhance teacher effectiveness during their early years.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NOVICE TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SCHOOL SETTINGS

Generated Theme: Flexibility and Adaptability The theme of flexibility and adaptability was consistently emphasized by participants as a key recommendation for novice teachers entering private schools.

To support this, one participant noted that private schools are excellent training grounds for showcasing flexibility, advising future teachers to "go with the flow" (Key Informant 2). Similarly, another participant highlighted the importance of embracing changes in the educational system and being ready to adapt at all times, stating, "Being a private school teacher, I come to realized that it is important to be flexible and learn to embrace the changes in our educational system today. Explore and be ready at all times" (Key Informant 3). Another participant stressed patience and adaptability, alongside establishing clear rules and seeking guidance from senior teachers, as they advised, "My advice to future novice teachers is to remain patient and adaptable. Establish clear classroom rules from the beginning and apply consistently. Don't hesitate to seek guidance from senior teachers and make use of available resources to enhance your skills. Effective time management and organization are also crucial when handling multiple subjects" (Key Informant 4). These responses collectively underline the necessity of being flexible and adaptable in navigating the dynamic challenges of private school teaching. Other advice included being optimistic and creative (Key Informant 1), not limiting expectations based on internship experiences (Key Informant 5), and being active and assertive in setting clear rules to gain student respect (Key Informant 6).

Flexibility and adaptability are critical traits for novice teachers in private schools due to the dynamic nature of teaching environments. Teachers must adjust their methods to meet diverse student needs, respond to curriculum changes, and manage unexpected situations effectively. This adaptability not only ensures smooth classroom management but also fosters resilience in teachers, enabling them to thrive despite challenges. For novice educators, developing these skills can lead to better job satisfaction, improved student outcomes, and professional growth. The implications of this theme extend beyond individual classrooms. Flexible teachers contribute to creating resilient educational systems capable of adapting to societal shifts, such as technological advancements or policy changes. Moreover, fostering adaptability among novice teachers can help mitigate stress caused by mismatched expectations or rigid teaching practices.

Local literature in the Philippines highlights similar findings. Studies emphasize that Filipino educators often face challenges such as limited resources and evolving curricula, making flexibility a vital skill for effective teaching (Posthumus, 2023). Internationally, research supports the idea that adaptability enhances teacher resilience and efficacy. For instance, flexible learning environments have been shown to improve collaboration among educators, enhance teaching methodologies, and bolster student engagement (Everyday Speech, 2023; Posthumus, 2023). Additionally, tools like the Six Staffordshire Teaching Styles Questionnaire have been developed to help educators reflect on their adaptability and teaching styles, further underscoring its importance (PMC, 2007).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study highlights several key themes that are crucial for novice teachers in private school settings. The motivation for teaching in private schools is often driven by career development and practical necessity, indicating that teachers are drawn to these environments for professional growth and stability. However, novice teachers face significant challenges, primarily a heavy workload and misaligned responsibilities, which can hinder their effectiveness and job satisfaction. To overcome these challenges, novice teachers can employ preparation and adaptation strategies, such as thorough lesson planning, continuous professional development, and adapting to the unique demands of private schools.

Furthermore, flexibility and adaptability are essential for success in these settings, as they enable teachers to navigate diverse student needs and school expectations effectively. This research underscores the importance of supporting novice teachers in private schools through targeted training, workload management, and fostering a culture of adaptability. By addressing these areas, private schools can enhance teacher retention, improve educational outcomes, and create a more sustainable and fulfilling teaching environment.

RECOMMENDATION

To effectively support novice teachers in private school settings, several key strategies can be implemented:

Private schools may establish targeted training programs that focus on essential skills such as lesson planning, classroom management, and professional development. Additionally, mentorship opportunities can be invaluable, pairing novice teachers with experienced mentors who can provide guidance, emotional support, and practical advice to help navigate challenges like heavy workloads and misaligned responsibilities.

Schools may also evaluate and adjust workloads to ensure that tasks are distributed fairly, allowing novice teachers to focus on teaching and student engagement. In addition, they may encourage continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and access to educational resources which can enhance teaching strategies and adaptability.

Furthermore, novice teachers are encouraged to adopt flexible teaching approaches tailored to student needs, such as differentiated instruction and creative engagement strategies. Promoting regular self-reflection among novice teachers can help identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes, boosting confidence and professional growth.

Finally, school administration may establish emotional support systems, such as counseling or peer groups, that can address the stress associated with transitioning into teaching roles. By implementing these strategies, private schools can foster a supportive environment that enhances teacher retention, improves educational outcomes, and creates a more sustainable and fulfilling teaching experience.

REFERENCES

1. Allen, R., Jerrim, J., & Sims, S. (2021). How did the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic effect teacher wellbeing? Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities Working Paper, 21(2), 1–29. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx>
2. Almerino, P., Ocampo, J., & Ponce, R. (2020). Challenges of novice teachers in the Philippines:

- Strategies for professional growth. *Philippine Journal of Education*, 96(2), 45–60.
3. Barrios, A.R., Claudio, G.A., Bilonoac, L.C., Beldia, L.L., & Sosas, R.V. (2023). Workload and Teaching Efficiency of High School Teachers in Southern Baptist College. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*.
 4. Bongco, R.T., & Ancho, I.V. (2019). Exploring Filipino Teachers' Professional Workload. *Journal of Research, Policy & Practice of Teachers & Teacher Education*.
 5. Çakmak, M., Gündüz, M., & Emstad, A. B. (2018). Challenging moments of novice teachers: Survival strategies developed through experiences. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 49, 147–162.
 6. Ching, C. C., Beboso, B. S., & Naparan, G. B. (2023). I Stay Long: A Phenomenological Study of Faculty Members Serving Many Years in A Private Educational Institution. *Canadian Journal of Educational and Social Studies*, 3(1), 84–95. <https://doi.org/10.53103/cjess.v3i1.115>
 7. Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2021). Effective teacher preparation: Evidence-based practices for supporting novice educators. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 72(1), 5–23.
 8. Dias-Lacy, S. L., & Guirguis, R. V. (2017). Challenges for new teachers and ways of coping with them. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(3), 265–272. Retrieved from <https://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/jel/article/view/68112>
 9. Dias-Lacy, S.L., & Guirguis, R.V. (2017). Challenges for new teachers and ways of coping with them. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(3), 265–272.
 10. Everyday Speech. (2023). Embracing Flexibility and Adaptability in Teaching: A Guide for Educators. Retrieved from <https://everydaysspeech.com/sel-implementation/embracing-flexibility-and-adaptability-in-teaching-a-guide-for-educators/>
 11. Felisilda, Angelito & Labitad, Gina & Comon, Jovit. (2024). Challenges and Performance of Novice Teachers: Basis for School Management Plan. *American Journal of Arts and Human Science*. 3. 96-118. 10.54536/ajahs.v3i4.3866.
 12. Flores, M. A. (2019). Beginning teachers' challenges: Building resilience through preparation and adaptability. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 98(1), 123–135.
 13. Philippine Business for Education (PBE). (2025). PBE backs bills strengthening teacher professionalization in the Philippines. Retrieved January 15, 2025, from <https://www.pbep.ph>
 14. PMC. (2007). Developing your teaching style: Increasing effectiveness in healthcare teaching. Retrieved from <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2599988/>
 15. Posthumus, M. (2023). School Resilience and Educator Efficacy: The Power of Flexible Learning Environments. Retrieved from <https://www.gettingsmart.com/2023/08/17/school-resilience-and-educator-efficacy-the-power-of-flexible-learning-environments/>
 16. Vietnam Teaching Jobs. (2022). Hiring Filipino full-time teachers. Retrieved June 21, 2022, from <https://vietnamteachingjobs.com>

