

# **Trials and Triumphs of Licensed Professional Teachers Working in Non-Teaching Industry**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study delves into the career transition of Licensed Professional Teachers (LPTs) as they move into non-teaching roles, examining the factors that drive their decisions and the implications of these choices. The research is guided by three primary objectives: to uncover the reasons behind LPTs' decisions to pursue non-teaching careers, to explore the challenges they encounter in these new roles and the strategies they use to cope, and to glean insights from their experiences in non-teaching environments. Using a phenomenological approach, the study explores the lived experiences and perspectives of LPTs who have made this career shift. In-depth interviews will be conducted, and thematic analysis will be employed to reveal the key factors influencing their decisions and the significance of these transitions. This approach seeks to uncover the subjective realities of participants, highlighting how they gain empowerment through recognizing their transferable skills, cultivating adaptability, and leveraging support networks. The findings will provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding career transitions for educators, offering valuable insights for both teachers and organizations looking to support their professional journeys. Ultimately, the study aims to inform strategies that facilitate successful integration into non-teaching industries, enhancing the overall professional development of licensed teachers.

**Keywords:** adaptability, career, empowerment, integration, transition, teachers

## **INTRODUCTION**

Obtaining a college degree is highly valued by students because it opens the door to professional opportunities and income generation. In the Philippines, several laws have been enacted to improve the educational system and increase student participation in higher education. One notable law is RA 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. This legislation introduced a two-year senior high school program that allows students to choose a track aligned with their interests.

The goal is to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for their chosen college degree and future career. Over the years, the number of tertiary-level graduates has steadily increased. Despite this growth, the country faces challenges such as unemployment, and brain drain. Additionally, many graduates pursue careers unrelated to their college degrees.

This trend is not limited to any specific profession; for example, education graduates often find themselves working in non-teaching jobs. University graduates typically experience a transitional period between completing their degree and entering the workforce. During this time, a significant number choose to change careers for various reasons, reflecting the complexities of aligning education with employment. [1]. Reference [2] highlights that science education in Philippine schools faces several challenges, notably the shortage of qualified science teachers. Additionally, narrative data from Reference [1] reveal that many graduates leave the teaching profession due to financial and economic concerns, particularly the perception that their salaries are inadequate. A mismatch between personal traits and teaching responsibilities has become evident, including health issues related to the demands of the profession. Although trained as teachers, several respondents did

not identify themselves strictly as teachers but rather as members of related professions within the teaching field.

Reference [3] further identified multiple factors influencing the choice of a teaching career, such as perceived teaching ability, altruistic motivations, intrinsic interests, and extrinsic incentives. The same study also highlighted four primary stressors faced by teachers: high levels of accountability, pressure from monitoring, constant demands for change, and a perceived lack of respect for their profession. These stressors contribute significantly to the challenges teachers encounter in their roles.

Many teachers feel unprepared during their first few years and often perceive insufficient support from their schools, which can lead to distress, low job satisfaction, and a desire to leave the profession. A major factor contributing to the high turnover rate among new teachers is the gap between theory and practice—sometimes called practice shock, reality shock, or transfer shock—referring to the difficult transition from student to professional. New educators struggle to apply the theoretical knowledge gained in college while managing practical classroom demands, including discipline, creating a safe learning environment, ensuring quality education for all students, and collaborating with colleagues and school administrators [4].

This research explores the experiences of licensed professional teachers in non-teaching industries to provide insights and advocate for support systems and inclusive policies that facilitate smoother career transitions beyond the classroom.

## Objectives of the Study

The study aims to understand why licensed professional teachers tend to choose jobs outside of teaching. Specifically, this aims to:

- To identify the reasons that lead licensed teachers to apply for and accept non-teaching jobs.
- To explore the challenges that licensed teachers encounter in non-teaching industries and their coping mechanisms in these new work environments.
- To gain insights from the experiences of licensed teachers in non-teaching roles

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of Licensed Professional Teachers who have transitioned into non-teaching careers. The research was conducted in various companies across the Province of Bukidnon, involving 3 to 10 participants until data saturation was achieved. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews using a validated questionnaire, with face-to-face interactions to record and later transcribe participants' experiences. The data were analyzed using Collaizzi's method, which involved identifying and refining themes to reveal the essence of participants' experiences. To ensure rigor, member-checking was conducted to verify the accuracy of interpretations. Ethical considerations were upheld through informed consent, ensuring participants' autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Themes on the Transition of Licensed Professional Teachers to Non-Teaching Roles

Theme	Description
Pursuit of Stability and Growth Beyond Teaching	Teachers transition to non-teaching roles seeking financial stability, competitive compensation, and personal growth opportunities. Many express dissatisfactions with salary and job security in education.
Navigating Transition Challenges	Teachers face significant challenges adapting to new work environments, including learning curves, emotional demands, and the pressure of

	different professional expectations.
Coping Strategies in the Workplace Transition	Participants utilize proactive strategies such as establishing routines, seeking mentorship, engaging in continuous learning, and practicing effective time management to manage challenges.
Empowering Licensed Teachers through Adaptation and Skill Recognition	Highlights the importance of recognizing transferable skills, fostering adaptability, and engaging in lifelong learning to successfully navigate career transitions.

The transition of licensed professional teachers into non-teaching roles is driven by diverse motivations. One key factor is the pursuit of financial stability, as teaching often presents limitations in terms of salary and job security. Many participants expressed a desire for more competitive compensation and benefits, which they found lacking in education but readily available in other sectors, such as call centers and hospitality.

The pursuit of personal and professional growth emerged as another significant factor influencing teachers' decisions to transition into non-teaching roles. Many participants expressed a desire for fresh challenges and opportunities to develop new skills in areas such as customer service, entrepreneurship, or engaging with diverse communities. This reflects an intrinsic motivation to broaden their abilities and make a greater impact beyond the classroom. Financial concerns also played a pivotal role in shaping these career shifts. Teaching often comes with salary constraints, which can lead to financial stress and dissatisfaction.

Research has shown that economic strain has a profound impact on teachers' attitudes, performance, and their likelihood of leaving the profession. For instance, a study conducted within the San Francisco Unified School District revealed that nearly half of surveyed teachers frequently experienced financial anxiety, which directly affected their job satisfaction and drove them to seek higher-paying opportunities [5]. Furthermore, economic analyses indicate that the disparity in earnings between teaching and other professions is a strong predictor of teacher attrition, particularly during the early stages of their careers [6].

The pursuit of a better work-life balance was another crucial factor driving teachers to transition into non-teaching roles. The demanding schedules often associated with teaching can be overwhelming, leading to stress and personal sacrifices. In contrast, non-teaching positions typically offer more structured hours and a reduced workload, allowing for a more balanced and healthier personal life. Reference [7] underscores the challenges teachers face, particularly during periods of remote emergency teaching, where irregular hours, lack of support, and role conflicts exacerbate stress.

These demanding conditions often lead professionals to seek jobs with more structured schedules and reduced stress. Beyond work-life balance, teachers often express a desire for new challenges and opportunities to expand their skills. Dissatisfaction with limited career advancement within teaching can prompt them to explore alternative careers, such as entrepreneurship or customer service, which offer diverse skill development and broader audience engagement.

High turnover rates due to burnout or dissatisfaction can negatively impact student outcomes and school environments. Addressing these systemic challenges is crucial to improving teacher retention and maintaining a stable educational environment [6],[8].

These difficulties arise from significant differences in work environments, professional expectations, and emotional demands. Participants highlighted various obstacles they encountered as they adapted to new industries, where the norms and pressures differed substantially from those in education.

Teachers, accustomed to nurturing environments, often struggle to adapt to roles that require conflict resolution or managing upset clients. Emotional labor becomes crucial in this adjustment, as they must develop new strategies to manage stress and maintain resilience in high-pressure situations. For instance, teachers have employed emotional labor strategies like surface acting and genuine expression to navigate professional challenges [9].

Moreover, participants reported facing a steep learning curve as they adapted to new job requirements, such as mastering unfamiliar software or understanding industry-specific protocols. This rapid skill acquisition can be overwhelming, leading to feelings of inadequacy, especially for those transitioning from the structured environment of a classroom. The shift from a predictable teaching schedule to the demands of a non-teaching job often requires significant adjustments in time management and workload expectations, resulting in increased stress and difficulty balancing competing responsibilities.

Teachers transitioning to new industries often face a steep learning curve [10]. Many struggle to master unfamiliar tools, software, and protocols that differ significantly from those used in educational settings. For instance, teachers moving into hospitality or customer service roles often feel overwhelmed by complex booking systems or customer service protocols. This adjustment can be particularly challenging for individuals accustomed to the structured routines of classroom teaching [11].

The shift from predictable schedules to the dynamic demands of non-teaching roles often requires flexibility and adaptability, which can lead to stress as teachers adjust to new workflows. Additionally, professional identity plays a critical role in this transition. Many teachers grapple with societal perceptions of leaving a "noble" profession like teaching, which can evoke feelings of insecurity or defensiveness when questioned about their decision [8],[10],[11]

Adapting to new workplace cultures is another hurdle for transitioning teachers. Differences in organizational structures, team dynamics, and operational norms can create feelings of isolation or uncertainty. Building networks and seeking mentorship in new industries have been identified as effective strategies to mitigate these challenges [12].

The diverse coping mechanisms that licensed professional teachers use to navigate the challenges of transitioning into non-teaching roles. Participants emphasized a proactive approach to managing workplace issues, highlighting the importance of establishing routines, leveraging support systems, engaging in continuous learning, and practicing effective time management.

Teachers adapt to new roles outside the education sector, focusing on their proactive strategies for managing stress, building resilience, and thriving in unfamiliar environments. Routines play a vital role in providing stability and predictability during transitional periods. Teachers often incorporate mindfulness practices, regular exercise, and structured schedules to manage stress and maintain focus, which also enhances mental well-being and productivity [13]. Similarly, positive reframing and active coping strategies among secondary school teachers, emphasizing the benefits of peer interactions in navigating workplace challenges [14].

Time management emerges as another critical strategy for balancing workloads in non-teaching roles. Teachers frequently rely on planners or digital tools to organize tasks and prioritize responsibilities effectively. This approach not only boosts productivity but also supports work-life balance by reducing stress levels. Planning has been recognized as one of the most widely used techniques for managing occupational demands [14].

Peer support also plays a crucial role in easing the transition. Participants emphasized the value of open communication with coworkers during breaks, where sharing experiences, discussing challenges, and brainstorming solutions fosters camaraderie. This supportive environment helps alleviate feelings of isolation often encountered in new workplaces and encourages individuals to express concerns and seek advice.

Adapting to new roles typically involves acquiring new skills and knowledge. Teachers transitioning into other industries often proactively engage in learning activities, such as mastering new software or understanding industry-specific protocols. Reflecting on their experiences helps them identify strengths and areas for improvement, which in turn builds confidence and adaptability. Maintaining a clear boundary between work and personal life is crucial for overall well-being during career transitions. Teachers who actively manage their work-life balance tend to report higher job satisfaction and better mental health outcomes. By prioritizing personal interests outside of work, individuals can recharge and maintain long-term motivation [13].

The key strategies and recommendations shared by respondents to support licensed professional teachers

transitioning into non-teaching industries. The focus on empowerment through adaptability and recognizing transferable skills underscores a proactive approach to career development. By leveraging their educational backgrounds effectively, teachers can navigate new roles with confidence and purpose.

It is also noted that identifying transferable skills, fostering adaptability, pursuing continuous learning, building networks, and maintaining resilience during career transitions is important. Teachers possess a broad range of transferable skills, including communication, conflict resolution, organization, and leadership, which are highly valued in non-teaching industries. These skills, honed through managing diverse teams, breaking down complex information, and navigating high-pressure situations, are particularly applicable in corporate environments [15],[16].

Adaptability is crucial for navigating new environments and overcoming challenges during career transitions. Teachers are accustomed to responding to diverse learners, unexpected situations, and evolving knowledge, which requires flexibility. This adaptability not only improves teachers' well-being but also reduces disengagement and enhances job commitment [17].

Engaging in lifelong learning through certifications and short courses helps teachers build relevant skills for new industries. Professional development activities like online training, workshops, and mentoring can boost confidence and employability. Reference [18] highlights the importance of continuous learning for adapting to fast-evolving professional demands.

Networking is a powerful tool for career transitions, providing guidance, insights, and encouragement through connections with colleagues, mentors, and professionals. Peer learning has been identified as one of the most impactful forms of professional development. Adjusting to a new career takes time and persistence. By viewing challenges as opportunities for growth, individuals can foster resilience and stay motivated. Research on career adaptability among teachers demonstrates how emotionalized learning experiences strengthen self-efficacy and work engagement during transitions [15],[19].

## CONCLUSION

The themes that emerged from the participants' responses underscore the critical role of empowerment, adaptability, and skill recognition for licensed professional teachers transitioning into non-teaching industries. By harnessing their transferable skills, embracing change, pursuing continuous learning, and cultivating supportive networks, teachers can successfully navigate this career shift. The insights gathered highlight a proactive approach to professional development, revealing the potential for educators to flourish in diverse roles beyond the classroom. Educators are encouraged to acknowledge the value of their existing competencies—such as communication, conflict resolution, and organization—and adapt these skills to new contexts. A commitment to ongoing education and the establishment of strong professional networks are essential for facilitating a smooth transition. Moreover, patience and resilience are vital as teachers adjust to new environments and challenges, enabling them to transform obstacles into opportunities for growth.

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