



Localized Deployment of Pre-Service Teachers: Student-Teachers Experiences in Focus

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ABSTRACT

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Teaching internship provides opportunity to pre-service-teachers to have a full-time teaching experience in schools under the supervision of a cooperating teacher. Localization deployment of student-teachers was not a new concept in Education, but it was implemented for the first time at the Southern Philippines Agri-business and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology (SPAMAST). This study used the qualitative-phenomenological approach and involved 32 pre-service teachers. The results revealed that familiarization, lesser expenses, teachers' attitudes, concern for students, and realization were the themes obtained for the benefits of localization while familiarization, expectation, and temptation were the disadvantages. Appreciation of students, participation of the learners, and performance of students were themes for the best experiences. The findings showed that familiarity could have both positive and negative effects to localized deployment of pre-service teachers. It would lead to animosity and lack of trust and slackness and carelessness. Pre-service teachers better equipped themselves by setting ground rules in interacting with students and in communicating with cooperating teachers. The right monitoring and supervision need to set in place. Localize deployment is a wonderful idea, but implementers may need to conduct exhaustive preparations which involve the stakeholders.

Keywords:

Localized deployment, pre-service teachers, SPAMAST

INTRODUCTION

Teaching internship provides opportunity to student-teachers to have a full-time teaching in schools under the supervision of a cooperating teacher/trainer and student teaching supervisor (CMO 78 S. 2017). It is during the teaching internship that pre-service teachers encounter the real classroom situations and handle the class as professional teachers should be. Teaching internship intends to provide the pre-service-teachers with actual learning experiences in which they can observe, substantiate, reflect on, and practice the actual teaching-learning scenario.

Several literature mentioned about the problems in deploying the pre-service teachers to their cooperating academic institutions. Bain et al. (2009) mentioned that pre-service teachers were required to attain mastery of the course content. It means that pre-service teachers needed to

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have rigorous preparations. On the other hand, Pennington (2007) pointed out the ability of the pre-service teachers in dealing with the cultures of students without showing their biases while Ma et al. (2005) reiterated the pre-service teachers' competence on computer technology which were relevant in teaching.

Localized deployment of pre-service-teachers means sending students to cooperating academic institutions located in their own place. The purpose was for the PSTs to serve their own communities. When PSTs were deployed, there would be a great chance that they would meet and be mentored by their previous teachers and advisers. There would be a feeling of belongingness, confidence, self-importance, satisfaction, and pride.

With localize deployment, PSTs could see the needs of their own communities and would be able to realize they could be those individuals that their communities were looking for. These would lighten their willingness to become future educators and be motivated to love their future profession. When these realizations were intensified,

the PSTs would eventually wear self-confidence in teaching as though self-confidence was never being a problem at all.

This study was conducted due to the scarcity of literature and studies on localized pre-service teachers. Several studies on deployment were available but did not focus on localization rather on the perceptions of cooperating teachers on pre-service teachers' performances and difficulties they encountered. This study gave new concept on alternative way on how pre-service may be deployed and may contribute new knowledge in the implementation of deployment of pre-service teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general aim of this study was to determine the personal experiences of the pre-service teachers who were deployed locally. Particularly, it ascertained to meet the following:

1. To determine the procedures in the implementation of localized deployment of Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs);
2. To ascertain the advantages and disadvantages of localized deployment;
3. To know the best experiences of the PSTs;
4. To find suggestions of the PSTs to improve the localized deployment.

THEORETICAL LENS

This study considered two systems of teacher deployment contended by Lewin (2000), the deployment by central authority and the deployment by a market system. Shibeshi (2009) mentioned that in the deployment by central authority, distance from local pressures, fairness, and transparency is seen as advantages. On the other hand, Hallak (1990) said that market system deployment advertises teaching vacancies for teachers to applying specific schools of their choice. The process of this deployment is in direct opposite of the centralized deployment. It hires teachers to a local level and teachers can choose the place of their preferences.

In this study, the deployment of pre-service teachers was required (CMO. 78 S 2017); however, the implementers had the freedom where to assign the pre-service teachers. In this case, the deployment was localized. The localized deployment may be considered as a sub-category of the market system because pre-service teachers were given the freedom to select their communities as their place of practice-teaching.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

The focus of this study was finding out the implications of the localized deployment of pre-service teachers deployed by Southern Philippines Agri-business and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology (SPAMAST). Moreover, this study was conducted using the qualitative method through phenomenological approach. Thus, the

results of this study cannot generalize the entire population (San Jose, 2012) of pre-service teachers. Further, this study only included the pre-service teachers from the Education Department Division of Digos City.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the qualitative-phenomenological method. This method was used to investigate the participants' opinions of the experience (Kuper et al., 2008); to understand the participants' personal encounter of the experience (Van Manem, 2016); to explore the participants significant lived experiences (San Jose et al. (2017); and to record the personal narrations and reflections of the participants. On the other hand, the phenomenological method allowed the researcher to use of focus group in gathering the information among the participants while generating good understanding of the gained experiences of the participants.

SAMPLE OF RESEARCH

This qualitative-phenomenological study used the non-probability sampling method in selecting the pre-service teachers. The researchers randomly selected 32 pre-service teachers from different cooperating schools after their teaching experiences. Further, these selected pre-service teachers were grouped into eight focus groups. Each focus group had four members.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument used in this study was a researchers-made interview guide questionnaire. The questions and probe-questions were based on the objectives of the study. The interview-guide questions were validated by experts. This was done to assess and shape its contents, determine its reliability, and to ascertain its outcome efficiency. The researchers were convinced that validating the interview guide-questions gave them the opportunity to polish thoroughly the questions for its purpose.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in Table 1 the results of the thematic analysis conducted based on the gathered information from the focus groups. In the presentation of information, the frequency of responses was considered as *General* if a theme obtained 50% and above; *Typical* if a theme acquired 21% and above but not more than 49%; while *Variant* if a theme earned less than 20% and below.

Five themes were culled for the advantages in the conduct of the localized deployment. These themes were familiarization, less expenses, teachers' attitudes, concern for students, and realizations. Each theme was discussed below.

Familiarization. Generally, the pre-service teachers found familiarity with the teachers, who were their advisers and mentors during their high school or elementary years,

was considered as advantageous. Animosity was no longer an issue whenever they dealt with them. Moreover, they already had knowledge of the culture of the students since most of them were their neighbors. Also, they were already accustomed to the environment. They felt at ease with their surroundings.

This result corroborated with Lengyel and Rosen (2015) who mentioned that with familiarity, student-teachers were able to develop a sense of ‘recognizing situations’ which can be relevant in improving their practices. It implies that localization may be a good practice to implement in deploying the student-teachers.

Table 1. Themes and core ideas on localized deployment of pre-service teachers

Themes	Core Ideas	Frequency of Response
Familiarization	- knew already the teachers	General
	- understood students’ culture	
	- acquainted by the environment	
Less expensive	- distance of the school	General
	- no hassle	
Teachers’ attitude	- warmth	General
	- approachable	
Concern of students	- can contact problematic students easily	Variant
Realizations	- teaching is touching lives	
Familiarity	- almost all people knew each other	General
	- student-teacher relationship difficult to define	
	- pressure of the attention	
Expectation	- performance rating is taken for granted	General
Temptation	- high level of performance is sought after & custom to becoming late and going home	Typical
Appreciation	- giving importance to their efforts & presence	General
Participation of learners	- CT & Principal are happy cooperating with the lessons	Variant
Performance of students	- students ask assistance	General
	- getting perfect in the exam	Variant
	- becoming achievers	
Improvement	- early deployment	General
	- holding of orientation program continue	Typical
	- with localization	Variant
	- one on one ration	
	- giving class mayor the authority to supervise	
	- not to be assigned in higher years	

Less Expenses. On the other hand, since the pre-service teachers were assigned to their locality, they could save money. The school was a walking distance or a ride away from their houses. Further, most of them were not stressed because they could arrive in their school assignments without impediment like traffic. Likewise, during lunch time, they could go home instead of buying food. Thus, localize deployment could allow savings on the part of pre-service teachers.

Teachers’ Attitude. Related to familiarity, the pre-service teachers found their cooperating teachers very warmth, accommodating, and approachable. The cooperating teachers’ attitudes helped them by giving pieces of advice on how to manage the class. Moreover, they had open communications with their cooperating teachers. According to Graham (2006) cooperating teachers’ attitude is influenced by the ‘depth of understanding of their role in the process; hence, they take responsibility with clear

expectations.’ On the other hand, Gallo-Fox and Scantlebury (2016) mention that cooperating teachers’ behavior may be attributed to their expectations of positive and renewed energy toward the practice of co-teaching. Evidently, Ronfeldt et al. (2018) find that effective cooperating teachers likely influenced pre-service teachers’ performance. This goes to show that cooperating teachers’ characteristics were good ingredients in an effective pre-service program.

Concern for Students. Interestingly, few pre-service teachers expressed that through the localization, they could immediately act on some students’ concerns like absenteeism. Since, they were familiar with the students’ families and neighbors, they could act instantaneously; thus, directly solve the problem.

Realizations. Few pre-service teachers were emotional. They found the localization as a good way of giving back to the people in their communities especially the

students. In their short stint, they could able to share and touch the lives of their neighbors.

On the other side, the pre-service teachers also found disadvantages of the localized deployment. Disadvantages included three themes such as familiarization, expectation, and temptation. These themes were given descriptions below.

Familiarization. Although this theme was also considered as advantage, the same was included in the disadvantages. Generally, the pre-service teachers thought familiarity as disadvantage because they felt the pressure of attention which they were not used to. Moreover, since their students were familiar with them, student-teacher relationship was difficult to establish. On the other hand, since the pre-service teachers were known to the cooperating teachers, the latter had taken for granted the PSTs' performance evaluation; worst, they were seldom observed and evaluated. This result was congruent to Mannay and Creaghan (2016), who point out that because of familiarity, some circumstances were no longer observed; thus, not given attention.

Expectation. Likewise, the pre-service students' teaching performance were looked into; thus, they were pressured and motivated to give their best in handling their classes, in delivering their lessons, and in dealing with their students. It was mentioned in the familiarization that there were cooperating teachers who did not make observation anymore because they had high expectations of the pre-service teachers' performances. Likewise, students expected their practice teachers to be good because they were their neighbors and friends. The expectations of the cooperating teachers and students were drowning. They did not expect these people to have high regards to their teaching and interpersonal abilities. Kim and Cho (2014) also had similar findings which showed that pre-service teachers were shock of the expectation of the reality. They also found that pre-service teachers' motivation to teach was negatively linked with their efficacy and intrinsic motivation rather positively connected to external motivation. Noticeably, the cooperating teachers' attitude towards their pre-service teachers raises the questions as to whether they were helping the pre-service teachers to grow and enhance their teaching skills. Hastings (2010) pointed out that strong emotional expectations of cooperating teachers can be used to make sense on how they can shape the lives of their pre-service teachers.

Temptation. On the pre-service teachers' side, some of them believed that localization would be a source of abused if not monitored. Typically, some of their colleagues were accustomed of going to school late and most of the time go home.

The pre-service teachers had different views on what were their best experiences in the localized deployment. This question obtained three themes. These were appreciation of students, participation of the learners,

and performance of students. These themes were discussed below.

Appreciation. Most of the pre-service teachers believed that students' thoughtfulness, appreciation of their presence through showing their participation and sharing their efforts and time were the most rewarding experience. The pre-service teachers were emotional when students participate in the activities such as class activities and class gatherings. Some pre-service shared that their students were full of surprises. Students were in unison to surprise their pre-service teachers. In many instances, the pre-service teachers thought students were unwilling but unknowingly, students had already prepared. On the other hand, few pre-service teachers were exuberantly happy when they received accolades from their cooperating teachers and principals.

Participation of Learners. On the other hand, most pre-service were emotionally high when they saw their students show participation and eagerness during the conduct of the lessons. The pre-service teachers believed that when students cooperate, they understood the lessons; hence, the pre-service teachers' goals for that lesson was obtained.

Performance of Students. Variantly, few pre-service teachers mentioned that their best experience were when students obtained perfect scores in their examination. For them, the students' performance in the examination was an indication that they were effective in the delivery of their lessons. Likewise, few felt success when they were able to transform those timid and unruly students achieved high marks and become achievers. Suggestions were necessary for improvement. The pre-service teachers offered actions to be done to make better the conduct of the localized deployment.

Improvement. Generally, the problem seen in the localization was the time of the deployment. Thus, the pre-service teachers suggested that preparations may be done earlier than usual. Early deployment would mean less competition with other academic institutions which had also pre-service teachers. This would also eradicate comparison of pre-service teachers. Although variant, few pre-service teachers experienced being compared with other pre-service teachers from private schools. It made them fell inferior. Typically, some pre-service teachers suggested to have an orientation program where pre-service teachers and their assigned cooperating teachers are introduced. Although the two were familiar with each other, the culmination activity would boost the morale of the pre-service teachers. Additionally, the pre-service teachers found a culmination program an official recognition of their presence in the cooperating school. Although it was thought that localization was good, only few recommended that the program would be continued. Few pre-service teachers also suggested that there should be one-on-one ratio of pre-service-teacher to cooperating teacher. This would allow more learning on the part of the pre-service teachers because

the cooperating teacher could focus on the latter. Lastly, few suggested that the class mayors be given the power by the College Dean to supervise the pre- service teachers.

CONCLUSION

The results demonstrate that familiarity can be both a benefit and a drawback. It addresses hostility and a lack of trust on the one hand, while also encouraging laxity and carelessness on the other. As a result, pre-service teachers can establish rules for how to interact with students as well as follow the correct protocols and processes while interacting with cooperating teachers. The community has high expectations for the pre-service teacher because they view them as a source of pride and admiration. Pre-service teachers need to identify their goals and concentrate on them in order to manage their expectations. They ought to remember that it's challenging to fulfill and see through people's expectations. However, while localization saves pre-service teachers money and time, it also promotes acclimation, which can lead to abuse. The right monitoring and supervision need to set in place. Localize deployment is a wonderful idea, but implementers may need to conduct exhaustive preparations which involve the stakeholders.

IMPLICATIONS

This study suggests that each new program should be assessed so that appropriate actions for improvement can be taken. As a result, the dictum "action by research" should be followed. This idea is crucial since every line of action has its foundations. Despite some modest but manageable problems, the study's findings showed favorable advantages and the best experiences. The results of this study may help the implementers understand how to handle the drawbacks and take into consideration the recommendations made by the pre-service teachers. Orientation program may be conducted before the proper deployment to their cooperating teachers. During this time, laying out of the objectives, goals, and expectations may be given. Participation of other community leaders may also be considered. Likewise, the Department of Education (DepEd) may act promptly to the approval of the MOA so as not to impede the deployment. Moreover, the implementers of the localized deployment may develop protocols as guide in the deploying process. Moreover, a separate study for cooperating teachers may be carried out to determine their observations and views on the processes of the conduct the localized deployment which may help in strengthening the program.

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