



The Untold Stories of Metrobank Outstanding Teachers in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study focused on the stories of outstanding teachers from Bicol Region awarded by the Metrobank Foundation, Inc. Through convenient sampling, the five key informants were determined. There were five awardees interviewed. The study examined the common themes along with their character, instructional competence, and social responsibility. Challenges along these parameters were also discussed. Also, the impact of winning the said search was highlighted. Through thematic analysis, the study revealed that their experiences vary along with the three areas. However, the promotion to a higher rank and the chance to go abroad for training and scholarships were the opportunities they thrived after winning the search. Continuing their respective advocacies was evident to the key informants even after they were awarded and recognized. It is also interesting that the teacher awardees acknowledged putting character at first before galvanizing the skills and intellect of a human person. It is recommended that the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education institutions strengthen the skills and character of the teachers to be the best educators in our country. These teacher awardees of Metrobank could encourage more outstanding educators to join the search, and through their alumni community, they could spearhead projects and programs to upgrade the teaching pedagogies of other educators in the country for the quality education of Filipino students across all levels. Future studies could also examine the other aspects of Metrobank awardees in other regions and consider other variables in the study.

Keywords: *Qualitative Study; Bicolano; Metrobank Foundation; Search for Outstanding Teachers; Untold Stories.*

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INTRODUCTION

In searching for remarkable persons in various fields, different private and government organizations continuously honor students and professionals for so many years now. Aside from the cash prizes, medals, plaques, and other benefits at stake, these honors and prestige contribute to the welfare of the organizations/institutions they represent.

Many public servants emerged triumphant in different outstanding searches inside and outside the country. To name some, they are the late Senator Raul S. Roco, 1964 Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines National Awardee sponsored by RFM Foundation and Commission on Higher Education (CHED); Senator Bam Aquino, Ten Outstanding Young Persons in the World 2012 sponsored by Junior Chamber International; Senator Dick Gordon, awardee of The Outstanding Filipino, given by Junior Chamber International (JCI) Senate Philippines. These awardees underwent a rigorous screening process that includes a nomination process, paper screening, validation of documents submitted, nerve-wracking interviews, and written tests.

There are numerous outstanding searches at local and national levels that look for exemplary educators who had to go beyond their usual duties as classroom teachers in education. Efren Bino, a recipient of the Many Faces of a Teacher award given by BatoBalani Foundation Inc. (BBFI), was a former multi-grade teacher who experienced handling combination classes at the Elementary level. His contributions toward the development of Mataas Elementary School in Bacacay, Albay, paved the way for improving the said school [1].

Similarly, the Search for the Outstanding Teachers of Metrobank Foundation, Inc. has continuously honored the best teachers all over the country for more than thirty years now. Teacher aspirants should meet the following criteria for evaluation: Personal Qualities and Character, Instructional Competence and Teaching Effectiveness, and Professional and Community Involvement.

The said search does not just stop in the recognition rites. The Metrobank Foundation Network of Outstanding Teachers and Educators (NOTED) Inc. was organized to formalize more than three hundred members from the elementary, secondary, technical-vocational, and higher education levels. It aims to strengthen leadership skills among its

members' foster creativity and academic excellence at all educational levels; promote professional fellowship and cooperation to improve action; and contribute to the solution of education, social and cultural problems of national and international concerns [2].

This Outstanding Search is endorsed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The endorsement is under the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (R.A.) 7722, otherwise known as the *Higher Education Act of 1994*[3]. Likewise, the Department of Education (DepEd) supports the search by endorsing the search to the Schools Division Superintendents, Educational Program Supervisors, and Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Principals. The said memo stipulates the qualifications and benefits of the Outstanding Search. The office highly encourages the school heads to nominate their potential teachers in the school [4].

Article IV, Section III in the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers of the Philippines [5] stipulates that every teacher shall participate in the Continuing Professional Education (CPE) program of the Professional Regulation Commission, and shall pursue such other studies as will improve his efficiency, enhance the prestige of the profession, and strengthen his competence, virtues, and productivity to be nationally and internationally competitive.

In 2016, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Metrobank Foundation, Inc. lauded ten of the most exemplary educators in the Search for Outstanding Teachers (SOT) and all those in the teaching profession during the National Teachers' Month (NTM) Media Launch on September 8, 2016, at the DepEd Central Office in Pasig City. The winners of the 2016 SOT were awarded P500,000 each, and were honored by the Senate, the Congress, Vice President Leni Robredo, and President Rodrigo Duterte [6].

For more than three decades now, several awardees have emerged from the different provinces, especially in the Bicol Region. As of 2016, according to the database of Metrobank Foundation, there were already twenty (20) awardees from Region V. Inspired by the laudable achievements of the Metrobank awardees, the researchers believe that the journey towards achieving a goal requires a tenacious character, a bright mind, and a humble heart.

Research Questions

This study aims to collect, analyze, and reveal the untold stories of the Outstanding Bicolano Teacher Awardees. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions.

1. What are the attributes of the teacher awardees along with:
 - a) Personal Qualities and Character
 - b) Instructional Competence and Teaching Effectiveness
 - c) Professional and Community Involvement

2. What are the challenges encountered by the teacher awardees along with:
 - a) Personal Qualities and Character
 - b) Instructional Competence and Teaching Effectiveness
 - c) Professional and Community Involvement

3. What are the impacts of the Search for the Outstanding Teachers on the professional and personal lives of the teacher awardees?

Framework of the Study

The researcher utilizes the constructivism theory in this study. According to Mogashoa [7], this theory applies to qualitative education research. This theory could reveal underlying principles, issues, phenomena, which are the main aim of a case study. The participant's personal experiences and individualistic perspectives in the study are investigated in-depth to answer the questions posed in the paper.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

This study utilized the Narrative Approach in a Qualitative Study. Narrative research [8] is a term that subsumes a group of approaches that rely on individuals' written or spoken words or visual representation. These approaches typically focus on the lives of individuals as told through their own stories. The emphasis in such approaches is on the story, typically both what and how is narrated. Narrative research can be considered both a research method in itself but also the phenomenon under study. Since the focus of the research is the untold stories of the key informants, this approach matches the methodology that is needed in the present undertaking. This research focused only on the narrative accounts of the key informants supported by the artifacts in the form of photos provided by the key informants to the researcher.

Study Design and Participants

The respondents known as the study's key informants were composed of five Bicolano teacher awardees of Search for Outstanding Teachers sponsored by Metrobank Foundation. The researchers used pseudonyms for the study participants: Teacher J, Teacher R, Teacher M, Teacher L, and Teacher N. Key informants are a combination of retirees and non-retirees. They are recipients of the said award regardless of the year. They are all Bicolano residents from the provinces of Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, and Albay.

Data Gathering Tools

The following instruments were used in this study: Structured Questionnaire, photos together with the key informants, recorder, and archives requested by the researcher to the key informants before the interview.

To achieve the objectives of the present undertaking, a questionnaire was devised by the researcher which is composed of the following parts: Preliminary Questions, Character and Personality Qualities of the Awardees, Teaching Pedagogies and Best Practices, Community Projects, Challenges along with the Teaching Profession, Experiences during the Search for the Outstanding Teacher, and Impact of the Search to their Personal and Professional Lives.

Analysis of Data

The researchers manually coded the responses of the interviews and was thematically analyzed. An inter coder helped the researchers to limit the biases of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attributes of the Teacher Awardees

A. Personal Qualities and Character

The personal traits and characteristics of the teacher awardees proved that they are outstanding in their ways and time. Though some of them are already retirees, it is palpable how they impacted the lives of many because of their extraordinary personal attributes in life. This section discusses the common qualities possessed by the teacher awardees in this area.

Both Teacher L and Teacher R wanted to become a lawyer at first; Teacher M's first choice is to be an Engineer; Teacher N's dream is to be a Professional Nurse abroad; it is only Teacher J who chose teaching as her first love ever since. The four teacher awardees just pursued Teacher Education as a course since they were left with no choice. The majority of them experienced financial difficulties in their family. Instead of not pursuing any degree, they have just decided to take their second option- to take an Education course. Teacher J's case is different since her former teachers motivated her in Elementary and she has the heart for children.

The results imply that most teacher awardees wanted to venture into another field, and teaching was only their second choice. However, all of them excelled and landed successfully in their chosen profession. Because of their exemplary attributes in their profession, they became remarkable in their field. This is supported by Dreikurs [9] who posited in the Goal Related Theory of Motivation that we should direct ourselves to attain our goals in the different aspects of our lives. We should direct ourselves, and we have to make sure that these are clear, challenging, and achievable. In the case of the teacher awardees, although teaching is not their first choice, they managed to excel in that field because of their motivations and drives in their lives. As a result, they were promoted and were awarded because of their clear, challenging, and achievable goals in their lives.

On the other hand, it was also shown in the interview of the teacher awardees that they have commonalities in their teaching philosophy. Lyn emphasizes the capacity of the teachers to empower lives and make a difference. According to Teacher N, the teacher could influence people, especially if he shares ideas with his students. Likewise, Teacher J believes that giving her best is seeing the results of the students' actions. Teacher M upholds that if the child does not learn, then the teacher did not teach. Lastly, Teacher R gave his earning of his part-time job to his students and the improvement of infrastructure in his school.

This implies that the teacher awardees are devoted to their career as extraordinary educators. There is no place for mediocrity in their lifestyle as a teacher. Even if it consumes a lot of their time, they are geared towards providing quality education to their students. They always wanted a successful teaching and learning process. They always make sure that their students generate new knowledge from them. They want a holistic learner who would also be successful someday like them. Thompson and Shamberger [10] said that regardless of their backgrounds, great teachers in challenging schools possess a positive relationship with their students, and they have the best students' interests at heart. Great teachers set students at the center of their lives. They maximize their skills, talents, and time to give their best to their

learners. Williams [11] emphasized that the qualities of an outstanding teacher manifold. One of the essential aspects of an outstanding teacher is the ability to accommodate the emotional needs of their students.

Courage, Commitment, Competence, Integrity, Accountability, and Good Character are the core values that all awardees possess. Both Teacher N and Teacher J have the same core values. It is also the same with Teacher L and Teacher M. Only Teacher R posited about goodness and character. This implies that the teacher awardees have many commonalities regarding the core values they possess. All these traits honed them as to who they are today. They were known as outstanding teachers, not just because of the awards they received but because of their extraordinary qualities regarding the values they uphold. It can also be inferred that above their competence and capabilities in their field, these awardees put character at the center of their profession. For them, competence and excellence are meaningless if you have no good character, especially humility.

According to Timperly et al. [12] high-quality teachers are engaged with the students' learning and find ways to make their lessons productive at the end of the day. They make sure that they are highly competent enough to maintain their credibility as high-quality teachers. It is also noted in the self-fulfilling prophecy that students excel in their classes if teachers set standards. They strive and are the best in their class. This also shows teacher's high competence in teaching. Also, a high-quality teacher could not begin to teach without vast competence in her subject matter. Lastly, this is also supported by The Endowed Progress Theory of Motivation [13] that shows commitment towards continuous efforts toward achieving someone's goal. The core values of the teacher awardees are also based on their goals in their profession. They are endowed with creating a significant impact on the lives of their students.

Instructional Competence and Teaching Effectiveness

The teacher awardees' instructional competence created an enormous impact on the lives of their students. Their passion, dedication, creativity, and wit made them distinct from other teachers. Their selflessness and determination to galvanize the empty cups of the students made them real outstanding educators in the country. This section analyzes the common teaching traits and styles of the teacher awardees.

It was shown in the interview that the majority of the teacher awardees did profiling to their students at the start of the school year. Teacher L, Teacher N, and Teacher M did the said strategy to cluster their learners according to their learning abilities. This implies that profiling helped the teacher awardees gauge their students' abilities and set proper interventions for students who find difficulties in their subject areas. Through this, they were able to know more about what type of students they have, and they were able to design activities and programs that would cater to all learning styles. Alexander and Murphy [14] proved in their research study that profiling helped teachers understand the differences, knowledge, interest, and strategic processing of their learners. Xu et al. [15] also confirmed in his study that student profiling increases learning motivation, increasing learning effectiveness.

Another interesting fact about the awardees is that Teacher N and Teacher R divulged that they are disciplinarian teachers. It implies that male teachers are more disciplinarian than female teachers. According to them, becoming a disciplinarian helped them catch their students' attention, especially Teacher N, who is a Science teacher. On the other hand, Teacher R needs to impose discipline on his students since his class is a male-dominated course and is in the field of technical vocational. Although these two male teachers were known for this style, they were both appreciated by their students and had learned so much from them. Although they manifested the said teaching style, they managed to have fun and enjoyable classes. The results are contrary to the study of Lewis and Lovegrove [16] revealed the negative attitude of grade nine students to the teachers who are a disciplinarian. It causes anxiety and disruption of their school works.

Even though differentiated Instruction, contextualization, and localization were just introduced today, the teacher awardees were doing these strategies when they were still teachers. It implies that varied approaches, methodologies, strategies, and techniques helped the students cater to their learning needs. These are also effective support to both performing and nonperforming students to address their learning styles. The interviews had shown that they had helped struggling learners in various fields. True enough, differentiated Instruction offers a framework for addressing learning variance as a critical component of instructional planning [17]. Levy [18] underscored in his study that through differentiated Instruction, the teachers could address all the needs of the students. Surprisingly, students do not just meet the minimum standard; they also exceed the standards set by the curriculum. These are also applicable to assessment strategies and grouping techniques. Subban [19] highlighted in her study, as part of her recommendation, that there should be a thorough research study regarding Differentiated Instruction. Thus, in the modern world of teaching, this strategy should be utilized by 21st-century teachers. In an educational experiment held in Africa, it was proven in the study that contextualization of lessons helped the students to understand the lesson more since the examples are situated in their locality [20].

It is also interesting that all teacher awardees are objective and fair in giving assessments and evaluations to their students. This implies that they possess integrity, as also reflected in their attributes and character. They also employed non-traditional assessment strategies like role-playing, drama, hosting, talk shows, debate, etc. Teacher L, Teacher J, and Teacher N were fond of doing that when they were still teachers. Because of these performance-based tests, the majority of their students passed their subjects and enjoyed doing such. Learning easily took place, and the retention of knowledge was in long-term effect. Darling-Hammond [21] emphasized that assessment provides teacher an authentic information regarding students' learning. It is also an avenue for the school to encourage self-reflection, self-correction, self-critique, and self-renewal. Her research also shows that performance-based assessments provide effective teaching to educators. Firestone et al. [22] also found out how performance-based assessment becomes effective in teaching Mathematics. It was revealed that it was an effective form of assessment in helping students who performed low in the said subject area.

Lastly, Teacher J highlighted the importance of lesson planning for the achievement of students' learning outcomes. A lesson plan is indeed the roadmap for students' achievement [23]. Also, lessons, planning, construction, and execution, receive considerable attention in teacher preparation programs because they are a means to organize the classroom environment and communicate the content material to students. Lesson analysis, the reflective counterpart to lesson planning, receives little attention yet is also an important teacher skill [24].

Professional and Community Involvement

Outstanding teachers can create an impact on the school and community in many ways. Besides the instructional competence and credibility as educators, the awardees are also agents of change that benefited many people in their school and community. This section highlights the commonalities of the social responsibility they had spearheaded when they were still classroom teachers.

Teacher L spearheaded a reading program that benefited not just the students but the entire community because of its sustainability. On the other hand, Teacher N was known for becoming a life coach and a Science trainer and initiated activities and programs for prisoners and Indigenous Peoples. Teacher J, a reformist and active leader, fought for the rights of the teachers in the city and was known for her bravery and spontaneity. Also, Teacher M conducted programs in her community to promote financial literacy and help her students boost their mathematical abilities. Lastly, Teacher R honed his students' abilities to utilize their skills in various practical situations toward employment. He also donated and established some infrastructure for the improvement of his affiliated school.

This implies that the teacher awardees' initiative and volunteerism pushed them to create sustainable programs and activities aligned with their advocacies. The school did not just benefit these things, but it had made a significant effect on society. Some of these programs are continuously adapted and still practiced in their respective institutions. The five teacher awardees have different programs since they were from the other areas of expertise. Teacher L concentrated on Reading Literacy; Teacher N was on Indigenous Peoples' Empowerment; Teacher J stood on Teachers' Rights; Teacher M focused on Financial and Mathematical Literacy; Teacher R highlighted the Utilization of Technical Skills.

According to the book authored by McCaleb [25] to establish a building of community learners, the collaboration among teachers, students, families, and communities should have a strong foundation. Westheimer [26] proved the importance of teachers in the community. Their practices and professional competence had a significant impact on their institutions. Also, in a foreign study, it was found out in the study of Wehlage [27], educators in successful schools accept a proactive moral responsibility for educating at-risk youth. Teachers should not just teach in the four corners of the classroom. Hence, they should be an active participant in creating sustainable programs for the betterment of their society. The role of a teacher does not end in Instruction. Lastly, Printy [28] posited in her study that the immediate supervisors of the teachers are essential in honing opportunities for educators to learn about communities of practice. Their support should be evident for the whole duration of their teacher's activity or program.

Challenges Encountered by the Teacher Awardees

Personal Qualities and Character

Beyond the positive attributes of the teacher awardees, some occurrences tested their character and personality. They were tested by time and situations inside and outside the parameters of their workplace. This section analyses their challenges along with their personal attributes as an educator.

Misunderstanding with fellow educators and immediate supervisors is the common challenge faced by the teacher awardees. Teacher L, Teacher N, and Teacher M experienced this case. There were several factors behind this that were discussed earlier. Time management also appeared as one of the challenges of these educators, which compromise their time with their families because of their hectic schedules. This was attested by Teacher J and Teacher N, who are both parents. Teacher R only considered one greatest challenge in his life, and that was poverty. Lastly, the death of the daughter of Teacher L tested his faith and courage.

The results imply that although there are commonalities in the challenges faced by the teacher awardees, their challenges vary according to their walks of life. Based on the interview, all of them took these challenges positively. These honed and made them better both as an individual and as an educator. Instead of giving up and questioning their faith, they remained resilient and passionate about their profession. Their good character emanated and was looked up to by the people in their community as an epitome of empowered men and women in society. Despite the challenges they faced, they remained humble and steadfast. Poverty, conflicts, time management, and depression were not easy to handle, but these outstanding educators in our country had shown the world that these are only challenges and not struggles. These should be combated and would never hurdle someone's success and aspirations in life. These are indicators that there is no shortcut to success, and everyone should undergo the process, even the most challenging stage, to be the best version of themselves. These would prepare them for becoming the cream of the crop in their niche.

Time management has been an issue not just for novice and seasoned teachers. A research article revealed that this problem had already started for college students who are taking up education. Findings include that this kind of problem affected the academic performance of the students. Recommendations include the university's intervention in helping their students manage their time wisely [29]. The book titled *Managing your boss* by Gabarro and Kotter underscored the conflicts between a boss and a subordinate. This kind of problem is inevitable and is present in various working place. Therefore, it is suggested that if ever this occurs, both parties should settle this immediately through a smooth flow of interpersonal communication. Depression is commonly a problem that affects the work productivity of a person. It was noted in the interview that Teacher L faced a high depression when her daughter died. However, because of her strong personality, she managed this problem. The impact of depression affects the work productivity of an employee according to a study. Simon, et al. [30] found out that majority of the respondents in their experimental research had a negative impact on their work productivity. They became less productive when they are depressed. This result is contrary to the effect of Teacher L's case of depression. She had become more productive and used that experience as her inspiration to be the best in her field.

Instructional Competence and Teaching Effectiveness

The best practices of the teacher awardees regarding Instruction would not be perfectly crafted without the challenges they encountered when they were still classroom managers. These experiences strengthened their knowledge and skills into becoming the best educators in the country. This section analyses their common challenges faced along with Instruction.

Teacher L admitted that she was a short-tempered person when she was a newbie teacher. She also considered both performing and nonperforming students as a challenge when she was a teacher. Because of numerous preparations she had to do every day, lesson planning was also challenging. On the other hand, Teacher J was able to handle performing and nonperforming students efficiently. She never considered it as a challenging task. In her experience as a classroom teacher, the protection of students' rights was her major challenge since she had students who other people sexually abused. Putting up excitement and creativity in lessons were the challenges of Teacher N because he was handling the brightest students in his school. Her daughter was Teacher M's greatest challenge in teaching. She could find out and address learner's impediments that might affect the teaching and learning process. Lastly, Teacher R's credibility as an educator served as his primary challenge when he started his job as an Instructor in College.

This implies that the challenges of the teacher awardees vary. They have different challenges they faced along their journey as a classroom teacher. Types of Learners, Temper, Lesson Planning, Students' Rights, Teaching Techniques, Learners Impediments, and Teacher's Credibility summed up the Instructional competence of the teacher awardees. In the educational system in our country, these are just but some of the challenges faced by the educators from primary to tertiary levels. Because of these, some educators quit teaching job because of these occurrences they meet every day. Some would even transfer into other professions, and other licensed teachers would resort to going abroad instead of utilizing their profession in the country. Other teachers rant and complain verbally and on social media sites. Because of too much stress brought by these factors, some teachers die at an early age, and some would retire/resign because of the toxic environment they faced at work. However, although there are negative implications of these factors, the teacher awardees used these experiences to be the best mentor in their ways. They turned their weaknesses into their strengths. They dared to be different, and they were not afraid to risk.

Teacher L properly addressed the types of her learners. She was also able to manage her temper as the years went by. Lesson planning was just a piece of cake for her because of her drive for a successful teaching and learning process. On the other hand, Teacher J sheltered her students who were sexually abused. She also fought for their rights so that this case will never happen again. Teacher N, who his students challenged, always ensured a lively and productive discussion of his subject matter every meeting. Lastly, Teacher R might be harsh at first with his students but could maintain his

credibility as a disciplinarian Instructor, but with a good heart. They coped with the challenges they faced and have never been a quitter even once.

It was noted in research by Mastropieri [31], teachers who are intelligent, personable to work, energetic, and enthusiastic were the ones who can successfully work with challenging students in different cases. Day [32] posited in his book, *Developing Teachers: The Challenges of Lifelong Learning* the teachers' values in helping struggling learners are crucial because they feel motivated and efficiently learn when surrounded by teachers who will push them to their limits. It is also essential that teachers build trust with their students for a successful teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the study of Irvine [33] revealed that the learning styles of students depend on their cultural background. Therefore, a teacher needs to profile his students at the opening of the classes. Teachers should also adopt the appropriate methodologies and techniques in the classroom to address the learner styles of their students.

On the other hand, sexual harassment is also an alarming case faced by students inside and outside the school premises. In American higher education institutions, sexual harassment is prevalent. In the research conducted by Elgart and Schanfield [34], the government needs to provide solutions to these student victims because currently, it is not adequately addressed.

Professional and Community Involvement

The significant contributions of the teacher awardees created an enormous impact on the community. It can be surfaced through the number of residents benefited and the program's sustainability. However, there were challenges that these educators faced in establishing their respective social responsibility advocacies. This section analyses the commonalities of the challenges they had gone through.

Teacher L experienced discouragement from her supervisor upon winning a project proposal in reading. Teacher N revealed that it was his credibility and the financial aspect somehow challenged his activities. On the other hand, it was the city government that suppressed the rights of teachers during the time of Teacher J. Surprisingly, there were no challenges that were encountered on the part of Teacher M and Teacher R. Both were supported by the school and the community they had served.

The results imply that the challenges faced by the teacher awardees vary. There are no commonalities found in the responses of the key informants. It is evident in the responses of the teacher awardees that in this area, they had only light challenges encountered compared to the two indicators. There were even two of them who responded that they have no challenges encountered. To sum up the responses gathered, the following were the challenges faced by the teacher awardees along professional and community involvement: Lack of Support from the Supervisors, Teacher's Credibility, Limited Budget, and the Government.

Some teachers, especially in the public school, do not find the time nor even interested in spearheading community projects inside and outside their schools. For them, what is more important is the Instruction. Some would even participate and would conduct short-term activities for the sake of Individual Performance Rating. Because of the busy schedule and other priorities, some teachers did not even participate and remained apathetic until they retire from service. Also, because of the working environment and lack of support system they experienced, they were discouraged from initiating an activity. Despite the overload activities that these teacher awardees face every day, they could find resources and time for the benefit of the community. Even though they were confronted with several challenges, it did not stop them from fighting for their advocacies. They maximized the available resources, tapped people and organizations, motivated the people, and helped the needy ones selflessly. Teacher L never raised her voice and still respected her supervisor despite what happened. Teacher N earned high credibility to the community and was able to find enough resources to push through his projects. Teacher J coordinated with other organizations did thorough research and fought for the teachers' rights. Even though it was against all the odds, these outstanding teachers left a trademark that their respective communities would treasure.

Contrary to Teacher L's experience to her supervisor, a study revealed that the boss should trust and support his/her subordinates to increase the level of motivation and for a higher work productivity [35]. According to Hatch, et al. [36], the credibility of the teacher is essential to maintain a positive impression for them. What makes a teacher credible is spearheading activities based on research, which would benefit the holistic development of the learners. Lastly, in the multicultural society, teachers' rights are fundamental and should be protected inside and outside the academe. This makes a country more democratic. If this will not be protected, the status of the teachers as working individuals will be compromised [37].

Impacts of the Award for the Outstanding Teachers

Because of the teacher awardees' remarkable qualities, instructional competence, and community involvement, they were hailed as one of the country's best educators recognized by the Metrobank Foundation. More than the prestige and honor they received, there was a significant impact on their lives. This section reveals the impacts of the award to their personal and professional developments.

Teacher L was given an opportunity to travel outside the country to present her papers. She also continues to inspire people in her ways. Like Teacher L, Teacher N continues to influence other people, and the said search helped him be promoted to a higher position. The same with Teacher J, she also rose from the rank and became a supervisor before retiring. As of the moment, she is geared towards helping other people in her community and aspires to be a community leader if the chance permits. On the other hand, Teacher M continually supports her community, primarily that she was also promoted to a higher position in the Department of Education. Lastly, Teacher R had explored the wonders of the world because of his attendance at various training after winning the outstanding search. It also helped him get a promotion like the other awardees.

The results imply that the impacts of the award on the lives of the outstanding teacher awardees vary. However, it is interesting to note that there are various commonalities found in their responses. All the awardees agreed that after winning the search, they were promoted to a higher position. Some of them became Supervisors in the Department of Education. Also, Teacher R retired as an Associate Professor 5.

Moreover, all of them continuously work for their respective advocacies and inspire other people especially their fellow educators to respond to the nation's call. For them, the award they received in Metrobank was just the beginning of more significant challenges. Their social responsiveness and moral obligation surfaced on a larger scale. It widened their horizon and expanded their networks. It taught them how to be more humble and humane. *"Once an outstanding teacher will forever be an outstanding teacher."* Despite the hurdles, they continued to uphold their values, and they remained in their system despite all their achievements.

CONCLUSION

Above the highlighted core values of the teacher awardees, the majority put a good character at first. Excellence is meaningless without good character, especially humility. The teaching pedagogies of the teacher awardees helped nonperforming students to improve their poor academic performance. Learning styles were also highly regarded by the teacher awardees in their delivery of Instruction. Lastly, the initiative and volunteerism of the teacher awardees pushed them to conduct activities and programs aligned with their advocacies through collaborative efforts of the people in their community.

The challenges of the teacher awardees concerning their personal qualities and character served as motivation and inspiration to become a better version of themselves – personally and professionally. The teacher awardees never compromise the values they uphold for the sake of their aspirations in the teaching profession. The challenges of teacher awardees along with their instructional competence and teaching effectiveness, served as their room for improvement to be the best educators in the country. They turned their weaknesses into their strengths. They dared to be different, and they were not afraid to take risks. They coped with the challenges with tenacity. Lastly, the challenges that the teacher awardees encountered along with professional and community involvement, never stopped them from finding resources for the benefit of the community. Even though the challenges were countless, the will to fight remained. They maximized the available resources, tapped people and organizations, motivated the people, and helped the needy ones selflessly.

The Search for Outstanding Teachers sponsored by Metrobank Foundation advanced Filipino teachers' professional growth. They helped the awardees create a good name in the field of education. The community projects spearheaded by the teacher awardees were made sustainable because of the relentless efforts and continuous support of their peers. These projects were not just intended for the search itself but by the spirit of volunteerism and exemplary leadership skills. Also, through joining conferences and attending training outside the country, the teacher awardees broadened their horizons because of their various exposures and learning gained from reputable speakers. They were able to share insights with their colleagues and other people in the community.

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