PH TEACHERS: POORLY COMPENSATED OR POORLY MANAGED FINANCES

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Teachers are still in cry for a wage hike claiming that they are underpaid considering their workloads and the pressures they are dealing with. But if we take a closer look on what is the real score on this matter, questions might come up. Are teachers really poorly compensated or are their salary grievances have other stories to tell?

Excessive workload and unfair salary has been an old resentment of teachers, this despite the stipulation of the law that education has to be on top budgetary priority to increase the quality of education in our country and to attract more talented individual to choose teaching as a career. This may be the reason why teaching has been given the notion as the noblest profession.

When RA 6758 or Salary Standardization Law 1 was enacted, the monthly basic salary of teachers in the Philippines grossed up to 20,754 for entry level teaching position which in comparison to other entry level position salaries of other professions might be well enough but not from the point of view of others, they thought that this salary may be unattractive because of the responsibilities that it bears plus the poor working conditions they may face. Steps have been taken to increase the basic salary of public school teachers because of claims that they are being undervalued and they should get the salary that fits them.

For others, teachers aren’t really poorly compensated; they said it straight up that better management of finances is their real dilemma. This might also be true because as of 2019 Department of Education data, public school teachers owed a combined debt of 319-billion to GSIS and other private lenders which could get higher if we will include
the unaccredited lending institutions that imposes higher interest rates for loans. In fact, a study from the Cebu Normal University reveals that professional and pre service teachers across the country has very low basic financial literacy skills. In line with this, steps have been taken to address the financial literacy of our educators including recommendations to teach such subject as early as in grade school.

When loan deductions take a large part of a teacher pay slip, is it already safe to assume that teachers are not really underpaid and they just lack financial literacy? That might be unfair to generally conclude because we do not know their burdens for these struggles would not appear in their pay slips or in any data. Would managing finances solve their problem if the expenses against their income are really unmanageable?

Teachers being underpaid and overworked might impose a serious threat because this would translate to the quality of education in our country because teachers’ performances are directly attributable to the performance of their students. But at the same end, better financial knowledge, behavior and attitude among people of a nation also spells its growth and development as a nation.

At the end of the day, what we can all agree to is that teachers are entrusted by the society to take on the task of shaping the future generations of Filipinos because the success of this nation is in its people. Teachers should really get what they truly and rightfully deserve.

There is really a solution to any problem; the reason why we can’t solve a problem is because we don’t really know what the problem is. The real score in this matter is the right problem should get the right solution because most often we give the right solution to the wrong problem.

References:

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