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## **Hospitality Professionals Transitioning to Teaching: The Journey from Industry to Academia**

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### **Abstract**

Transitioning from industry to academia posed a significant challenge as professionals sought to merge their practical industry expertise with the demands of pedagogical skills in teaching. This study aimed to explore the rich and valuable lived experiences of hospitality professionals who transitioned to teaching within higher education institutions offering Hospitality Management programs in Cebu, Philippines. The objectives were to capture their personal stories, gain profound insights, and understand their individual encounters and reflections during this transformative journey. This qualitative study aimed to provide a clear portrayal of the lived experiences and challenges faced by hospitality professionals as they shifted from industry to academia. Purposive sampling methods were used to select 20 participants for the study. The study gathered descriptions from informants through interviews and analyzed them using the Colaizzi steps method. Four themes emerged: Transition Experiences, Challenges in Transition, Response to Challenges, and Commitment to Teaching. The findings indicated that for a smooth transition from industry to academia, individuals required sufficient support, guidance, and comprehensive training programs. The study recommended developing comprehensive professional development policies and mentoring initiatives. It underscored the importance of teachers with diverse backgrounds and skills, emphasizing the need for guidelines to support industry professionals transitioning into teaching. Furthermore, it offered valuable insights for policymakers and human resource professionals to efficiently handle human resources and address workforce transition challenges.

Keywords: transition, hospitality professionals, teaching, academia, qualitative research

### **Introduction**

#### **Background of the Study**

In today's fast-changing job market, professionals had more opportunities to switch careers and pursue different paths. By possessing necessary skills such as adaptability and a willingness to learn, individuals could explore new industries, acquire fresh knowledge, and successfully transition to other fields. This flexibility empowered professionals to navigate changing job demands, pursue their passions, and experience a more fulfilling and diverse professional journey.

According to Fouad and Bynner (2008), individuals had to make choices and adjust to a constantly changing world of work. As work held great significance for their functioning, transitions in and out of work had significant mental health implications.

While some professionals in different fields could smoothly transition their careers, others encountered challenges, especially those experiencing involuntary changes. Masdonati et al. (2022) found that involuntary career shifts were complex and influenced by personal, work, and institutional factors. These factors could create barriers, like unsupportive family and work environments, and inadequate support systems, leading to feelings of loneliness and shame. This highlighted the importance of understanding these dynamics to better support individuals undergoing involuntary career changes.

Among those who faced difficulties were hospitality professionals who aspired to shift into teaching roles. Shifting from an industry-based profession to education could be challenging because workers needed to incorporate a previously unknown job background and develop new skills. Educators in the hospitality industry were required not only to have the technical skills needed for the industry but also the necessary skills to teach, which could be challenging.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenge of transitioning from the hospitality industry to teaching became even more apparent. Many hospitality professionals found themselves out of work or with reduced hours due to the temporary closure of hotels, resorts, and restaurants. Some began considering a career shift to education, prompted by the pandemic's impact on their industry. However, they faced new hurdles as budget cuts and the shift to online learning intensified competition for teaching positions, demanding educators with advanced technological skills. Despite the challenges, individuals from diverse backgrounds, including hospitality, ventured into education, albeit facing steep learning curves and unfamiliar teaching environments as they entered the profession during the pandemic.

According to Gupta et al. (2022), the global pandemic COVID-19 had transformed online teaching from an optional practice to a vital necessity for educators. Consequently, university instructors were required to invest time and effort into familiarizing themselves with online teaching systems and modifying their teaching materials to align with this new mode of instruction, as highlighted by Huang et al. (2022).

Amidst the uncertainties, these professionals' showcased resilience and adaptability, embracing the challenges of online teaching and gradually mastering virtual instruction. Their perseverance and dedication not only enabled them to overcome initial obstacles but also allowed them to flourish in their newfound roles as educators. Despite the unprecedented circumstances, their journey exemplified the human capacity to adapt, learn, and thrive in the face of adversity, underscoring the importance of resilience and determination in navigating turbulent times.

### **Research Purposes**

The primary purpose of this research was to gain insight into the essence and structure of human experiences, as perceived by the informants themselves. This study explored the lived experiences of hospitality professionals who transitioned to teaching, aiming to understand how they coped and what their experiences meant to them. It aimed to contribute to teaching knowledge and provide insights for human resource professionals and policymakers addressing workforce transition challenges.

## Research Questions

The study was guided by three questions:

1. How was the transition experienced by the hospitality professionals from the industry to the academe?
2. What was the meaning of the experience by the hospitality professional turned educator?
3. What was the implication of the findings of the study?

## Literature Review

### Transition Experiences

New teachers often faced difficulties when transitioning to their new role, which researchers labelled as 'reality shock' or 'cultural shock' (McCormack & Thomas, 2003). This period of change, triggered by moving from a familiar to an unfamiliar environment, negatively impacted the ability of new teachers to cope, leading to burnout, tension, and sometimes unfavorable outcomes for their students (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Numerous studies explored the concept of culture shock, which occurred when individuals felt physically and emotionally uncomfortable upon entering a new culture with different people and unfamiliar surroundings. This phenomenon was commonly experienced by various groups such as business people, missionaries, students, and others who transitioned between cultures (Wa-Mbaleka & Ryszewski, 2012).

After conducting a review of the literature, Öztürk (2014) had produced a comprehensive paradigm based on common issues that teachers from different pathways faced during the induction period. The study underlined how important it was to incorporate hands-on learning into training facilities and educational settings. It emphasized how crucial it was to have a well-organized training program that included pre-service, in-service, and probationary periods. Öztürk (2014) also emphasized the common challenges that new teachers had during the onboarding process and promoted an all-encompassing strategy for teacher preparation. This strategy addressed difficulties related to workload, psychological impediments, and school-specific contextual factors. The study also emphasized the need for a teacher education program that was inquiry-based and fostered cooperation between educational institutions and schools (Öztürk, 2014).

### Challenges in Transition

Recent trends in teacher distribution indicated that economically and socially deprived classrooms had a higher proportion of less-qualified teachers (Sutcher et al., 2016). As a result, learners from underdeveloped communities were particularly vulnerable to facing negative consequences associated with underprepared teachers, such as lower rates of academic achievement, school attendance, and completion. This disparity in teacher quality highlighted the vulnerability of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and emphasized the urgent need for equal access to well-prepared and qualified educators in all communities.

Athanasios and Achinstein (2003) identified that mentoring novice teachers often involved providing buddy support, technical advice, and classroom management tips to address concerns centered on teacher survival. This mentoring approach was in line with traditional models of teacher development, which characterized novices as initially focused on self-image, materials and procedures, and management, with a later transition towards prioritizing individual student learning after the initial years. Mentors drew upon their understanding of

student and teacher learners, pedagogical strategies for classroom instruction and teacher guidance, and comprehensive knowledge across various domains of assessment, including evaluating students, aligning curriculum with standards, and providing formative assessment for new teachers. The adept utilization of this knowledge facilitated the emphasis on individual student learning and aided new teachers in devising approaches to tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students. These findings questioned existing developmental frameworks of teaching and conservative mentoring practices, highlighting the necessity for defining a knowledge base and implementing relevant mentor development to early on emphasize new teachers' focus on individual student learning (Athanases & Achinstein, 2003).

### **Response to Challenges**

Teachers had the option to employ different approaches in their teaching. One approach was student-centered, where students assumed greater responsibility for their learning. In contrast, the teacher-centered approach emphasized the teacher's role (Trigwell et al., 1999). When teachers changed their teaching approaches, it signified a need to adapt to the students' needs. A student-centered approach could enhance student motivation and engagement, particularly in challenging subjects. This approach could also be beneficial for hospitality professionals transitioning to teaching. However, it was common for faculty members to initiate a shift toward concept-based teaching without fully understanding the practical aspects involved. Developing new lessons could be tiring, prompting the temptation to revert to standard teaching methods during curriculum implementation. However, if instructional methods remained the same, faculty members avoided missing out on the potential benefits of the conceptual approach. Therefore, faculty members had to commit to creating innovative instructional strategies that incorporated learners in meaningful ways and embraced learning opportunities (Giddens, 2016).

According to Cosser (1998), peers significantly impacted teachers' performance. They evaluated their colleagues' outcomes and provided feedback and assistance for improvement. Insights on teaching offered guidance and explanations for teachers' actions and provided a framework for understanding moral responsibilities and perceptions in the profession. The importance of belongingness in human motivation, as emphasized by Baumeister and Leary (1995), was also supported by Deci and Ryan (2000). A sense of belongingness within the organization gave employees a feeling of security and acceptance. Teachers experienced higher levels of job-related stress, as indicated in the study by Stoeber and Rennert (2008). However, through the support of colleagues, they could effectively cope with this stress, highlighting the influential role of peers in professional success. Furthermore, this social support and motivation fostered a sense of belongingness.

### **Commitment to Teaching**

Hariri and Sumintono (2020) emphasized the significant role of teachers in influencing student achievement and enhancing school and education quality. They explored various aspects of teacher commitment to teaching, including the characteristics associated with committed teachers. According to the authors, committed teachers were identified by four key qualities: a strong desire to excel in teaching, serving as reliable sources of information, acknowledging and valuing individual student worth, and fulfilling professional obligations. The study underscored the importance of adequate preparation, ongoing support, and continuous improvement to sustain and enhance teacher commitment. Additionally, the authors suggested that principals could contribute to fostering teacher commitment through leadership styles conducive to commitment. Furthermore, they recommended that education policymakers

elevate the status of the teaching profession, similar to that of doctors, to attract top candidates and make teaching a more appealing career choice (Hariri & Sumintono, 2020).

### Research Methodology

In this study the researchers utilized the descriptive phenomenology design. According to Husserl, phenomenology focused on exploring what people had experienced and witnessed, and was both a hypothesis and research technique aimed at examining and explaining human experience (Langdrige, 2007). Thus, the study explored the lived experiences of hospitality professionals who transitioned to the academe, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

The researchers conducted this study in Cebu, Philippines, one of the country's most developed provinces, the second largest metropolitan area in the Philippines, following Metro Manila. Situated in the Visayas region, Cebu serves as a central hub for tourism, education, and industry. Over the years, it has grown into a prominent regional center, particularly known for its thriving business services, tourism and hospitality, and transportation sectors.

#### Research Participants

Twenty (20) Hospitality professionals turned educators from various higher education institutions (HEIs) in Cebu, Philippines, participated in the study. The researchers employed purposive sampling, intentionally selecting individuals who met specific inclusion criteria. These criteria included having at least five years of experience as a hospitality provider, holding a Master's degree in hospitality management or allied program, one (1) year experience teaching in the academe, and being willing to participate and provide informed consent. The participant's profiles were presented in table 1.

**Table 1**

*Participant's Demographic Background*

Participant Code	Gender	Years working in the Industry	Years working in the Academe	Academic Credentials	Department
HMT1	Female	9years	3 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT2	Female	5 years	1 and 6 months	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT3	Female	7 years	2 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT4	Female	9 years	2 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT5	Female	8 years	1 year	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT6	Female	5 years	2 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT7	Female	6 years	3 ½ years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT8	Female	7 years	4 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT9	Female	7 years	2 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT10	Female	5 years	3 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT11	Female	12 years	3 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT12	Female	6 years	1 year and 4 months	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT13	Female	9 years	3 years and 8 months	Masters degree	HM Department

Participant Code	Gender	Years working in the Industry	Years working in the Academe	Academic Credentials	Department
Female Participants - 13					
HMT14	Male	10 years	4 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT15	Male	5 years	5 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT16	Male	8 years	2 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT17	Male	5 years	1 year	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT18	Male	9 years	3 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT19	Male	12 years	4 years	Masters degree	HM Department
HMT20	Male	11 years	4 years	Masters degree	HM Department
Male Participants – 7					
<b>Total Participants - 20</b>					

Procedures were employed during the course of this study. The first step involved the organization of interview questions. Given the study's atheoretical approach, the interview questions were formulated without reliance on a specific theoretical framework or preconceived knowledge, allowing the researchers to adapt the investigation based on the analysis. Secondly, the researchers arranged a date, time, and location convenient for the participants. Prior to the interviews, the researchers obtained informed consent from the participants and requested permission to record the interviews. Each interviewee was assigned an informant code to ensure confidentiality and safeguard their privacy. Thirdly, the researchers provided a brief orientation to the participants concerning the study's purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations. They used paper, pens, and an audio recorder to document the interview responses. The transcribed data was then shared with the participants for clarification and potential modification of their answers.

In this study, the researchers coded and grouped the main ideas in the transcriptions, compared them to the recognized emerging themes, and adjusted the study's methodology accordingly. Any adjustments to the methodology stemmed solely from insights gained from the data itself. During the review process, the researchers used the Colaizzi data analysis method. The method outlined by Colaizzi (1978) consists of seven steps tailored for qualitative research. This method was also in line with Morrow et al.'s (2015) presentation of the steps in Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method. The steps in Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Steps in Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method*

Step	Description
1. Familiarization	The researchers read the participant accounts multiple times to become familiar with the data.
2. Identifying significant statements	The researchers identify statements that directly relate to the topic from the participant accounts.
3. Formulating meaning	The researchers find meaningful interpretations from analyzing the important statements. They try to avoid letting their own assumptions influence the process.
4. Clustering themes	Similar meanings are grouped into themes that appear across all the participant accounts. The researchers remain impartial and don't let

Step	Description
	existing theories impact this step.
5. Developing an exhaustive description	The researchers write a detailed description of the phenomenon, including all the themes that emerged from the analysis.
6. Producing the fundamental structure	The researchers condense the description into a brief statement that captures the essential aspects of the phenomenon's structure.
7. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure	The researchers share the condensed statement with the participants to get their feedback and ensure it matches their experiences. Based on the feedback, the researchers may make changes to earlier steps if needed.
<b>Source:</b> Morrow et al., 2015	

### Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were implemented across different dimensions. Firstly, credibility was addressed through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, comprehensive field notes, audiotaping, verbatim transcription, triangulation of data and methods, saturation of data, and member checking. These techniques aimed to establish a strong alignment between the respondents' perspectives and the researcher's portrayal. Transferability was demonstrated through the use of thick descriptions, allowing for the application of findings to similar contexts, populations, and phenomena. Confirmability was maintained by ensuring neutrality in the study's findings, with efforts made to mitigate potential biases through an audit trail documenting every step of the data analysis process. Lastly, dependability was ensured by creating an inquiry audit mechanism, where an independent party reviewed and evaluated the study process and data analysis, thereby enabling the replication of the study and ensuring consistent findings. These strategies collectively contributed to the trustworthiness of the study by enhancing credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability.

## Results and Discussion

This study explored the lived experiences of hospitality professionals who transitioned to teaching, aimed to understand how they coped and what their experiences meant to them. The collections of findings and discussions led to the discovery of four themes. These themes shed light on the experiences shared by the participants. The identified themes were Transition Experiences, Challenges in Transition, Response to Challenges, and Commitment to Teaching.

### 1. Theme 1: Transition Experiences

The Transition Experiences theme was one of the four main themes that emerged from the study's data analysis. This theme provided insights into how the participants transitioned from their previous careers to teaching.

#### 1.1 A Difficult Experience

The informants discussed the challenges they faced during their transition from the hospitality industry to the academic world. For many, this was a difficult experience due to their lack of prior teaching experience. As new teachers, they found the first months of school to be highly stressful as they were suddenly bombarded with unexpected concerns and scenarios.

*“My transition from the hospitality industry to the academic world was really hard. It gave me doubts about whether I would continue or breach my contract. Actually, I was thinking that prior to class there would be trainings or guidelines of what strategies you would do, but I was simply told to draw from my experience in the hospitality industry during class discussions. With only a syllabus to guide me and my industry experienced. I struggled to engage my students and capture their attention.” (HMT5)*

*“When I first started teaching in college, even though I knew a lot about the subject I was teaching from my own experience, explaining it to students and helping them understand how it's used was really tough. I struggled a lot.” (HMT9)*

The participants who used to work in hospitality industry had a difficult time transitioning to teaching in schools. They didn't have teaching experience before, so it was really hard at the beginning. They felt unsure if they could keep going or if they would have to leave their teaching job. They thought they would get training before starting, but they were just told to use their industry experience in class. They found it hard to keep students interested because they only had a syllabus to help them. Another participant said even though they knew a lot about what they were teaching, explaining it to students was tough.

As these challenges persisted beyond the initial adjustment phase, it became increasingly evident that transitioning from the hospitality industry to academia required more than just adapting to a new environment. The participants' experiences underscored the pressing need for tailored support systems capable of addressing the unique needs of individuals making such career transitions. Moreover, their struggles highlighted the crucial role of ongoing professional development opportunities in equipping educators with the pedagogical skills essential for success in the classroom.

## **1.2 Culture Shock**

The concept of culture shock was related to the feeling of surprise, unease, or anxiety that individuals experienced when they encountered a community or environment that was different from their own. This term was applied to the experiences of the hospitality professionals who transitioned to the academe, as they encountered a new culture that was unfamiliar to them.

*“I was shocked by the environment. The teacher's teaching methods were far different from how we conducted our training in the industry.”  
(HMT18)*

*“In my first year of teaching, I noticed that the work environment in the industry and academia were different. In my industry experience, things moved quickly, focusing on completing tasks efficiently. In schools and universities, it's more relaxed, with a focus on learning new things and exploring ideas.”  
(HMT2)*

The participants felt surprised and uneasy when they moved from the hospitality industry to teaching because the teaching methods and work environments were very different. They were used to a fast-paced, task-oriented environment in the industry, but in schools and universities, things were more relaxed, with a focus on learning and exploring ideas. Their experiences showed that transitioning between different fields could be challenging because of the cultural differences.

Job transition was a challenging process that required consideration of various factors. Leaving a job could be the result of feeling overworked and undervalued, but changing careers was not an easy task as it involved adapting to new work environments, colleagues, and organizational cultures. In particular, the transition to teaching was further complicated by the added responsibilities of managing emotions and adapting to new teaching methods and technology. The schools needed to provide tailored support for teachers transitioning to a teaching career, including on-the-job mentoring, induction services, and career development opportunities. Sharing experiences could motivate others to pursue new careers successfully. Proper training and orientation were crucial, especially during challenging times. Investing in these resources would have improved outcomes for teachers, students, and the community.

## **2. Theme 2: Challenges in Transition**

The Challenges in Transition theme revealed that transitioning from the hospitality industry to teaching was not an easy process for the participants. The lack of experience and training in teaching made it challenging for them to adjust to the demands of teaching, including the transfer of knowledge to their students. Additionally, they had to adapt to a new culture, rules, and expectations from their colleagues, supervisors, and students.

### ***2.1 Transfer of Knowledge a Challenge***

Transferring knowledge was a crucial aspect of teaching as teachers had to deliver lessons that were easily understood by their students. However, novice teachers, including those from the hospitality industry, found it challenging to transfer knowledge due to varying learning abilities among students. While it was the teacher's responsibility to transfer their knowledge, it was not always an easy process. One of the biggest challenges was determining the best teaching strategies and creating a conducive learning environment.

*“It was more than just telling experience; how to articulate my thoughts and convey them to my students for them to understand the lesson was the most challenging part. Not to mention preparing lesson plans that includes objectives, learning, and instructional materials.” (HMT4)*

*“Transfer of knowledge was one of my challenges. Since I was from industry, how could I be sure my students got the lesson?” (HMT1)*

Transferring knowledge was a significant challenge for both participants. One struggled with effectively expressing thoughts and creating comprehensive lesson plans, while the other faced uncertainties about ensuring students understood the lessons. These experiences underscored the difficulties in successfully transferring knowledge and emphasized the complexity of bridging the gap between expertise and student understanding in an academic setting.

To address these challenges, a strategy was developed that utilized multiple teaching tools. Two different teachers with distinct styles could implement a teaching method

differently. However, in teaching practice, challenges emerged, such as how to diversify instruction to improve students' learning, how to foster creativity as an opportunity for students to learn, how to present lessons in an easily understandable manner, and, above all, how to become an effective teacher.

Another significant aspect that novice teachers, particularly those transitioning from industries like hospitality, grappled with was the establishment of effective classroom management strategies. In the hospitality industry, the dynamics of interaction and authority differed significantly from those in an educational setting. Novice teachers found it challenging to establish and maintain a positive and structured learning environment, which often led to disruptions and distractions hindering student engagement and learning. Developing classroom management skills involved not only setting clear expectations and boundaries but also fostering positive relationships with students and implementing proactive strategies to address behaviour issues constructively. As novice teachers navigated this aspect of their role, they continuously reflected on their practices, sought feedback from colleagues and mentors, and refined their approaches to create a supportive and conducive learning environment for all students.

## **2.2 Misalignment**

Misalignment in education occurred when system components like curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, and teacher expertise failed to cater to students' learning needs. In hospitality and tourism, misalignment happened when professionals taught outside their expertise. This diverse approach provided insights but could also present challenges when faculty were assigned courses outside their specialization. The challenge was rooted in a discrepancy between teacher training and teaching tasks, not their education level.

*“It did not matter whether you were a newly hired or an old employee. If there was a subject without a teacher, it could be loaded to you even if it was not aligned or was not your forte.” (HMT20)*

*“Other subject loads were far from my field of expertise. I could only be an effective teacher if I were knowledgeable enough about that subject.” (HMT8)*

Misalignment emerged as a common issue for both participants, regardless of their tenure. One participant highlighted that they were assigned subjects outside of their expertise, which affected their effectiveness as a teacher. Another participant faced similar challenges, recognizing that teaching subjects far from their forte impacted their ability to deliver quality instruction. These experiences underscored the difficulties encountered when there was a mismatch between assigned teaching responsibilities and areas of expertise, raising concerns about the effectiveness and quality of instruction in such situations. Educational institutions needed robust systems to match teachers with suitable subjects based on their qualifications.

## **2.3 Organization Member Behaviour**

The study of how individuals behaved within a group setting, known as organizational member behaviour, had a significant impact on employee success and well-being in an organization. These challenges were common in the academic world, especially in hospitality education, and could be particularly daunting for new educators who were transitioning from

a hospitality profession to teaching. Failure to effectively address these challenges could have had a negative impact on employee productivity.

*“I was expecting a harmonious relationship with colleagues. A friendly environment and a second home to me, but it was the opposite. I was really adjusting to blend with them.” (HMT6)*

*“The academic world also had distinct human behaviour, like in each organization. In this particular university where I was teaching, personalities were pretty colourful: some were pleasant, while others were complicated.” (HMT10)*

One participant expected to have a friendly and welcoming relationship with colleagues, hoping for a second home-like environment, but struggled to adjust and fit in. Similarly, another participant noticed a variety of human behaviours in the academic world, encountering a range of personalities, some pleasant and others more complicated. These experiences highlighted the challenges of navigating interpersonal dynamics within the academic setting, where individuals may have faced difficulties in establishing harmonious relationships and adapting to the diverse behaviours of their colleagues.

Life was unpredictable, offering two choices: embrace the journey with joy and learn from experiences, or resist and resent every moment. This statement resonated with the challenges faced by individuals transitioning to teaching. Novice teachers from hospitality backgrounds encountered significant difficulties, such as knowledge transfer, educational misalignment, and organizational dynamics. These challenges were not taken lightly and resembled a roller coaster ride. However, most individuals persevered and overcame the obstacles. To support new teachers transitioning from hospitality, developing a comprehensive strategy that allowed them to adapt and embrace their new career path without hesitation was crucial. The shared challenges of the informants highlighted how professional educators encountered the demands of their work and the learning environment. They faced the need to prepare for teaching and understand the psychological aspects of their students, often pushing themselves beyond conventional boundaries.

### **3. Theme 3: Response to Challenges**

The Response to Challenges theme discussed how the participants overcame the challenges they faced when transitioning from working in the hospitality industry to teaching. The participants' experiences showed that they used creativity, education, proactiveness, and acceptance of help from others as tools to overcome these challenges. They were able to successfully adapt to their new profession and thrive in it despite the obstacles they encountered.

#### ***3.1 Applying Different Approach***

The hospitality professionals turned educators had limited knowledge of teaching pedagogy, and many did not receive formal training or orientation prior to their transition. As a result, they had to work hard and develop their own strategies. They demonstrated professionalism in their new field by applying the knowledge and skills they gained from their previous work experiences, though there were areas that needed to be reinvented to achieve better outcomes, especially in the academic world where educators were encouraged to apply new techniques to facilitate better learning experiences.

*“I started to do some research about the teaching methods and assessment of student learning and gradually applied it in a form of an experiment. After that, I was able to know what worked for each learner and it slowly developed my teaching.” (HMT 3)*

*“Benchmarking! When I was in college, I remember what my teachers used to do on the first day of school; that was, they would always had a “getting-to-know session.” So, I did the same.” (HMT7)*

Participants took the initiative to improve their teaching skills through independent research and experimentation. One participant researched teaching methods and assessment strategies, gradually applying their findings to understand what worked best for each student. Another participant drew inspiration from their college experience and implemented a "getting-to-know session" to establish a connection with their students. These experiences underscored the importance of actively exploring and utilizing various teaching approaches, demonstrating a willingness to adapt and enhance instructional methods for the benefit of students.

### **3.2 Seek Help from Others**

Seeking help from experienced teachers while transitioning from the hospitality industry to teaching was important because collaboration was a common practice in the field of education. Collaborating on ideas among teachers strengthened relationships and helped to achieve goals faster. This collaboration allowed for the sharing of knowledge and skills, ultimately leading to success in the organization.

*“I sought help from colleagues and read a lot of books about basic education. I was so thankful for others who were helpful.” (HMT14)*

*“One more thing, my workmates were a big help during my transition. They offered tips, ideas, and references, including books and PowerPoint presentations.” (HMT19)*

Participants actively sought assistance from colleagues and dedicated time to self-directed learning. One expressed gratitude towards those who supported her during her transition, while the other found his workmates to be a significant source of help. They received tips, ideas, and references, including books and presentations, which greatly aided their adjustment. These experiences underscored the importance of seeking guidance from others and highlighted the positive impact that supportive colleagues could have on one's transition and professional growth.

### **3.3 Being Pro-Active**

The hospitality professionals turned educators who were proactive in their approach to transitioning to teaching were more successful. They had the willingness to plan for the future, ensuring coordination and implementation of activities. Proactive individuals had a clear understanding of their organization's ethos, purpose, and vision, enabling them to make decisions independently. These professionals understood that there were challenging situations where they had to rely on themselves to complete their work, and this mindset helped them as they transitioned to the academic world.

*“I acknowledged the need for me to learn and after I graduated with my Master’s degree, I immediately enrolled to get a Certificate in Professional Education (CPE). With that, I continued developing my teaching skills.”*  
(HMT11)

*“I learned to be proactive. I did not wait for someone to give me instructions. I had the initiative to prepare everything ahead of time.”*  
(HMT15)

Recognizing the importance of self-improvement, participants showed proactive behaviour by taking steps to improve themselves without waiting for instructions. One pursued further education after completing a Master's degree, while the other prepared in advance for tasks without being prompted.

Being proactive in seeking out advance learning opportunities and building strong collaborative relationships with colleagues and experienced educators was essential for hospitality professionals who transitioned to teaching. By doing so, they could continuously develop their skills and knowledge, adopt effective pedagogies, and address the unique needs of their students.

#### **4. Theme 4: Commitment to Teaching**

The Commitment to Teaching theme was a prominent theme that emerged from the study's data analysis. This theme provided insights into the participants' passion for teaching despite the challenges they faced during their transition to the academic world.

##### **4.1 A Developmental Experience**

A developmental experience was an opportunity to grow and become a better person. For those who transitioned from the hospitality industry to teaching, personal growth was a key to enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom. They recognized that developmental experiences, both positive and negative, were opportunities to learn and become better teachers. Even when faced with challenging situations, they believed that growth was possible through experience. As a result, they were able to evolve and adapt to the demands of the teaching profession.

*“My experience allowed me to seek more knowledge that I could share with my students besides my industry experiences.”* (HMT12)

*“I attended various seminar-workshops about self-efficacy, teaching strategies, pedagogies, and other related topics to develop my skills and become a more effective teacher.”* (HMT17)

In the teaching profession, personal growth and developmental experiences played a crucial role. Mentoring and induction programs were highlighted as vital facilitators of teacher identity development, offering avenues for both personal and professional growth. These programs helped new teachers reflect on their experiences, improve their teaching abilities, and foster a strong sense of identity. Additionally, ongoing professional development opportunities were crucial in supporting teachers to expand their skills, ensuring both educators and students received necessary support for success.

#### **4.2 Passion not just Profession**

Passionate teachers who focused on the positive side of every situation did not feel stressed by challenges and were able to create a positive learning environment despite the inherent difficulties of their job.

*“I considered teaching to be my passion. In the early years of my teaching as a part-timer, I never really put in my heart what I was doing in the academe, but as years went by, I was able to love teaching.” (HMT19)*

*“Passion is also an essential thing for a teacher. In my experience, despite its challenges, I noticed that I did not give up. I realized that by that alone, I grew on what they always call “passion,” and I’m glad I could have experienced it.” (HMT13)*

Teaching was not just a profession but also their passion. They enjoyed teaching and found it to be fulfilling, even amidst the challenges inherent in their job. Passionate teachers were able to create a positive learning environment and overcome the obstacles they faced. Passionate teachers prioritized their students and persevered through challenges, using them as motivation. The importance of loving teaching was underscored by the experiences of passionate teachers, who showed determination and resilience. Passionate teachers created a positive learning environment and inspired students to achieve their potential.

The participants' experiences revealed that having a genuine love for their work fuelled their determination to strive harder and work without limitations. Although often seen as a cliché word, commitment held a deeper meaning for them. It represented how they clung to a resilient spirit despite life's challenges. The researchers explored the significance of these experiences and were amazed by their revelations. The participants viewed their experiences as opportunities for personal development as teachers. They exhibited resilience in overcoming obstacles, and the researchers interpreted this resilience as passion. The term "passion, not just profession," was coined to emphasize how the participants perceived their experiences. It showcased their unwavering desire to pursue what they love, regardless of the difficulties they encountered.

The transition from the hospitality industry to teaching could be a difficult experience, but the participants in this study displayed professionalism by using various tools and strategies to overcome challenges. These individuals applied their previous work experiences and experimented with new techniques to facilitate better learning experiences. Seeking help from experienced teachers and collaborating with colleagues were crucial for achieving their goals. Proactive individuals who were willing to plan for the future, make decisions independently, and rely on themselves in challenging situations were more successful. It showed that being proactive at all times gave teachers confidence in teaching. Teachers took initiative to learn through seeking advice from colleagues and reading a lot of books connected to the subject to gain confidence and knowledge in pedagogy. Successful career changers demonstrated a willingness to learn and develop new skills, seek help from others, and utilize their previous work experiences to inform their new career.

### Schlossberg's Transition Theory

The Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981) served as a comprehensive framework for understanding the experiences of hospitality professionals transitioning to academia. By considering the factors of situation, self, support, and strategy, insights were gained into the challenges individuals faced during transitions and the key factors influencing their adjustment to new roles and environments.

**Situation Factor:** The participants encountered significant challenges transitioning from the hospitality industry to academia. They lacked prior teaching experience and felt uncertain about their ability to continue in their new roles. This aligned with the Situation Factor of Schlossberg's Theory, which emphasized external circumstances influencing the transition process. The participants' experiences underscored how situational factors such as unfamiliarity with teaching environments and expectations could impact the transition experience.

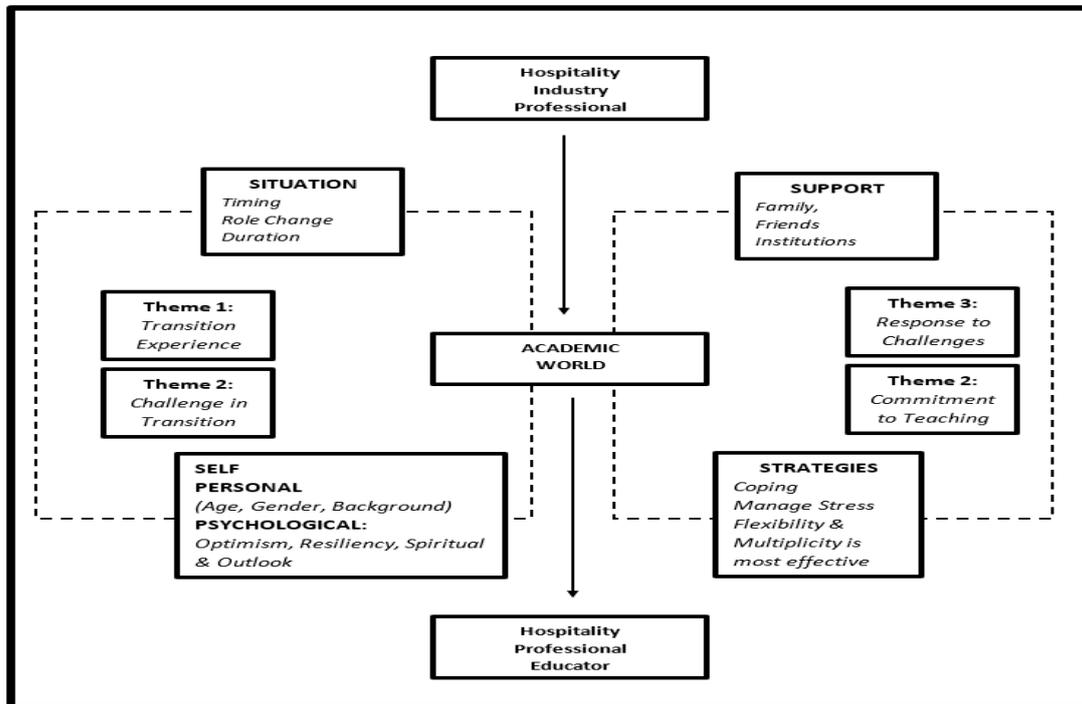
**Self-Factor:** Despite their challenges, the participants demonstrated personal characteristics such as resilience and a commitment to self-improvement. They actively sought ways to enhance their teaching skills and adapt to their new profession. This aligned with the Self Factor of Schlossberg's Theory, which emphasized the individual's internal resources and coping mechanisms. The participants' experiences highlighted how self-efficacy and a proactive approach to learning were essential for navigating their transition successfully.

**Support Factor:** Social support from colleagues and access to resources such as books and presentations were crucial for the participants as they navigated their transition to teaching. Seeking guidance from experienced educators and engaging in self-directed learning helped them overcome challenges and adapt to their new roles. This aligned with the Support Factor of Schlossberg's Theory, which emphasized the importance of external support systems in facilitating the transition process. The participants' experiences demonstrated how supportive relationships and access to resources could help individuals navigate unfamiliar situations and overcome obstacles.

**Strategy Factor:** Participants employed various coping strategies, including proactive behaviour, seeking help from others, and continuous self-improvement, to navigate their transition. Flexibility in applying these strategies allowed them to adapt to the demands of their new roles and overcome obstacles along the way. This aligned with the Strategy Factor of Schlossberg's Theory, which emphasized the individual's problem-solving approaches and coping mechanisms. The participants' experiences highlighted how employing effective strategies could help individuals navigate transitions and achieve successful outcomes.

**Figure 1**

*Schlossberg's Transition Theory*



### Summary of Findings

The research investigated the experiences of hospitality professionals transitioning into teaching roles, aiming to understand their coping strategies and the significance of their experiences. Participants encountered obstacles during the transition, such as a lack of teaching experience and support systems, leading to uncertainty and difficulties in engaging students. The transition involved adapting to new environments, colleagues, and teaching methods, along with facing workload issues and emotional challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Despite these difficulties, participants showed proactive behaviour, pursuing further education and building collaborative relationships. Leveraging their prior work experiences, they employed diverse teaching approaches and sought help from peers. Despite the challenges, participants found teaching rewarding, driven by their passion for the profession. The findings highlighted the importance of comprehensive support, mentorship, and professional development for individuals transitioning into teaching careers. The study shed light on the experiences of career changers in education and underscored the crucial role of passion and resilience in overcoming challenges and fostering positive learning environments.

### Implications and Conclusion

This study had significant implications for stakeholders in the hospitality industry. It offered valuable insights for hospitality professionals wanting to transition to academia. It served as a helpful guide for faculty members, enhancing student learning and providing additional resources for hospitality professionals-turned-educators. Policymakers could utilize

the study's findings to create policies and training programs that promote competence among industry professionals entering academia.

The findings of this study underscored the critical need for robust support mechanisms and tailored professional development initiatives for individuals transitioning from the hospitality industry to academia. As evidenced by the challenges encountered by participants, including the lack of teaching experience and support systems, it became evident that targeted interventions were necessary to facilitate a smoother transition process. Institutions should have prioritized mentorship programs, offering guidance and resources to help new educators navigate the complexities of teaching.

Moreover, the resilience and proactive behaviour displayed by participants highlighted the importance of cultivating a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within academic environments. Encouraging further education and fostering collaborative relationships empowered educators to leverage their prior work experiences effectively and adopt diverse teaching approaches.

In conclusion, while the transition from the hospitality industry to academia presented significant challenges, it also offered opportunities for growth and fulfilment. By recognizing the value of passion and resilience in overcoming obstacles, institutions could support career changers in education to thrive in their new roles and contribute positively to the learning environment. This study emphasized the importance of holistic support, mentorship, and professional development initiatives in facilitating successful transitions and fostering a culture of excellence in teaching.

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