



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Higher Education

Journal Homepage: <https://ijmshe.com/index.php/pub/index>



Research Article

The Professional Journey Of Full-time College Teachers in their Transition From Industry Practice to Pedagogical Work Engagement: A Multiple Case Study

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Article Info

Article history:

Received: 23 November 2025

Revised: 06 December 2025

Accepted: 29 December 2025

Keywords:

Professional journey, full-time college teachers, transition, industry practice, pedagogical work engagement

Abstract

The transition from industry practice to pedagogical work engagement presents various challenges for educators entering higher education. There is limited research on how full-time college teachers with strong industry backgrounds handle this transition in South Cotabato, Philippines. This study fills that gap by looking at the professional journeys and coping strategies of five full-time college teachers as they move from industry to teaching. Using a qualitative multiple case design, data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed with thematic analysis. Results showed a three-phase process in their transition. First is their entry and adjustment which is marked by apprehension and culture shock. Next is through adaptation and integration characterized by the learning and application of new pedagogical skills. And lastly is their professional identity formation where increased confidence and a sense of belonging emerged. Results also showed the challenges faced by the participants in their teaching responsibilities, administrative tasks, student engagement, and research expectations. Coping mechanisms such as mentorship, collaboration, and continuous learning were used to address these challenges. This study emphasizes that transitioning from industry to academe is a transformative journey that builds professional identities. It highlights the need for support systems within institutions to bridge the gap between industry work and teaching.

Cite as: Fajartin, C. M., & Acosta, P. (2025). The Professional Journey of Full-Time College Teachers in Their Transition From Industry Practice to Pedagogical Work Engagement: A Multiple Case Study. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Higher Education*, 2(4), 136–163. <https://doi.org/10.70847/662068>

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1. Introduction

The transition of industry professionals into higher education is increasingly significant as institutions aim to bridge skill gaps and cultivate a capable workforce. Studies, such as the 2024 research on community college CTE faculty, highlight that former industry practitioners enrich academic programs with real-world expertise, yet they face challenges in translating industry practices into pedagogically sound teaching strategies, navigating academic culture, and meeting student-centered expectations. Beyond pedagogy, this transition involves a shift in professional identity; Griffin (2022) notes that newcomers often face unrealistic expectations of seamless integration despite needing to develop teaching, mentoring, and reflective competencies distinct from corporate skills. Research by Alkhaqani (2022) emphasizes the persistent gap between academic preparation and workplace realities, underscoring the need for continuous professional development and industry-university collaboration. Additionally, the rise of digital and hybrid learning environments (Елькина & Лозован, 2023; Reid et al., 2021) requires transitioning educators to acquire advanced technological skills.

In the Philippine context, practitioners often enter academia with limited pedagogical grounding (Adeyemo & Seehole, 2016), while misaligned curricula (David et al., 2020) further complicate adaptation. Such barriers affect teaching efficacy, well-being, and retention, while studies show that high self-efficacy, peer support, and pedagogical partnerships (Han & Wang, 2021; Laitinen, 2022; Cook-Sather et al., 2019) enhance engagement and reduce burnout. These insights underscore the importance of institutional support systems to facilitate smoother integration of industry professionals into academe, benefiting both teaching and student learning.

Despite extensive research globally, local studies on full-time instructors transitioning from industry to academe in South Cotabato remain scarce. Addressing this gap, the present

multiple-case study draws on Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice Theory and Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) Socialization Theory to explore participants' experiences, aiming to strengthen local education systems, support faculty development, and inform policy. The findings have been shared at international forums and will be presented in seminars and workshops for HR practitioners, academic leaders, and faculty developers to foster dialogue on effective support programs. Ultimately, this research provides a foundation for collaborative initiatives with colleges, universities, government agencies, and professional networks to develop targeted training, support programs, and policies for transitioning faculty in the region.

The purpose of this multiple case study is to describe the professional journeys of five full-time college teachers as they transition from industry practice to pedagogical work engagement. Through a multiple case study approach, the research sought to examine the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms these educators encounter as they shift from professional industry roles to academic teaching positions. At this stage in the research, the professional journeys were generally defined as the experiences and key events that shape the transition of industry practitioners into full-time college teachers, highlighting their challenges, adaptations, and professional growth.

The findings of this study aim to provide insights into supporting industry practitioners transitioning into academe by equipping them with essential pedagogical skills for quality teaching. As more professionals enter teaching roles without formal instructional training, gaps in teaching effectiveness and student engagement may emerge. Understanding these challenges enables the development of targeted training programs, curriculum improvements, and institutional policies that facilitate a

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smoother transition while bridging the gap between industry and education to better prepare graduates for the workforce. By examining participants' personal experiences, the study offers valuable guidance for faculty development, teaching effectiveness, and overall educational quality. Limitations include reliance on participants' recollection, which may be affected by memory lapses, and the study's strict focus on professional transitions, with all interviews conducted to ensure responses remained relevant to the research questions

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple case study design to explore the experiences of full-time college teachers who transitioned from industry practice to academic teaching. A multiple case study approach enables an in-depth examination of several bounded cases within a shared context, allowing for both within-case and cross-case analyses (Göktürk et al., 2017). This design is appropriate for capturing the complexity of professional transitions, as it facilitates the identification of common patterns while also highlighting individual variations across cases (Halinen & Törnroos, 2005).

Qualitative research emphasizes the interpretation of human experiences, meanings, and perspectives using non-numerical data such as narratives and reflections (Brooks & Normore, 2015; Damaskinidis, 2017). In the context of this study, the transition from industry to academe extends beyond a career shift and involves changes in professional identity, pedagogical practices, and institutional culture. Consistent with Maxwell (2004), the qualitative approach enabled the collection of rich, context-specific data that illuminated how prior industry experience shapes teaching philosophies, classroom practices, and engagement with students.

while maintaining participant confidentiality and research integrity.

Research Questions

1. What are the professional journeys of full-time college teachers in their transition from industry to pedagogical work engagement?
2. How do they cope with the challenges associated with the transitioning from industry practice to pedagogical work engagement?
3. What explains the similarities and differences of each case?

The multiple case study design further allowed the exploration of personal, institutional, and cultural factors influencing the transition process (O'Brien et al., 2021). By examining similarities and differences across cases, the study generated comprehensive insights relevant to faculty development, institutional support mechanisms, and policy formulation in higher education (Aaboen et al., 2012; Malin et al., 2018).

2.2. Research Participants and Sampling

The participants consisted of five full-time college teachers who transitioned from industry practice to academic teaching in higher education institutions in the Province of South Cotabato, located in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, Mindanao, Philippines. Participants were selected using maximum variation sampling, a purposive strategy aimed at capturing diverse experiences across cases while identifying shared patterns (Patton, 2002). This approach enhances analytical depth by documenting both uniqueness and convergence within heterogeneous cases (Başaran & Özen, 2025; Suri, 2011).

Inclusion criteria required participants to (a) be full-time college faculty members, (b) possess prior industry experience relevant to their teaching field, (c) have at least one semester of higher education teaching experience, and (d) teach business-related courses. Excluded were

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part-time faculty, educators without industry experience, and those teaching outside business-related disciplines.

The five cases represented varied industry backgrounds, including audit supervision, finance and operations, sales and marketing, accounting and billing, and customer relations. Teaching experience ranged from one to seven years. For triangulation, additional interviews were conducted with individuals closely associated with each participant, such as co-faculty members, former students, program heads, or peers.

All participants were adult professionals and did not belong to vulnerable populations. They voluntarily participated and possessed full capacity to provide informed consent.

2.3. Data Collection

Following approval from the Graduate School Dean and ethics clearance from the University of the Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee (UIC-REC), data collection was conducted through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Participants were recruited through referrals from academic administrators, and formal invitations with informed consent forms were sent via email.

Interviews were conducted in locations chosen by the participants to ensure privacy and comfort. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes, with follow-up interviews conducted when necessary for clarification. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent, and field notes were taken to document contextual and non-verbal cues. Probing questions and real-time member checking were used to enhance accuracy and clarity of responses.

To strengthen credibility, data triangulation was employed by interviewing individuals closely associated with each participant. All data were anonymized using coded identifiers and stored securely in encrypted, password-protected digital folders, in compliance with the Data

Privacy Act of 2012. Data will be retained for five years and securely destroyed thereafter.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a systematic process involving transcription, coding, thematic analysis, and cross-case analysis. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and, when necessary, translated from Filipino to English while preserving meaning and context. Transcripts were reviewed for accuracy prior to analysis.

Coding and categorization were conducted to identify significant statements, patterns, and recurring ideas (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Taylor & Ali, 2017). Initial codes were grouped into broader themes through an iterative process. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of shared experiences related to professional transition, pedagogical adaptation, and coping strategies.

Subsequently, a cross-case analysis was conducted to compare themes across all five cases. This process highlighted both commonalities and variations in experiences, allowing for a holistic understanding of how industry professionals adapt to academic roles. The combination of within-case and cross-case analyses enhanced the analytical rigor and depth of the findings.

2.5. Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness was established using the criteria of credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 2012). Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking. Confirmability was addressed by maintaining reflexive journals, using audio-recorded interviews, and engaging in peer consensus to minimize researcher bias. Transferability was supported through thick, rich descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures, enabling readers to assess applicability to other settings. Dependability was strengthened by

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providing a transparent audit trail of research procedures and by allowing participants to review and validate findings (Suter, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

2.6. Role of the Researcher

The researcher was responsible for participant recruitment, data collection, transcription, and analysis. Interviews were facilitated with sensitivity and reflexivity to encourage open and

meaningful responses. The researcher's professional background—seven years of industry experience as a finance officer and current teaching responsibilities in business education—provided contextual insight while necessitating reflexive awareness to mitigate bias. Validation from individuals familiar with the participants further strengthened data credibility.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Cross-Case Analysis

This study focuses on the professional journeys of full-time college teachers in their transition from industry practice to pedagogical work engagement. Chapters 3 to 7 contain the within

case analysis of each of the five participants who qualified as the informants in accordance with the inclusion criteria set in this study. Their profile is reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of the Informants in In-Depth Interview

	Case A	Case-B	Case-C	Case-D	Case-E
Sex	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male
Marital Status	Married	Single	Single	Single	Single
Industry	Audit Supervisor	Finance Officer	Sales Clerk	Loans Officer and Accounts Payable In-Charge	Billing and Accounting Clerk
Industry Experience	1 year	2 years	9 years	3 years	9 months
Pedagogical Experience	8 years	7 years	3 years	1 year	2 years

The five informants in the study—composed of three females and two males—each transitioned from various business-related industry roles into full-time teaching positions within higher education. Their previous positions included Audit Supervisor, Finance Officer, Sales Clerk,

Loans Officer and Accounts Payable In-Charge, and Billing and Accounting Clerk, with industry experiences ranging from nine months to nine years. Their pedagogical experience varied between one and eight years, indicating different levels of adjustment to academic life. Most of

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them did not initially plan to enter teaching; rather, their transitions were characterized by sudden shifts influenced by personal motivations, peer encouragement, or opportunities presented by mentors or administrators. While some sought teaching as a break from industry pressures or to pursue a long-held dream, others were persuaded by colleagues or institutional leaders. Despite their diverse industry backgrounds, all now handle subjects aligned with their previous professional expertise—such as accounting, finance, marketing, and management—which allows them to integrate practical insights into classroom instruction.

Similarities and Differences Between Cases

This section presents the shared patterns and unique experiences of the five participants as they transitioned from industry to academe. It highlights how they commonly faced challenges in adjustment, teaching diverse learners, and managing workload, while differing in their coping approaches, teaching styles, and adaptation pace. Together, these insights reveal both the collective and individual dimensions of their professional journeys.

Professional Journeys of Full-time College Teachers

Table 2 presents the shared and distinct professional journeys of five full-time college teachers transitioning from industry to academia, highlighting their initial impressions, early experiences, adaptations, and evolving professional identities.

Initial Impressions.

Most participants (A, B, C, and E) experienced apprehension, uncertainty, and culture shock upon entering academe, perceiving teaching as more demanding than industry due to workload, documentation, and the pressure to demonstrate competence immediately. Establishing authority and meeting unfamiliar academic expectations were common concerns. Differences in adjustment were shaped by prior exposure: A and B emphasized the need to project authority,

C struggled with an abrupt transition, and E noted the contrast between academic bureaucracy and hospital pace. In contrast, D's prior part-time teaching experience enabled a smoother entry, underscoring how earlier academic exposure mitigates transition-related stress.

First-Week Experiences.

The first weeks were characterized by trial-and-error learning, reliance on peer advice, and informal mentoring to manage classroom practices and institutional routines. Practice and collegial support were central to early stabilization. Adjustment speed varied, with B and C requiring gradual scaffolding, while D transitioned more smoothly due to familiarity with academic systems, highlighting the role of prior teaching experience in accelerating early competence.

Academic Adaptations.

As participants settled into their roles, all reported significant shifts in routines, time management, and multitasking to meet teaching, administrative, and relational demands. Structured preparation and support from colleagues and family were essential coping strategies. Adjustment timelines varied: some adapted within a semester, others required longer periods, influenced by prior habits, workload complexity, and social demands. These differences indicate that academic adaptation is shaped by both individual work styles and contextual expectations.

Training, Mentorship, and Resources. All participants accessed orientations, trainings, or seminars and relied on peer or mentor support, which provided foundational guidance during early teaching stages. However, perceptions of adequacy differed. Some found trainings generic or limited, others effective but infrequent, while several supplemented institutional support through self-directed learning or advanced studies. Overall, while foundational support was shared, its depth and relevance varied across institutions and disciplines.

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Changes in Personality, Identity, and Role.

Participants reported growth in confidence, sociability, patience, and professional purpose as they shifted toward mentoring-oriented identities. Teaching fostered a stronger sense of meaning and relational engagement. Individual expressions of this transformation differed: some emphasized authority and confidence, others empathy, role-modeling, or patience. These findings suggest a shared trajectory of identity development shaped by personal background and professional context.

Professional Fulfillment.

Teaching was widely viewed as fulfilling, particularly due to its perceived impact on students' learning and development. While A, B, and D regarded teaching as more meaningful than industry, C and E viewed both sectors as

equally rewarding but assessed success using different metrics—productivity in industry versus student outcomes in academe. Fulfillment was thus universal, though framed through varied definitions of professional success.

Integration of Industry Experience into Teaching.

All participants integrated industry experience into instruction, using real-world cases to connect theory and practice and enhance student engagement. Applications varied by discipline, and several participants noted tensions between textbook theory and actual practice, which became opportunities for critical discussion. These findings affirm industry experience as a shared pedagogical asset, with discipline-specific expressions.

Table 2. *Similarities and Differences in the Professional Journeys of Full-Time College Teachers*

Theme	Similarities	Differences	Explanation
Initial Impressions	Common apprehension on entry into teaching (A, B, C, E). Teaching perceived as more hectic/demanding than industry (A, B, D). Excitement mixed with nerves (A, E).	D reported a more neutral start due to prior part-time teaching. A highlighted voice/authority concerns; B stressed need to project competence from Day 1; C faced culture shock from rapid hiring; E noted contrast from hospital pace.	Similarity: New faculty commonly feel nervous due to unfamiliar academic demands. Difference: Variation arises from prior exposure (D) or abrupt transitions from different sectors (C, E).
First-Week Experiences	Early adjustment through practice and peer advice (B, C).	D experienced a smoother first week because of prior part-time teaching experience; B and C needed guidance and on-the-job learning.	Similarity: New teachers depend on practice and peer scaffolding to stabilize their first week. Difference: Speed of adjustment differs due to previous experience.

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Academic Adaptations	Shifts in routines and time use (advance prep, stricter schedules) are widespread (A, C, E). Time management and multitasking emerge as shared needs (A, D, E). Collegial/family support is universal (A, B, C, D, E).	Adjustment length varies: C took ~one semester; E about a year; D notes ongoing adjustment. A shifted from late-riser habits; B emphasized expanding social ‘battery’ to handle many students.	Similarity: Faculty roles demand structured preparation and multitasking. Difference: Adjustment lengths vary due to habits and workload.
Training, Mentorship, and Resources	All accessed orientations / trainings / seminars to equip teaching (A, B, C, D, E). Mentorship/peer guidance supported growth (A, B, D, E).	C reported no HR-led support (department handled guidance). A found offerings generic (discipline gaps). D had limited frequency (twice) but 80% effective. B pursued doctorate/assessments and saw few gaps. E perceived mentorship gaps for day-to-day duties.	Similarity: Foundational institutional and peer support is shared. Difference: Specificity and depth differ by institution and discipline.
Changes in Personality, Identity, and Role	Gaining classroom authority / confidence (A, B, D) and becoming more people-smart / sociable (A, B, C). Many describe stronger purpose / impact in teaching (B, C, D, E).	A reports a marked transformation from timid to confident; E notes less immediate industry-style authority but more mentorship identity; C stresses role-model expectations; D foregrounds patience and time management.	Similarity: Teachers develop authority, sociability, and meaningful identity. Difference: Personality and context shape how shifts appear.
Professional Fulfillment	Teaching assessed as more impactful / effective for many (A, B, D). Some judge impact as equal but differently measured (C, E).	C self-rates higher effectiveness in industry (sales metrics) but above-average in academe; E frames impact as equal across sectors. A, B, D cite evaluations and student outcomes as evidence of effectiveness.	Similarity: Fulfillment comes from student outcomes and meaning. Difference: Perceptions vary due to different sector metrics.

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Integration of Industry Experience into Teaching	Using real-world cases to link theory and practice is universal, and students respond positively (A, B, C, D, E).	Disciplinary applications vary: A (tax/accounting), C (marketing/sales), D (financing/marketing rotations). Conflicts between theory and practice highlighted by A, C, E.	Similarity: Industry experience enhances relevance Difference: Discipline determines types of examples used.
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Coping Strategies of Full-time College Teachers

Table 3 summarizes the shared and distinct coping strategies of full-time college teachers transitioning from industry to academe. Across cases, participants developed adaptive strategies to manage academic demands, while variations reflected differences in professional background, discipline, and personal adjustment styles.

Adjustment to Academic Culture and Hierarchy.

All participants emphasized patience, diplomacy, and relationship-building as essential for adapting to academic hierarchy and slower institutional processes. Transitioning required a shift from results-driven industry norms to a culture emphasizing compliance, collaboration, and continuous learning.

However, coping approaches differed: B struggled with moving from a leadership role to a subordinate position, D managed demands through proactive preparation, and E reframed his mindset from outcome-oriented to process-focused teaching. A and C relied heavily on collegial guidance. These differences illustrate how personal histories shape pathways toward academic alignment despite shared structural challenges.

Dealing with Diverse Students.

Engaging students with varied backgrounds and learning preferences was a universal challenge. All participants adopted inclusive and adaptive strategies, though methods varied. A used Filipino expressions to address linguistic diversity, B emphasized approachability, C integrated technology, D employed case studies and collaborative tasks, and E promoted peer-led learning. These strategies reflect a common shift toward student-centered pedagogy, with variation shaped by teaching philosophy, discipline, and learner characteristics.

Coping with Academic Workload.

Managing teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities required strict time management and task prioritization across all cases. Nonetheless, strategies varied by role: A balanced teaching and advising, B and C relied on peer mentoring to master academic requirements such as exam construction, D maximized vacant periods for administrative work, and E balanced teaching with committee responsibilities.

These findings indicate that while time discipline is universal, workload coping strategies are shaped by institutional roles and exposure to academic routines.

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Leveraging Industry Experience.

Participants consistently drew on industry backgrounds to cope with academic demands and enrich instruction. Real-world cases enhanced relevance and credibility, though applications varied by discipline—ranging from taxation and accounting to marketing, finance, and ethics. Some participants noted tensions between theory and practice, requiring careful explanation. Overall, industry experience served as both a coping mechanism and a pedagogical bridge between prior professional identities and academic roles.

Peer and Mentor Support.

All participants relied on peer or mentor support for instructional and emotional guidance. While A and C depended mainly on informal advice, B and D benefited from structured mentoring, and E compensated for limited formal support through peer collaboration. Regardless of form, mentorship fostered confidence, belonging, and resilience, reinforcing its role as a stabilizing factor in professional transition.

Professional Development.

Continuous learning was a shared priority across cases. All participants pursued training, seminars, or further studies, though focus areas differed. Some emphasized certifications and doctoral studies, others research development, pedagogical enhancement, or educational technology. These efforts underscore a collective commitment to growth and adaptability, reinforcing evolving academic identities.

Building Relationships and Belongingness.

Finally, cultivating collegial relationships emerged as a key emotional anchor. All participants highlighted communication, collaboration, and mutual respect, though strategies reflected individual personalities and roles. Through these relational practices, participants developed a sense of belonging that marked the culmination of their transition from industry professionals to integrated members of the academic community.

Table 3. *Similarities and Differences in Coping Strategies of Full-Time College Teachers*

Theme	Similarities	Differences	Explanation
Adjustment to Academic Culture and Hierarchy	Teachers commonly relied on patience, diplomacy, and relationship-building (A, E). All cases acknowledged the need to shift from industry norms to academic rules.	B highlighted difficulty shifting from leader to subordinate; D coped through proactive preparation; E reframed mindset from results to process.	<i>Similarity:</i> All teachers recognized that academic demands patience, compliance, and relational diplomacy. <i>Difference:</i> Personal histories shape how each adapts to hierarchy and expectations.

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Dealing with Diverse Students	All cases emphasized strategies to engage students, whether through friendliness, technology, or activities (A–E).	A used Tagalog for inclusivity; B leaned on approachability; C adopted technology; D gave case study tasks; E grouped students and encouraged peer leadership.	<i>Similarity:</i> Engaging diverse students is universal. <i>Difference:</i> Approaches vary based on language needs, generation, and teaching philosophy.
Coping with Academic Workload	Common strategy was strict time management and prioritization of tasks (A–E).	A focused on advising; B and C learned TOS from peers; D maximized vacant time; E balanced teaching with committee work.	<i>Similarity:</i> Time management is central to coping. <i>Difference:</i> Workload strategies differ with roles and administrative duties.
Leveraging Industry Experience	All teachers used industry background to enrich teaching, linking theory to real-life examples (A–E).	A stressed tax/accounting cases; B relied on case analysis; C drew heavily from sales/marketing; D incorporated financing experience; E highlighted accounting systems and ethics.	<i>Similarity:</i> Industry experience strengthens credibility and relevance. <i>Difference:</i> Specific examples depend on field.
Peer and Mentor Support	All cases sought guidance and advice from colleagues/mentors (A–E).	A and C emphasized informal advice; B and D received structured mentoring; E noted gaps but relied on peer support.	<i>Similarity:</i> Peer/mentor support is essential. <i>Difference:</i> Form and depth of support vary by institution.

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Professional Development	All pursued training, seminars, or further studies (A–E).	A and B focused on certifications and doctoral studies; C specialized in research training; D pursued master’s and marketing knowledge; E prioritized educational technology.	<i>Similarity:</i> Continuous learning is shared. <i>Difference:</i> Focus areas differ by goals and institutional needs.
Building Relationships and Belongingness	All highlighted communication and collegiality as key (A–E).	A stressed friendliness; B focused on remembering names; C emphasized open communication; D balanced closeness with authority; E valued collaboration.	<i>Similarity:</i> Belonging develops through supportive relationships. <i>Difference:</i> Strategies vary with personality and teaching role.

Professional Journeys of Full-time College Teachers

Analysis of the first research question revealed seven key themes describing the transition of full-time college teachers from industry to academia. Initial Impressions highlighted emotional and practical challenges, including apprehension, uncertainty, and culture shock, emphasizing the need for structured onboarding, mentorship, and pedagogical training (Crowder & Mouratidou, 2018). First-Week Experiences underscored the importance of peer support, mentorship, and early teaching exposure, with prior teaching experience easing adaptation, while others relied on collegial guidance (Laari et al., 2021; Bahari, 2022; Fernando, 2024; Garcia & Lindsey, 2022; Nekardová, 2022). Academic Adaptations reflected substantial adjustments in routines, time management, and social engagement, suggesting orientation programs, workload management training, and mentoring networks to support integration (Laari et al., 2021; Zhao & Ko, 2024; Samuel, 2024;

Rana & Rodriguez, 2025; Hayman et al., 2024). Training, Mentorship, and Resources emphasized the role of structured programs, mentorship, and self-directed learning in developing pedagogical competence (Serrano, 2025; Swenson et al., 2025; Zhao & Ko, 2024; Hand et al., 2022). Changes in Personality, Identity, and Role showed participants evolving from task-oriented professionals to reflective educators, enhancing confidence, emotional intelligence, and teaching effectiveness (Arlinda et al., 2024; Portilho et al., 2024; Sikoyo & Isabirye, 2023; Novrianti et al., 2024; Brownell et al., 2019; Weng, 2025; Villegas-Torres & Lengeling, 2021). Professional Fulfillment reflected intrinsic satisfaction derived from teaching and impacting student learning (Aslam et al., 2022; Johnson et al., 2024; Guellouma & Bilouk, 2024; Aguilar & Protacio, 2025). Finally, Integration of Industry Experience into Teaching demonstrated leveraging real-world expertise to bridge theory and practice, enhancing engagement and learning outcomes

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(Association for Career and Technical Education Research, 2024; Badir et al., 2023; Nuuyoma et al., 2024; Farakish et al., 2022; Gao et al., 2025). Collectively, these themes illustrate adaptation, growth, and professional integration, showing how mentorship, reflective practice, and prior industry experience support successful academic transitions.

Coping Strategies of Transitioning Full-time College Teachers

Analysis of the second research question identified seven key coping mechanisms used by full-time college teachers transitioning from industry to academia. Adjustment to Academic Culture and Hierarchy showed that participants navigated the slower-paced, hierarchical, and process-oriented academic environment by shifting from output-driven to reflective, student-centered approaches, planning lessons proactively, and regulating emotions (Xi & Dindin, 2023; Guellouma & Bilouk, 2024; Li, 2024). Dealing with Diverse Students highlighted the adoption of adaptive, student-centered strategies, including technology integration, relatable examples, group work, and peer-led collaboration, requiring pedagogical knowledge, creativity, and flexibility (Muir et al., 2021; Manokhina, 2024; Dantes, 2024; Uimanova, 2022; Nurhayati, 2018; McPherson & Pearce, 2022).

Coping with Academic Workloads involved balancing teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities through prioritization, time optimization, and peer consultation, underscoring the need for institutional support, mentorship, and collaborative communities of practice to prevent burnout and sustain productivity (Ujir et al., 2020; Obianuju & Gamede, 2021; Jääskeläinen, 2022; Makmun et al., 2025; Shamim et al., 2025; Li et al., 2019; Liu & Ni, 2021). Leveraging Industry Experience allowed educators to integrate real-world examples and case studies into instruction, enhancing engagement and credibility, though occasional conflicts between theory and practice arose, highlighting the

importance of mentorship and professional development to support practice-based pedagogy (Valstar et al., 2020; Palsokar & Tajne, 2018; Laari et al., 2023; Lambert et al., 2024; Elizabeth et al., 2023).

Peer and Mentor Support functioned as a stabilizing mechanism, providing guidance, emotional reassurance, and collaborative problem-solving, which strengthened confidence, competence, and belonging (Wingrove, 2024; Jayaun, 2025; Ferguson & Wilmot, 2024; McPherson & Wendler, 2023; Kisalama & Kibedi, 2020). Professional Development emphasized engagement in graduate studies, seminars, certifications, and research training to bridge knowledge gaps and enhance pedagogical skills, supporting institutional strategies for formal and informal skill-building (Dantes, 2024; Elizabeth et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024; Zhao & Ko, 2024; Loseñara & Jugar, 2023). Finally, Building Relationships and Belongingness involved fostering inclusive, supportive environments through open communication and collegial interactions, strengthening professional identity, rapport, and teaching effectiveness (Rathod et al., 2025; Kou et al., 2024; Brownell et al., 2019; Nuuyoma et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2020; Calidguid & Estoque, 2025).

Together, these coping mechanisms illustrate how full-time college teachers successfully manage academic, social, and professional challenges during the transition from industry to higher education, highlighting the roles of institutional support, mentorship, adaptive teaching strategies, and professional development.

Through the Lens of the Theories

The experiences of the participants in this study align closely with Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice (CoP) theory. Their transition from industry to academia exemplifies legitimate peripheral participation, as they initially engaged in academic tasks with varying confidence, relying on peer guidance,

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mentorship, and institutional support. Through continuous interaction with colleagues, participation in workshops and seminars, and collaborative problem-solving, participants gradually became more central and confident members of the academic community. Their use of peer feedback, trial-and-error learning, and integration of prior industry experience into teaching illustrates how social learning and active participation foster both pedagogical skill development and professional identity reconstruction, demonstrating that engagement in supportive academic communities enhances adaptation, professional growth, and belonging.

Similarly, Van Maanen and Schein's Socialization Theory explains the professional journey of full-time college teachers transitioning from industry to academic work. Participants navigated cultural and procedural shifts from results-driven industry environments to the process-oriented, collegial nature of academe, reflecting the socialization process described by the theory. Mentorship, peer collaboration, and institutional training served as critical mechanisms for adjustment, consistent with socialization tactics such as mentoring and collective learning. The use of "investiture tactics," which validates and integrates prior competencies, was evident as participants leveraged industry expertise to enrich instruction and establish credibility. Engagement in continuous professional development and reflective practice further reflects the "metamorphosis" stage, whereby newcomers evolve into fully integrated and confident members of their academic communities, illustrating how adaptation, identity reconstruction, and professional integration occur through structured socialization and institutional support.

Implication for Practice

The findings indicate that teachers transitioning from industry to academia cultivate adaptability, patience, and reflective practice to navigate the distinct demands of higher education. Unlike fast-paced, results-driven industry settings,

academia emphasizes process, collaboration, and continuous learning, requiring new educators to engage in self-reflection and proactively adjust to institutional norms. Awareness of bureaucratic structures and slower organizational pace can mitigate frustration and facilitate smoother integration, highlighting the importance of structured orientation programs and onboarding that address emotional preparedness, institutional culture, and pedagogical expectations.

Mentorship and collegial support emerged as critical mechanisms for successful transition. Strengthening formal and informal mentoring systems provides guidance on pedagogy, research, and institutional procedures, while peer collaboration enhances teaching effectiveness, emotional stability, and a sense of belonging. Practitioners benefit from actively engaging in mentorship, collaborative lesson planning, and faculty learning communities, which allow them to translate prior industry expertise into effective academic practice.

Professional development was also identified as essential for adaptation. Educators should pursue ongoing learning opportunities—including workshops, graduate studies, certifications, and training in educational technology—to bridge the gap between industry skills and academic requirements. Institutions are encouraged to offer sustained, discipline-specific, and practice-oriented programs that integrate reflective practice and mentorship, enabling improvements in teaching, assessment, and research engagement while fostering lifelong learning habits.

Finally, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional connection within the academic community enhances satisfaction and retention. Positive relationships with students and colleagues, combined with balanced authority, approachability, and open communication, support professional integration. Incorporating training in interpersonal competence, emotional intelligence, and transformational leadership can strengthen relational skills, allowing educators

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to create inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environments. Together, these strategies facilitate a successful transition from industry to

academia, promoting effective, resilient, and fulfilled educators.

4. Conclusion

The professional journeys of full-time college teachers transitioning from industry practice to pedagogical work engagement revealed a quite resilience which is shaped by cultural adaptations, new teaching demands, and professional identity changes. Although they had some challenges with the workload, academic procedures, and new pedagogical responsibilities, they managed to adapt, relying on the help of mentorship, continuous professional development, and the practical knowledge that remained with them in the industry. Doing this study has been enlightening and fulfilling as I have gained a better insight

into the professional journeys that define their growth within the academic environment. The process reaffirmed that success in the academe is more than knowledge and technical competence; it involves adaptability, patience, collaboration and a long-term love for teaching and learning. This work made me understand that it is not just a knowledge transfer that a good educator should master but a lifelong learning process with students and peers. Throughout this, the transition of industry to academe is not only a change in career, but also a journey of personal and professional change that not only transforms the educator, but also the academic community.

5. Recommendations

Future research should examine the institutional factors that influence the adjustment and success of educators transitioning from industry to academia. Institutional structures, policies, and cultures shape how faculty adapt to academic norms, expectations, and workloads. Comparative studies across public and private universities, as well as research-intensive versus teaching-oriented institutions, could clarify how different environments affect integration, promotion, work engagement, and long-term satisfaction. Investigating administrative support systems—such as mentorship programs, workload policies, and performance evaluation mechanisms—using mixed-method or longitudinal designs can illuminate how institutional alignment facilitates or hinders adaptation and professional growth, informing evidence-based onboarding, mentorship, and professional development initiatives.

Additionally, research should explore pedagogical innovations that arise from the

transition, including the integration of experiential learning, simulations, technology, and case-based instruction, and how these approaches affect student engagement, motivation, and employability. Discipline-specific studies in fields such as engineering, health sciences, and information technology could reveal contextual factors shaping these innovations and guide curriculum development that bridges theory and practice. Finally, studies investigating institutional and collaborative conditions—mentorship quality, peer collaboration, and access to resources—could highlight how reflective and creative teaching practices are fostered. Incorporating perspectives from academic leaders, administrators, and students would provide a holistic understanding of faculty transition experiences, supporting adaptive, innovative, and inclusive academic environments.

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Supplementary Details

Author Contributions:

This paper was collaboratively authored by two researchers, each contributing according to their expertise: Mr. Fajartin led the development of the introduction, interpretation of results, and discussion of findings; Dr. Acosta was responsible for the comprehensive review, ensured the rigor of the study through validation of the methodology and results critical refinement of the manuscript.

Institutional Review Board Statement:

This research endeavor was submitted for ethical review. It received full-board approval from the University of the Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee (UIC-REC) to ensure compliance with ethical standards during the conduct of this research. The approved protocol code was GS-ER-07-25-0331

Informed Consent Statement:

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. All research participants were informed of the purpose and procedure of the study, potential risks and discomforts, benefits, data privacy and confidentiality and their rights as research participants.

Acknowledgement:

I express my profound gratitude to my adviser, Dr. Presentacion Acosta, for her patience, expert guidance, and invaluable feedback that greatly shaped this study. I also extend sincere thanks to the panel chair and members—Dr. Mary Jane Amoguis, Dr. Gloria P. Gempes, Dr. Emma Sagarino, Dr. Mona Laya, and Dr. Josie D. Fuentes—for their constructive insights and steadfast support. Deep appreciation is likewise given to the full-time college teachers and triangulation participants whose contributions and shared experiences enriched and validated the study's findings.

Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Disclosure Statement:

In the course of writing the research, the following AI tools were employed, along with their specific applications, such as: ChatGPT – helped in grammar correction, paraphrasing, formatting and structuring of the text in the manuscript. Scite AI – helped in locating the relevant literature and referencing styles in the processes of reviewing related literature. All the AI-aided material underwent thorough validation and revision by the author to assess the accuracy, integrity, and correspondence with the findings of the study, and interpretations and conclusions are the prerogative of the author.

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