

Career Progression Mapping in Public Elementary Schools in Expanding Teachers' Competence

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Abstract

The study sought to determine the relationship between career progression and the competence of teachers in public elementary schools particularly in the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) under DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025. The study sought to determine the level of career progression, the effectiveness of the procedures for its implementation, and the extent of the teachers' competence in the key domains based on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). A mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design was employed, integrating both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The respondents of the quantitative phase are 279 public elementary school teachers of the Division of Cabuyao for the School Year 2025-2026 selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a validated survey questionnaire based on the ECPS and PPST indicators. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) were used in the analysis. The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with selected participants to give in-depth insights into teachers' experiences and perceptions. Results showed that teachers generally demonstrated high competence in the PPST domains, particularly in curriculum planning, learning environment and diversity of learners. The implementation procedures of career progression were also rated as highly implemented, especially in terms of clarity of guidelines, fairness and administrative support. Career progression was also significantly positively related to teacher competence, meaning that effective career progression mechanisms lead to professional skills and teaching performance. The qualitative findings also supported this by emphasizing the importance of leadership support, professional development opportunities and transparent systems in motivating teachers and developing their competencies. Challenges such as resource limitations, implementation delays, and inadequate orientation were also identified. The research shows that a well-organized mechanism for career progression is an important factor in the impact of teachers' professional development and competency. The research indicates the need to improve the implementation of policies, strengthen the support system and ensure equitable access to development opportunities to sustain teacher quality and improve education outcomes.

Keywords: Career progression, teacher competence, professional development

1. Introduction

Educational development is the foundation of national development and teachers are the lifeblood of the educational system. Their growth, competence and professional development are crucial in generating quality teaching and learning outcomes. In recent years, the Department of Education (DepEd) has redoubled

its commitment to the welfare and development of teachers by instituting the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) for public school teachers as provided for in DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025.

The system offers teachers clear career pathways, merit-based promotion mechanisms and enhanced professional development opportunities. The ECPS tackles the perennial issues raised by teachers concerning limited promotion opportunities and slow career progression. It expands the existing teaching positions from Teacher I to Master Teacher IV and provides a more systematic and competency-based career progression anchored on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The PPST is under DepEd Order No. 042, s. 2017, the national framework for defining teacher competence, which states what teachers are expected to know, be able to do and value at each stage of their career, beginning, proficient, highly proficient and distinguished.

Mapping career progression in relation to teachers' competence is important to understand how policy changes are translated into professional growth at school level. Teachers' competence, as reflected in the PPST domains such as content knowledge, pedagogy, learning environment, and professional engagement, is a major determinant of effective teaching performance and learner success. However, despite the institutionalization of progressive policies, disparities in the implementation and understanding of career progression mechanisms remain evident among teachers in public elementary schools.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of career advancement on the improvement of teachers' competence in public elementary schools. It will also highlight the challenges and opportunities facing teachers in the new system. This research, through mapping the relationship between these two important dimensions, aims to offer insights that may help educational leaders and policy makers in further strengthening programs that boost teacher quality, motivation and career satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Career Progression

Career progression is the systematic movement of teachers from one level to another in the course of their professional life in accordance with the qualifications, competencies, and standards of performance prescribed by the government. The teacher career progression in the Philippine setting was created to provide teachers opportunities for professional growth and recognition and career advancement based on merit and competence, not on length of service.

In line with Executive Order No. 174, s. the Expanded Career Progression System for Public School Teachers (ECPS) was issued. 2022, to recognize the continuing professional development of teachers. The career stages of the system are Teacher I to Master Teacher V and the competency framework that serves as the basis for the promotion/progression of teachers is the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers

(PPST). The reform intends to encourage excellence, motivation, and retention in the teaching profession (DepEd, 2025).

Before this, the only available promotion path for teachers were Teacher I-III and Master Teacher I-II, which resulted in stagnation and demotivation for those who've reached the highest possible rank. The ECPS tried to fill this gap by extending the career ladder to Teacher IV-VII and Master Teacher III-V, thereby offering more opportunities for promotion (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2025).

DepEd (2025) noted that aside from recognizing the dedication and success of teachers, this new framework encourages them to develop higher skills in curriculum innovation, research, mentorship, and community engagement, which are some of the crucial elements of teacher competency under PPST. As noted by Angara (2024), the reform was primarily to ensure that "no teacher retires as Teacher I" referring to the system's aim to promote professional excellence and focus on continuous improvement (DepEd, 2024).

The mapping of career progression has been recognized as a strategic framework that provides teachers with clear pathways for their professional growth and development. This guide integrates career stages, competency requirements, and performance expectations to enable teachers to know the standards and processes in career advancement. Effective career systems that provide expectations and link professional development with performance results have been associated with professional motivation and continuous improvement (Fullan, 2020). For example, the Philippines' Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) institutionalizes career progression mapping through the articulation of career paths, levels and positions for teachers to ensure transparency and fairness in professional growth (Department of Education, 2025).

Serrano and Fallado (2025) pointed out that opportunities for professional career development impact the engagement and commitment of teachers to professional standards. Teachers who are informed about clear pathways for promotion are more motivated to train and improve their performance in the classroom.

The study of Enverga University (2025), "Perceived Impacts of the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) on the Professional Growth and Development of Teachers" was conducted among teachers of Lucban District. The results revealed that the ECPS had a significant impact on teachers' motivation, job satisfaction and the fairness of the promotion procedures. The study, however, recommended more support from school administrators and more clearly defined rules for evidence-based advertising.

2.2. Implementation Procedures

Efficient and timely implementation procedures of career progression makes teachers satisfied and motivated to join in professional growth activities (Mangalindan, Sablad & Dela Rosa, 2025). Similarly, delayed implementation of procedures for career advancement may result to frustration and less productivity among educators (Serrano & Fallado, 2025). In general, literature confirms that timely and efficient implementation procedures are critical in realizing equitable and responsive career progression systems that enhance teacher competence and organizational effectiveness. Administrative and technical support is critical to ensure effective implementation of educational programs and policies especially in ensuring career progression systems run smoothly.

According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2020), administrative and technical support from school leaders and education agencies is critical in creating an environment that supports teacher practice and ongoing professional learning. Technical assistance is the ability to effectively use digital tools and systems for documentation and assessment systems required for the implementation of policies. Adequate administrative support provides teachers access to the resources they need with clear guidance and continuous monitoring.

The OECD (2019) identified leadership to be critical to provide both administrative oversight and technical infrastructure for successful education reform. Responsive and technically equipped administrative units are more likely to implement policies in a consistent and accurate manner with less delay or error.

Feedback mechanisms are also important to learning, reflection and performance appraisal. Effective implementation of feedback mechanisms increases transparency and effectiveness and encourages data-driven decision making that leads to positive organizational outcomes and teacher performance. Systematic observation and constructive feedback equip teachers with the tools to identify their own strengths and areas for growth and ensure their alignment with professional standards such as the PPST as noted by Darling-Hammond, Hylar, and Gardner (2020).

Good monitoring systems around the world promote adaptive leadership and organizational learning (Fullan, 2020), and regular feedbacks enhance teachers' enthusiasm and involvement in professional development activities (Nguyen and Pham, 2021). The quality and the frequency of feedback are significantly associated to successful program results and sustainability of innovations in education (Durlak and DuPre, 2008). Furthermore, robust monitoring mechanisms and open channels for feedback help to ensure openness and fairness in the execution of policies and equal possibilities for career growth for all teachers (Mohammad and Khan, 2022). DepEd Order No. 66, s. in the Philippine context, the career development system should be constantly examined and assessed for fairness, accountability and continual improvement as demanded by the DepEd frameworks of 2007 and beyond.

Local scholars Mangalindan, Sablad, and Dela Rosa (2025) argue that schools with regular feedback sessions between instructors have greater levels of teacher satisfaction and engagement in training programs. Likewise, Serrano and Fallado (2025) found that regular feedback and supervision by administrators improve teachers' trust and commitment to institutional goals. Overall, these studies validate that monitoring and feedback systems are crucial in guaranteeing the success, equity, and responsiveness of the implementation of career progression in public elementary schools.

2.3. Teachers' Competence

Competence of teachers refers to their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional behaviors that they can utilize to provide effective support to the learning process, classroom management, and student success. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) describe competency as a multi-dimensional concept that includes professional engagement, assessment literacy, classroom management, instructional effectiveness, and ongoing development.

In section 42 of DepEd Order No. 2017 and section 24 of DepEd Order No. By 2025, teachers' competency will be correlated to career advancement wherein promotions and merit-based recognition will be given based on professional growth, good performance, and in accordance with the PPST criteria (Mangalindan, Sablad, & Dela Rosa, 2025). According to Mangalindan, Sablad, and Dela Rosa (2025), higher competent teachers have better classroom management, instructional innovation, and student accomplishment. Competence is an essential part of professional development and career advancement. As stated by Serrano and Fallado (2025), teachers' competency is directly related to their ability to increase their RPMS-PPST scores, seek certification and participate in research and school improvement projects. This shows that competency, professional growth and career advancement are interrelated.

Teacher competence in managing diversity is central to social cohesion, equitable learning outcomes and low-dropout rates under the international framework on inclusive education (UNESCO, 2020). Training and professional development are essential to equip teachers with the knowledge to address the diverse learning needs of the learners including students with disabilities, indigenous learners and learners from marginalized

communities. Darling-Hammond et al. (2021) also pointed to the teacher's ability to differentiate instruction and to use inclusive pedagogy as indicative of high professional competence.

Continuous professional development in cultural awareness, gender sensitivity and differentiated instruction equip teachers to handle the challenges of a diverse classroom. The study of Serrano and Fallado (2025) stated that teachers with good competencies in the management of learner diversity had a higher percentage of success in their Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS-PPST) evaluations and increased their chances for promotion under the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS). This shows that the ability to manage diverse learners is not only a pedagogical requirement but also one of the major factors in elevating one's professional status.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design, which involved the use of quantitative and qualitative methods to study the relationship of career progression, implementation procedure, and teachers' competence in public elementary schools. The quantitative part included the use of a structured survey questionnaire to collect measurable data on career progression (based on DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025) and teachers' competence (based on DepEd Order No. 042, s. 2017). The results will be statistically treated to find out if there exists a significant relationship between the two variables.

On the other hand, the qualitative part was conducted through a semi-structured interview to selected teacher-respondents. This would provide more in-depth insights into their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) and its effect on teachers' competence as stated in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). Through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, this mixed-method design allows for a more thorough understanding of how career progression contributes to the development and enhancement of teachers' competence in public elementary schools.

4. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide vital information regarding career progression mapping in public elementary schools in expanding teachers competence.

Table 1

Extent of Career Progression observed by the Respondents in terms of Qualification Standards

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The qualification standard ...</i>			
1. include qualification requirements that are clearly explained.	3.72	0.451	Always Observed
2. contain academic requirements appropriate for each career stage.	3.45	0.498	Observed
3. apply across all levels of teacher applicants.	3.75	0.443	Always Observed
4. ensure teachers are informed about any changes in qualification requirement.	3.46	0.506	Observed
5. promote professionalism among teachers.	3.43	0.504	Observed
6. establish promotion criteria that are fair, transparent, and reasonable.	3.68	0.475	Always Observed

Overall	3.58	0.269	Always Observed
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Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) Never Observed; 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) Sometimes Observed; 2.50-3.49 (Agree) Observed; 3.50-4.0 (Strongly Agree) Always Observed.

Table 1 shows that the career progression of teachers in terms of qualification standards obtained an overall mean of 3.58 interpreted as “Always Observed.” This means qualification standards refer to the prescribed set of minimum educational attainment, eligibility, and experience requirements that teachers must meet to qualify for appointment or promotion within the public school system. This finding suggests that respondents feel that these standards are consistently implemented in their schools and across the division. The finding points to teachers' awareness of the necessary qualifications and their perception of the promotion process as being governed by formal and recognized criteria.

The indicators with the highest rating are related to the consistent implementation of qualification requirements for all teacher-applicants and the clear communication of the qualifications. It implies that the system is viewed to be standardized, transparent and merit-based. Teachers in public elementary schools wishing for promotion from Teacher I to higher positions usually meet requirements such as performance ratings, eligibility, training certificates and teaching experience. The uniform implementation of such requirements enhances teachers' perception of fairness and equal opportunity in career progression. Civil Service Commission (2017) states that appointments and promotions in government service should be based on merit and fitness and should be in accordance with the rules and regulations, thus, emphasizing that promotion should be based on competence and qualifications.

The high rating for clarity of qualification requirements suggests that the policy was effectively communicated through memos, staff meetings and personnel briefings. The importance of clear guidelines is underscored, which is defined as the degree to which the rules, criteria and steps for career progression are clear and well understood by teachers. When teachers know what is required for promotion, ambiguity is decreased and participation in advancement opportunities is increased. Department of Education. (2007). DepEd Order No. 66, stressed on transparency and proper dissemination of standards in appointments and promotions. For example, Linda Darling-Hammond (2017) stated that clear professional standards help build equitable systems that promote teacher growth and accountability.

However, the indicators on the continuous updating of teachers on changes in qualification requirements received relatively lower ratings. This means that, despite the generally positive perception of the system, there is a lack of consistent communication. Some schools share updated requirements with teachers only at application times and not during orientation or systematic updates, leading to missed opportunities, slow compliance or confusion about documentary requirements. Communication systems are very essential because timely and accessible information improves policy implementation. Open discussion of career paths and standards increases teachers' motivation and engagement in professional development (OECD, 2019).

Another area of lower rating relates to the contribution of qualification standards to professionalism. The study indicates that professionalism can be linked to teachers' personal growth and professional development, which is an ongoing process of improvement of knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices. The result suggests that although qualification standards set requirements for entry and promotion, they may not always result in continued professional behavior unless complemented with mentoring, leadership support and school culture. In some contexts, professionalism grows through individual initiative rather than institutional structured support. UNESCO (2020) pointed out that standards, ongoing learning, coaching and communities of professional practice improve teacher professionalism.

A further dimension which has average scores relates to the appropriateness of academic requirements for each career stage. However, despite the formal prescription of these requirements, some teachers may find it difficult to meet the requirements due to financial constraints, workload demands and limited access to graduate education program, especially in areas with geographical challenges. This means

that standards may be reasonable in theory but the context in which they are applied differs from one context to another; barriers to access may also impede teacher advancement even where teachers are willing to meet the requirements.

The World Bank (2018) points out that career advancement schemes are more successful when teachers have equal access to training and further education. Overall, the results reveal that the qualification standards aspect of career progression is structurally sound, fair and clear. However, there is scope for improving policy communication, professional support networks and access to opportunities for academic advancement. Schools and divisions can also increase implementation through regular policy orientations, increased administrative and technical support, scholarship opportunities and flexible graduate learning programs for teachers. Concentrating on these areas can help to ensure that qualification standards not only govern promotion but also actively contribute to teacher competence and long-term professional development.

Table 2

Extent of Career Progression observed by the Respondents in terms of Performance Evaluation

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The performance evaluation ...</i>			
1. uses an objective and evidence-based performance evaluation system.	3.61	0.489	Always Observed
2. provides a fair assessment of the teaching performance.	3.49	0.508	Observed
3. offers feedback that supports professional growth.	3.77	0.427	Always Observed
4. includes an evaluation process that encourages improvement in teaching approaches.	3.51	0.501	Always Observed
5. contains indicators that accurately reflect actual classroom practices.	3.68	0.468	Always Observed
6. ensures adequate support from school heads and raters throughout the evaluation process.	3.67	0.470	Always Observed
Overall	3.62	0.290	Always Observed

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) Never Observed; 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) Sometimes Observed; 2.50-3.49 (Agree) Observed; 3.50-4.0 (Strongly Agree) Always Observed.

Table 2 shows career progression in terms of performance evaluation with an overall mean of 3.62 which means “Always Observed”. This implies that performance evaluation refers to the systematic assessment of the performance of a teacher using appraisal tools such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS). This result indicates that the respondents generally view the performance evaluation system as consistently implemented and functional in supporting career progression. It also shows that teachers see evaluation as a routine process of judging competence, monitoring performance at work and identifying opportunities for advancement.

The highest-rated indicators are those that have to do with feedback that fosters professional growth and the link between evaluation indicators and teachers’ classroom practices. These results support the idea that teachers perceive the evaluation system as a process that is not only procedural but also developmental. Teachers usually receive feedback from school heads, master teachers and evaluators after the classroom observation or performance review. The feedback may contain recommendations on improving instructional strategies, classroom management, learner engagement or assessment practices. If feedback is timely and

specific, teachers can better refine their professional practices and improve on the delivery of instructions.

This is in line with the concept of personal growth and professional development, which is the continuous improvement of teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices. In DepEd Order No. 2, the Department of Education (2015) emphasized that the RPMS should be used as a tool for accountability and development. Similarly, John Hattie (2012) pointed out that feedback is one of the most powerful influences on professional development and learning outcomes. The high rating of the alignment of evaluation indicators with classroom practices further implied that teachers viewed the system to be relevant and reflective of their actual teaching responsibilities. Indicators such as lesson preparation, learner participation, assessment strategies, and classroom environment are directly related to daily teaching duties. Consequently, it results in increased acceptance of the evaluation process by teachers because it mirrors actual instructional conditions, not abstract standards. According to Charlotte Danielson (2013), effective and reliable systems for evaluating teachers need to be based on clear domains of performance and observable teaching practices.

However, the indicator on fairness of performance assessment was rated relatively lower. This indicates that, although the system is broadly accepted, some teachers believe that there are inconsistencies in the way the evaluations are performed across schools or among raters. This perception may be due to differences in the assessment of the evaluator, the interpretation of the indicators, or the inconsistent practices of observation. One evaluator may focus on the discipline of the classroom, while another looks at the creativity of the instruction or the participation of the learners. These differences pose questions of subjectivity and inequality of treatment. This result is related to the concept of transparency and fairness of the study that refers to how transparent, neutral and free from any bias or favoritism are the implementation processes. Fairness and transparency are important components of teacher evaluation systems because perceived inconsistency can reduce trust, motivation and engagement, said OECD (2013).

The finding also highlights the need for better monitoring and feedback mechanisms, which in the study are described as systems and practices put in place to monitor regularly, review and give feedback on the implementation of career progression programs. The RPMS has rubrics that are structured but the variation in application shows the need for calibration of evaluators, training of raters and periodic review of evaluation practices. Improving the inter-rater reliability might help to ensure consistent application of standards across schools and divisions. Another key area is the consistency of the support from the leadership in conducting the evaluation. School support is generally positive but there may be variability across schools. Some school heads and master teachers are very active in mentoring teachers in the preparation of their portfolios, completion of the IPCRF, and development of improvement plans. In some cases, support is limited to compliance documentation, not coaching on professional development. This finding relates to support and guidance from leadership (in this study, assistance, mentoring and encouragement provided by school heads and administrators to help teachers achieve professional growth and career advancement). The development of teacher competence is dependent on effective school leadership that provides mentoring, supervision and supportive evaluation cultures (UNESCO, 2020).

When teachers think that evaluation is a reflection of their real classroom performance and is supported by constructive feedback, they are more likely to participate in professional learning activities such as seminars, engage in Learning Action Cells (LAC), and improve their teaching strategies. In fact, teachers in schools are usually guided to identify their strengths and areas for improvement during post-observation conferences with certain recommendations that prepare them for higher career levels and greater responsibilities. Professional growth is also promoted through reflective feedback and opportunities for self-improvement that are directly related to teaching performance and learner outcomes in accordance with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

Overall, the data show that the performance evaluation component of career progression is robust in terms of developmental feedback, relevance to classroom practice and overall implementation effectiveness. Opportunities for improvement include the standardization of evaluation practices, calibration of raters, and consistent leadership support across schools. Taking full advantage of those opportunities will enhance the

credibility, fairness and developmental impact of the performance evaluation system and better support teacher competence and career development.

Table 3

Extent of Career Progression observed by the Respondents in terms of Professional Development and Training

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The professional development and training ..</i>			
1. offer activities that are relevant to my professional needs.	3.66	0.476	Always Observed
2. provide training programs that help improve my teaching competence.	3.52	0.508	Always Observed
3. receive school support through official endorsement, time allowance, and access to learning opportunities for participation in seminars and workshops.	3.70	0.460	Always Observed
4. encourage continuous learning through in-service trainings, webinars, and professional courses, promoted by school leaders.	3.61	0.495	Always Observed
5. help prepare me for career advancement by enhancing my skills, credentials, and professional portfolio.	3.75	0.432	Always Observed
6. ensure training opportunities are generally accessible to teachers in my school.	3.71	0.464	Always Observed
Overall	3.66	0.268	Always Observed

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) Never Observed; 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) Sometimes Observed; 2.50-3.49 (Agree) Observed; 3.50-4.0 (Strongly Agree) Always Observed.

As presented in Table 3, the overall mean of 3.66, interpreted as “Always Observed,” indicates a strong and sustained culture of professional development and training among public elementary school teachers which means professional development and training pertain to seminars, workshops, or courses undertaken by teachers to enhance their teaching skills, pedagogical knowledge, and professional competence. This result suggests that respondents generally perceive professional learning opportunities as consistently available and integrated into the career progression system. It further suggests that teachers consider ongoing learning as a requisite for professional development and as an effective means of improving professional competence. The most favored indicators are training programs that facilitate career advancement through acquiring enhanced skills, credentials, and professional portfolios, and institutional backing through formal endorsements, time allocations, and access to learning opportunities.

The results reveal that teachers strongly associate participation in training with prospects for promotion and professional mobility. Indeed, teachers seeking higher positions such as Teacher III or Master Teacher often participate in in-service trainings, division seminars, Learning Action Cell (LAC) meetings, and enroll in graduate studies to qualify and be promoted. This is in line with the study’s concept of opportunities for career mobility which refers to the availability of pathways or advancement opportunities that enable teachers to move to higher positions or roles within the education system.

This high rating in institutional support further affirms that schools and divisions generally extend enabling mechanisms for teacher development, such as permission to attend seminars, recommendations for scholarships, and flexible scheduling. This is consistent with the definition of administrative and technical

support in the study that refers to assistance, resources and facilitation provided by school or division offices to help teachers comply with requirements and processes for progression. DepEd Order No. 7 (Department of Education, 2023) highlighted the importance of systematic and needs-based professional development of teachers and school leaders based on competency standards, including the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The policy also underscored the role of institutions in fostering an enabling environment for teachers' continuous learning.

The lower-rated indicator on the effectiveness and relevance of training programs to enhance teaching competence indicated major implementation gaps. Despite the wide availability of training opportunities, some teachers might find some programs inconsistent in their quality, practicality and applicability in the classroom. Some seminars may be seen as too theoretical, repetitive or not sufficiently responsive to actual classroom challenges such as differentiated instruction, reading remediation, numeracy gaps or large class management. This means that the availability of training does not necessarily translate into meaningful professional growth.

This finding relates to the study's concept of teachers' competence with respect to content knowledge and pedagogy, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, and assessment and reporting. Professional development is most effective when it targets these aspects of teaching. Generic programs or programs not related to the realities of the classroom can only expect to see teachers meeting attendance requirements with little change in their practices. As Thomas Guskey (2002) wrote, the evaluation measure should be the impact of professional development on teacher practice and student learning outcomes, not the number of participants. Lower ratings may also be due to scheduling challenges. Trainings scheduled during important academic times of year or during times of high workload can lead to decreased teacher engagement and limited time to practice new learning. This underscores the importance of timeliness and efficiency, which refers to promptness and smoothness in conducting career progression activities with minimal disruptions.

Overall, the findings indicate professional development and training as important enablers for career progression, provided through institutional mechanisms and perceived by teachers as useful for career progression. However, there is scope for improvement such as making training more relevant, not having repetitive programs, integrating learning opportunities with classroom needs and effective scheduling. These areas need to be addressed so that professional development not only meets promotion requirements but also improves teachers' competence and accelerates significant career progression within the Department of Education system.

Table 4

Extent of Career Progression observed by the Respondents in terms of Merit-based Promotion System

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The merit-based promotion system ...</i>			
1. emphasizes merit over seniority.	3.77	0.448	Always Observed
2. credits accomplishments during promotion evaluations.	3.45	0.520	Observed
3. evaluates all applicants using prescribed criteria relevant to the position applied for.	3.56	0.505	Always Observed
4. values competence and performance in the promotion process.	3.67	0.485	Always Observed
5. gives me confidence to apply for promotion, knowing merit is prioritized.	3.53	0.507	Always Observed
6. maintains a transparent and performance-driven.	3.52	0.501	Always Observed
Overall	3.58	0.300	Always Observed

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) Never Observed; 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) Sometimes Observed; 2.50-3.49 (Agree) Observed; 3.50-4.0 (Strongly Agree) Always Observed.

The merit-based promotion system is presented in Table 4 with an overall mean of 3.58 which is interpreted as “Always Observed.” The merit-based promotion system is the process of promoting teachers based on their performance, qualifications, and merit rather than seniority or tenure. The result suggests that the respondents generally perceive the promotion system in public elementary schools as competency-based and fairly implemented. This implies that the teachers recognize that promotion is affected by the professional qualifications, performance evaluation, and continuous professional development of the teachers which are the key elements of the career progression system in the education system. However, the difference in the indicators reflects the strong acceptance of the principles of the system and concerns over the consistent application of the system.

The highest-rated indicator is the perception of the promotion system as a tool for career development through the enhancement of teachers’ skills, credentials, and professional portfolios, suggesting that teachers highly acknowledge the developmental function of merit-based promotion. It is seen as a systematic means of professional development rather than simply an administrative process. In practice, teachers are involved in trainings, graduate studies and activities for portfolio building such as outputs aligned with RPMS, classroom-based innovations and documentation of performance in the requirements for promotion.

This is consistent with the study’s conceptualization of career mobility opportunities as referring to the existence of pathways or avenues of advancement that allow teachers to move to higher positions or roles in the education system. This perception is in consonance with the Department of Education (2007) through DepEd Order No. 66, s. 2007 which provides the standardized guidelines for appointment and promotion on the basis of the qualifications, experience, performance and relevant training. Moreover, it is in line with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) which highlights that the development of teachers must be grounded on proven competence and professional development in the areas of content knowledge, pedagogy and professional engagement. The high rating indicates that teachers generally agree with the principle that one should improve one’s qualifications and performance in order to be promoted.

The lower score on the indicator on recognition of achievements in promotion assessments reflects a huge gap in the implementation of transparency and fairness. It means that the career progression system is transparent, impartial and free from bias. While the system is intended to take account of documented achievements, some teachers point out that not all contributions are always documented or reflected in the evaluation outcomes. For example, classroom innovations, mentoring of peers, informal leadership roles and school-based initiatives may not always be fully reflected in the official promotion matrices. Another factor could be the different understanding of evaluation by the rater and the school, even if the criteria are the same. Differences in recording or rating performance can result in differences in recognition, which could affect the teachers’ sense of fairness. This is related to the monitoring and feedback systems aspect in the study that looks into the systems and processes of regularly monitoring, reviewing, and giving feedback on implementation.

Systems must be set up to ensure uniformity and impartiality in the promotion process. For example, a teacher with long tenure, high performance scores and numerous training sessions may not be promoted on time if there are no Plantilla positions or if the criteria for ranking are more stringent. Or perhaps teachers who are more successful at documenting and articulating their portfolios are seen as more competitive even though they are less effective classroom teachers. This illustrates the complexities of merit-based systems where both performance and documentation practices matter to the outcome.

This is consistent with the work of Linda Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) who propose that effective systems for teacher promotion should be designed to incorporate competency, performance and transparency

to increase credibility and trust . The OECD (2019) similarly observed that merit-based systems are most effective when the criteria used are clearly communicated, are consistently applied and are able to reflect the totality of teacher contributions to school improvement, formally and informally. Overall, findings suggest that the merit-based promotion system is generally perceived as functional, developmental and aligned to competency-based principles, but there is scope for improvement in terms of transparency, standardization of the assessment of achievement among raters and broadening the recognition of the varied contributions of teachers. Addressing these shortfalls will build confidence in the promotion process, increasing the credibility and efficacy of merit-based promotion within the Department of Education system.

Table 5

Extent of Career Progression observed by the Respondents in terms of Assessment Mechanisms

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The assessment mechanisms ...</i>			
1. use clear and appropriate tools to assess teachers.	3.63	0.484	Always Observed
2. reflects in professional performance.	3.66	0.475	Always Observed
3. utilize results to identify the development needs.	3.64	0.481	Always Observed
4. provide feedback regarding the assessment outcomes.	3.61	0.489	Always Observed
5. are well-structured and systematic.	3.67	0.471	Always Observed
6. help improve teaching practices through the assessment process.	3.69	0.463	Always Observed
Overall	3.65	0.228	Always Observed

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) Never Observed; 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) Sometimes Observed; 2.50-3.49 (Agree) Observed; 3.50-4.0 (Strongly Agree) Always Observed.

Table 5 presents assessment mechanisms, with an overall mean of 3.65 interpreted as “Always Observed.” which means assessment mechanisms refer to tools and processes used to evaluate teachers’ performance, learning outcomes, and professional growth as part of the career progression framework. This indicates that most of the respondents have the perception that the assessment systems in public elementary schools are well in place, structured, and carried out in a uniform way. This also implies the perception of assessment as not just a compliance requirement but as a vital component in managing teacher performance and career development. However, the differences in indicators indicate that the experience of the specific elements of the system in actual school practice may vary.

The indicators rated the highest are the use of clear and appropriate assessment tools and the provision of feedback that identifies the development needs of the teachers. The results show that teachers highly value the presence of standardized and competency-based instruments such as RPMS tools, classroom observation rubrics and performance evaluation forms. These instruments are systematic and transparent bases for assessment of teacher performance that promotes consistency and minimizes ambiguity in evaluation outcomes. This is in consonance with the concept of performance evaluation which is the systematic assessment of teacher performance utilizing standardized appraisal tools such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS). This finding is consistent with the Department of Education (2015) through DepEd Order No. 2, that institutionalized the RPMS as a standardized, results-based process for teacher performance evaluation using objective indicators.

In actual school practice, teachers are subjected to classroom observations using common rubrics, so

performance is evaluated using uniform standards. This adds to the perception of fairness and supports the convergence of teaching practices and anticipated competencies. Also, the high rating on indicators related to feedback suggests that assessment generally acts as a developmental tool. Teachers often receive feedback from school heads or master teachers after observation on what they have done well and what needs to be improved, such as instructional delivery, questioning techniques, classroom management or assessment strategies. This approach is consistent with the study's idea of personal growth and professional development, which refers to the ongoing development of teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices to improve teaching effectiveness.

John Hattie (2012) pointed out that feedback is among the most powerful influences on teacher improvement when it is timely, specific and actionable. Structured evaluation systems that include reflective dialogue also support teachers in using assessment results to inform improved instructional practices. Yet the somewhat lower-rated indicators, in particular the degree to which assessment results inform sustained improvements in teaching practices and long-term professional development, indicate an implementation gap.

Although feedback is provided, its translation into ongoing instructional improvement may not always be fully realized. This may be due to limited post-assessment support such as coaching, mentoring, or structured professional development planning. In some instances, feedback is provided at a single post-observation conference with no sustained follow-up to ensure implementation of recommended improvements. The gap also indicates the need for monitoring and feedback mechanisms, or systems and practices for regularly tracking, reviewing and providing ongoing feedback on career progression and performance implementation. However, without continuous mechanisms, assessment can become a compliance exercise rather than a developmental one.

The quality of feedback moreover can be influenced by the evaluator's expertise, workload, and time, creating varied levels of instructional guidance throughout the school. In practice, evaluation feedback is given to a teacher indicating the strengths and weaknesses such as differentiated instructions or classroom management strategies. However, without ongoing coaching and follow-up support, it is difficult to sustain these changes. This suggests that the perceived effect of assessment on long-term instructional change is somewhat less than other indicators even in strong structural systems.

Evaluation systems work only if they can lead to meaningful instructional change and not just be used as a measurement tool, as Thomas Guskey (2000) pointed out. Teacher evaluation is most effective when structured feedback, coaching, and reflective practice are in place to directly support instructional improvement (Charlotte Danielson, 2013). The results indicate that the assessment mechanisms are also an important aspect of building accountability, reflective practice, and professional responsibility among teachers. With the constant implementation of assessment systems and their alignment to teaching standards, teachers are more conscious of their instructional performance and professional expectations. Assessment results in numerous public elementary schools motivate teachers to re-evaluate their teaching approaches, increase learner involvement, and improve classroom practices for future assessments and career growth prospects.

Overall, the findings indicate that assessment mechanisms are strong in terms of structure, clarity, and feedback provision. However, there is a need to strengthen the post assessment support systems, the consistency of the quality of feedback across evaluators and the link between the assessment results and sustained professional development interventions. Filling these gaps will ensure that the assessment does not only measure teacher performance but also consistently drive instructional improvement and long-term professional growth within the Department of Education system in consonance with DepEd Order No.2, s. 2015.

Table 6*Extent of Career Progression observed by the Respondents in terms of Opportunities for Career Mobility*

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The opportunities for career mobility ...</i>			
1. have clear, well-defined pathways for advancement to roles like master teacher, department head, or administrator.	3.34	0.620	Observed
2. offer promotion opportunities for qualified teachers.	3.32	0.544	Observed
3. support teachers in pursuing higher positions.	3.46	0.638	Observed
4. encourage teachers to aim for higher positions	3.56	0.497	Always Observed
5. promote equal opportunities for career advancement.	3.46	0.644	Observed
6. include information sessions on career progression.	3.46	0.499	Observed
Overall	3.43	0.456	Observed

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) Never Observed; 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) Sometimes Observed; 2.50-3.49 (Agree) Observed; 3.50-4.0 (Strongly Agree) Always Observed.

Table 6 presents opportunities for career mobility, with an overall mean of 3.43 interpreted as “Observed” which means opportunities for career mobility refer to the availability of pathways or advancement opportunities that allow teachers to move to higher positions or roles in the education system. This suggests that there are perceived opportunities for career advancement within the system, but these are not equally experienced by all teachers. Career mobility seems to be less uniformly implemented compared to other dimensions of career progress such as performance evaluation and assessment mechanisms. The mixed responses indicate that contextual factors such as the availability of Plantilla positions, leadership support, dissemination of information and implementation practices at the school or division level affect access to advancement.

The highest rated indicator, “Encouragement from school leaders to aspire for higher positions” was interpreted as “Always Observed”. This indicates that support and guidance provided by leadership, defined in the study as the assistance, mentoring and encouragement provided by school heads and administrators to help teachers achieve professional growth and career advancement, is generally strong. In practice, school heads and principals even encourage teachers to apply for higher positions like Master Teacher or Head Teacher positions and to participate in leadership training and professional growth activities. Such leadership encouragement develops teachers’ confidence and strengthens aspirations for professional advancement. This finding is consistent with the significance of instructional leadership in career progression systems. Department of Education (2007) through DepEd Order No. The 66 highlights the merit-based promotion based on qualification, experience, performance and professional development. It highlights the role of school leaders to promote teachers’ growth through proper guidance and motivation.

The high rating indicates that there is a positive professional climate in many schools where teachers are willing to pursue upward mobility. Moderate high ratings for support in pursuing higher positions and information sessions on career progression indicate that administrative and technical support, defined as assistance, resources and facilitation provided by school or division offices to help teachers comply with career progression requirements, is available but applied unevenly. In some schools, teachers are mentored,

oriented on promotion guidelines and assisted in document preparation. But in other contexts (particularly in small schools or geographically isolated contexts) such support may be limited or informal resulting in differences in levels of readiness and awareness among teachers. This variation is a reflection of a lack of monitoring and feedback systems, which are systems and practices used to regularly track, review and provide feedback on the implementation of career progression. Uneven dissemination of information and differences in leadership capacity can result in differences in access to career development support, which can impact preparedness of teachers for promotion.

On the other hand, the relatively low rated indicator on clear and well-defined pathways for career advancement suggests that some teachers feel that there is limited clarity on how promotion is obtained. The finding suggests that teachers depend on division memoranda, colleagues' advice, or informal guidance to understand the process of promotion. Clarity of guidelines in the study refers to the degree to which the rules, criteria, and steps for career progression are communicated. This creates uncertainty, different interpretations and confusion on the requirements and timelines. The lack of Plantilla positions perpetuates the idea that career progression is a competition and not a matter of being qualified to teach. This structural barrier limits mobility opportunity because advancement is not only a function of competence and readiness, but also of the availability of open positions in the system. The findings indicate the need for efficient, structured, transparent and standardized systems for career mobility between schools and divisions. But this should go hand in hand with clear guidelines, consistent dissemination of information and equitable access to opportunities, so as to promote equity in the implementation of the system.

Clear career paths and transparent promotion systems are essential to improving teachers' motivation and professional development (OECD, 2019). There is career mobility and support from leadership to progress, but some areas of focus. This should include transparency on the routes to promotion, systematic sharing of information, better support systems and equality of access to promotion opportunities. Closing these gaps will promote transparency, fairness, and efficiency in the career development of employees in the Department of Education. Formal career development opportunities may be inconsistent or unclear in their career structures (UNESCO, 2020), impacting on teacher mobility and confidence in the promotion system and the design of fair and predictable systems of career development (Hall and Soskice, 2001)

Table 7

Extent of Career Progression observed by the Respondents in terms of Support and Guidance from Leadership

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The support and guidance from leadership..</i>	3.39	0.691	Observed
1. provides guidance on career goals.			
2. offers mentoring for promotion preparation.	3.23	0.709	Observed
3. encourages professional development.	3.54	0.499	Always Observed
4. gives constructive performance feedback.	3.43	0.495	Always Observed
5. provide resources for promotion preparation.	3.35	0.627	Observed
6. creates an environment that fosters continuous improvement.	3.47	0.507	Observed
Overall	3.40	0.480	Observed

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Strongly Disagree) Never Observed; 1.50-2.49 (Disagree) Sometimes Observed; 2.50-3.49 (Agree) Observed; 3.50-4.0 (Strongly Agree) Always Observed.

Table 7 presents support and guidance from leadership, with an overall mean of 3.40 interpreted as "Observed" which means support and guidance from leadership refers to the assistance, mentoring,

encouragement, and instructional support provided by school heads and administrators to help teachers achieve professional growth and career advancement. This result indicates that leadership support for teacher development is present in schools but is not consistently experienced across all indicators and contexts. The implementation of leadership support appears to be less consistent than other aspects of career advancement, such as assessment mechanisms and performance evaluation. This suggests that school leaders' performance as instructional leaders may vary. The indicators that perform the best are promoting professional development and providing constructive feedback, both identified as "Always Observed." This indicates a general consensus that school leaders are successful in fostering a culture of continuous learning. On the ground, school heads and master teachers actively promote teachers' participation in trainings, seminars, INSETS, and graduate studies for their professional development. This is in accordance with the definition of professional development and training of the study which is also defined as the seminars, workshops or courses attended by teachers to improve their teaching skills, pedagogical knowledge and their overall professional competence.

Constructive feedback is provided periodically such as classroom observations and post conferences. Teachers are guided on how to improve their teaching techniques such as delivery of lessons, classroom management, assessment strategies and learner engagement. This is evident in the performance appraisal process that assesses the performance of the teachers systematically through the use of organized tools such as RPMS and classroom observation rubrics. This feedback loop also gives teachers the opportunity to use the outcome of the appraisal to enhance their teaching practice and professional development. This is an important finding in consonance with DepEd Order No. 24 (Department of Education, 2020) which states that according to the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), school heads are to be instructional leaders who develop teachers through coaching, mentoring and evidence-based feedback. It confirms that leadership involves not just administrative oversight but instructional enhancement and professional learning.

Career goals, systemic mentoring for promotion preparation and continuous supportive environment for continuous improvement show significantly lower scoring indicators, however, with deficits in implementation. Support exists but not always systematically provided or experienced uniformly by all teachers. Some schools have teachers engaged in regular mentoring and individualized guidance on promotion pathways, in others support is hampered by administrative workload, large teacher populations or the lack of formal mentoring systems.

This inconsistency points to weaknesses in monitoring and feedback mechanisms, the systems and practices put in place for regular tracking, review and ongoing feedback on the implementation of career progression. Informal or ad hoc leadership support for teachers may result in unequitable access to guidance including areas such as promotion planning, portfolio development and qualification requirements. The lowest scoring element, resources provided for promotion preparation, continues to highlight structural limitations in leadership support, as teachers may not have access to coaching resources, scheduled review sessions or coordinated support in preparing for promotion documents.

In some instances, teachers seeking advancement resort to self-directed efforts or informal peer assistance, which escalates workload and creates disparities in access to institutional support. This refers to administrative and technical support which the study defined as the assistance and facilitation provided by school or division offices to help teachers meet the requirements of career progression. In actual school settings, this means that while one teacher might receive step-by-step mentoring from a school head when preparing for promotion, another might largely depend on independent preparation. Differential experiences create different ways of experiencing support from leadership and may influence perceptions of fairness and consistency of career progression processes.

Effective instructional leadership is also important for the development of a good school culture that

supports collaboration, reflective practice, and ongoing learning. However, the different experiences of teachers indicate that the effectiveness of the support from leadership is highly dependent on the capacity, availability, and commitment of school leaders to introduce structured mentoring and guidance systems. Real school situations, continuous coaching and career advice motivate teachers to feel more confident to meet promotion requirements, portfolios and professional development.

This reflects the work of Viviane Robinson et al. (2008) who found that effective school leadership has a significant impact on teacher results through goal setting, instructional support and engagement in professional development. Similarly, Ken Leithwood et al (2020) found that successful leadership strategies require motivation and feedback if they are to have an actual effect on teacher development, but also well-structured systems of support and teamwork, and ongoing mentoring.

The findings reveal that leadership support is perceived positively in terms of encouragement and feedback, however, formal mentoring structures need to be improved, career guidance processes need to be standardized and resources for promotion preparation need to be equally accessible. Filling these gaps will improve the consistency and impact of instructional leadership and cement its role in promoting career growth of teachers within the Department of Education system.

Table 8

Extent of Implementation of the Career Progression as to Clarity of Guidelines

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The clarity of guidelines ...</i>			
1. instructions on requirements are specific and complete.	3.30	0.540	Implemented
2. outline exact steps in the promotion process.	3.30	0.670	Implemented
3. provide clear orientation on career progression rules.	3.32	0.544	Implemented
4. ensure guideline documents are accessible to all teachers.	3.49	0.574	Implemented
5. allow for clarification of concerns.	3.20	0.567	Implemented
6. minimize confusion during promotion applications.	3.32	0.467	Implemented
Overall	3.32	0.433	Implemented

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Unimplemented); 1.50-2.49 (Partially Implemented); 2.50-3.49 (Implemented); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Implemented).

The clarity of guidelines with a mean of 3.32 (Table 8) is interpreted as “Implemented” which means that clarity of guidelines refers to how well defined and understandable the rules, criteria and steps of career progression are communicated to teachers. That is, there are policies and systems of career progression, but their clarity and usability in practice is not yet fully optimized. The results show that the structural existence of guidelines is established, but the communication and understanding between the teachers still need to be improved.

The most highly rated indicator is teachers’ accessibility to guideline documents. This suggests that policy materials are generally available through official channels, including printed memorandums, postings in schools, division offices, and online. This is consistent with the study concept of transparency and fairness that refers to the open, fair and accessible implementation processes. This means that the system allows for

formal communication of career progression policies as teachers can access the relevant documents as and when they need. In line with standards of public sector governance, the Department of Education encourages policy transparency by making issuances and guidelines available to the public at the official website of the Department of Education.

However, the relatively lower rated indicator on clear statement on exact steps in promotion process despite availability of documents shows significant gap in clarity. This means while the teachers are able to access the guidelines, it may still be difficult for the teachers to translate the documents to a clear step-by-step understanding of the promotion process. Teachers are frequently given policy documents but are not always clear about the sequencing requirements, documentary evidence, timelines and evaluation procedures. This suggests that the information exists but is not operationalized enough to be used in practice.

This is directly linked to the study's definition of clarity of guidelines which highlights not only the existence of guidelines, but also the understandability and usability of rules and procedures for career progression. Without simplified guidelines and formatted documents for practical application, teachers may turn to informal sources, such as colleagues or administrative personnel, to clarify the information. The employment of informal sources of interpretation points to the fact that formal channels of communication are not sufficiently effective in ensuring understanding. Different schools/divisions respond differently, so dissemination practices vary. Some schools had a really good orientation, a step-by-step walk-through and a checklist, while others just gave out papers with little or no explanation.

Furthermore, the complexities in the promotion requirements, especially under the RPMS and PPST-aligned criteria, can be cognitively overwhelming for teachers to fully understand and navigate the system on their own. What this reveals is a major gap in implementation – the gap between policy availability and policy understanding. While guidelines are available and disseminated, they are not always presented as clear, simplified, and standardized procedural guides that teachers can readily follow.

In terms of assistance and facilitation provided by the school or division offices to help teachers meet the career progression requirements, this gap affects the efficiency of the administrative and technical assistance.. A teacher may know that promotion is based on documents such as IPCRF ratings, training certificates, and performance evidence, but may not be clear about the sequencing, the validation procedures, or the order of requirements. The ambiguity may cause delays or reliance on informal guidance, which may result in differences in access to the right information according to the strength of support networks available to the teacher.

These findings support those of Maria Santiago et al.(2016) indicating that the lack of clear career advancement systems may undermine teachers' motivation and restrict their involvement in advancement opportunities. Similarly, the OECD (2019) highlights the role of clear, well-communicated and accessible career structures for fairness, motivation and career opportunities for teachers. In conclusion, the evidence indicates that guidelines for career advancement are already available and accessible, but there is scope for further development in terms of procedural transparency, dissemination practices and the simplification of guidelines into user-friendly formats (e.g. flowcharts, checklists and structured orientation modules). Improvements along these lines will help teachers better understand the system, reduce reliance on informal interpretation and improve the fairness, transparency and effectiveness of career advancement within the Department of Education framework.

Table 9

Extent of Implementation of the Career Progression as to Transparency and Fairness

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The transparency and fairness ...</i>			
1. ensure promotion procedures are fair and unbiased.	3.02	0.824	Implemented
2. provide equal treatment to all applicants	3.06	0.854	Implemented

during evaluation.			
3. base candidate selection on established criteria.	3.19	0.698	Implemented
4. inform teachers about the basis of promotion results.	3.11	0.686	Implemented
5. require evaluators to follow strict ethical standards.	3.19	0.512	Implemented
6. build trust through transparency in the promotion process.	3.29	0.547	Implemented
Overall	3.14	0.559	Implemented

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Unimplemented); 1.50-2.49 (Partially Implemented); 2.50-3.49 (Implemented); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Implemented).

As shown in Table 9, the degree of implementation of career progression in terms of transparency and fairness obtained an overall mean of 3.14 which is interpreted as “Implemented”. Transparency and fairness, as measured in the study, refer to the degree to which the implementation of the career progression process is open, impartial, and free from bias or favoritism. The findings indicate that public elementary schools have procedures and practices in place to promote transparency and fairness in the promotion process.

Nevertheless, transparency and fairness seem to be present, but not yet consistently optimized within schools and divisions, compared to higher-ranked domains such as assessment mechanisms and performance evaluation. This means that teachers experience equitable promotion processes in practice differently. The indicator with the highest rating is “building trust through transparency in the promotion process.” This shows that teachers overall are feeling an improvement in openness and communication on the promotion process.

This can be attributed to improved communication of guidelines, structured ranking systems and improved communication from school heads and human resource personnel. Teachers are normally oriented through memoranda, meetings and briefing sessions, which explain such requirements as performance ratings, training credentials, portfolio evidence and documentary submissions. These practices reduce uncertainty, increase preparedness and enhance confidence in the legitimacy of promotion decisions.

This result is consistent with the Department of Education (2007) through DepEd Order No. 66 institutionalizes merit-based appointment and promotion based on standardized qualifications and experience and performance criteria. It also reflects the principles of accountability in the public sector that emphasizes openness and clarity of procedures in personnel actions. The finding shows that many schools have improved communication systems to make promotion processes more understandable and transparent than before.

However, the lowest rated indicator, giving equal treatment to all applicants during evaluation, points to a serious concern about the fairness of implementation. The lower “Implemented” rating reflects the perception of some teachers that the use of evaluation standards in different contexts is not uniform. This may be due to differences in the judgment of the evaluators, their interpretation of the criteria, their access to mentoring and information, or their perception of favoritism in some settings. This is related to the principle of transparency and fairness, which suggests that the decisions on promotion should be clearly communicated and implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

Teachers in outlying or smaller schools may feel they are at a disadvantage than teachers in central schools where division offices, technical assistance and prompt guidance are more readily available. In this vein, differences in how evaluators interpret RPMS indicators or rate achievements may help explain perceived inequities in promotion outcomes. This indicates a major implementation gap: transparency in procedures does not guarantee fairness in outcomes. Even where procedures are well explained, the application of standards can still affect perceptions of fairness in the system. Further, the study recommends that to eliminate the inconsistencies and improve uniformity in the application of the promotion criteria, it is important to improve monitoring and feedback systems that periodically monitor, review and ensure

uniformity in the implementation of career progression processes.

Another area rated in moderate terms is informing teachers about the basis of promotion results. This means that results are published but not always with sufficient explanation to fully clarify the reasons for decisions. Results may be provided to teachers without feedback on whether promotion was based on performance ratings, missing requirements, rank position or availability of positions. This constrains their capacity to make informed improvements for future applications and subverts the developmental function of the system. A non-promoted teacher may know the outcome but not the reason for it and without structured feedback the opportunities for strategic preparation and professional growth are limited. This emphasizes the need to improve feedback systems in fair and transparent career advancement practices.

These results are consistent with Donald McGinnis and Robert Bishop (2017) who claim that fairness in personnel systems requires uniform rules, uniform application and clear communication of the decisions. Clear and fair career paths are also important for maintaining teacher trust, motivation and professional engagement, especially where the prospects of promotion are few and competitive (OECD, 2019). In conclusion, the results underline the necessity to improve the current mechanisms of transparency and fairness to guarantee the coherence and equity of the system. Opportunities for improvement relate to equal treatment of applicants, standardization of the interpretation of promotion criteria by evaluators, monitoring systems, access to support for teachers in less advantaged contexts and clearer and more detailed feedback on the outcome of the promotion process. Bridging these gaps will enhance fairness, coherence and trust in the career progression system and ensure its alignment with the merit-based promotion principles within the Department of Education framework.

Table 10

Extent of Implementation of the Career Progression as to Timeliness and Efficiency

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The timeliness and efficiency ...</i>			
1. follow promotion schedules.	3.38	0.486	Implemented
2. evaluate applications without unnecessary delays.	3.34	0.474	Implemented
3. prevent backlogs and delays in document processing.	3.29	0.535	Implemented
4. maintain efficient administrative handling.	3.43	0.570	Implemented
5. provide clear timelines for each promotion stage.	3.36	0.558	Implemented
6. support teachers in preparing documents properly through efficiency.	3.34	0.552	Implemented
Overall	3.36	0.407	Implemented

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Unimplemented); 1.50-2.49 (Partially Implemented); 2.50-3.49 (Implemented); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Implemented).

Table 10 shows that the implementation of career progression in terms of timeliness and efficiency resulted in an overall mean of 3.36 which is interpreted as “Implemented.” Which means timeliness and efficiency refer to promptness and smoothness in the implementation of career progression activities and the least delay in the processing of applications or promotions. The result suggests that, on average, schools can cope with processes related to promotion in a reasonable time and with functional administrative systems. But the result also indicates that timeliness and efficiency are not yet fully aligned across schools and contexts, while systems are operational. Differences between the indicators mean variation in the effectiveness of administrative processes in practice.

The indicator of “efficient administrative handling”, which is the best-rated indicator, reflects the general perception of teachers that schools are organized in terms of the processing of requirements, documents, and procedural tasks for promotion. This can be attributed to improved record management systems, transparent scheduling of deadlines, and the incremental digitalization of administrative processes. In practical terms, teachers applying for promotion may have a timetable for submission, staff assigned to deal with the applications, and explicit criteria checklists. This organization supports “administrative and technical support” which refers to the assistance, resources, and facilitation that the school or division offices provide to help the teachers meet the requirements for career progression. This finding is consistent with the Department of Education (2007) through DepEd Order No. 66 which promotes the standardized and systematic processing of appointments and promotions based on merit and procedures. It also represents the common principles of public administration that promote efficiency, accountability and responsiveness in human resource systems. The relatively high rating suggests that many schools are improving administrative processes related to career advancement.

However, there are operational gaps in the indicators measuring applications without undue delays and those providing support to teachers in document preparation, which still impact teachers’ experiences. Although these aspects are still in the ‘Implemented’ category, the lower scores indicate that in some cases there are still delays, multiple revisions or a lack of procedural guidance. These challenges may be related to workload stressors experienced by school administrators who are frequently overwhelmed with many responsibilities including supervision of instruction, reporting requirements, financial management, and human resource activities. As a result, promotion cases may be competing with other demanding duties which may result in lengthier processing delays.

Lack of training or unfamiliarity with updated promotion guidelines can result in inconsistent advice being provided to applicants. This relates to the study’s notion of clarity of guidelines referring to how clear and understandable the rules, criteria and steps involved in career advancement are to teachers. Some teachers submit their promotion documents on time but there is a delay in verifications, endorsement or feedback. The documentation required may need to be revised several times by some teachers due to unclear instructions or changing expectations around the documentation. These experiences increase the burden and can dissuade some teachers from applying for promotion opportunities. This is one of the examples of the gap between prescribed method and seamless and efficient implementation for all applicants.

This is in line with OECD (2020) who emphasize that efficient administrative systems and timely processing of applications are important to maintain trust, motivation and equal access to opportunities for career progression. Bureaucratic delays and lack of transparency in procedures can discourage teachers from applying for promotion pathways even if they are eligible. The findings indicate that the system has timely and efficient procedures but there is scope for improvement in application workflows and processing delays, administrative capacity and initial orientation to applicants. Schools and divisions can further improve implementation through use of standardized checklists, digital tracking systems, applicant assistance desks and well-defined accountability measures around timelines. Strengthening these areas will help to ensure the implementation of career progression processes that are timely, efficient and teacher-friendly and will improve credibility and foster continuous professional growth within the Department of Education system.

Table 11

Extent of the Implementation of the Career Progression as to Administrative and Technical Support

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The administrative and technical support...</i>			
1. assists teachers in preparing promotion documents.	3.15	0.681	Implemented
2. offers personnel to guide teachers through the process.	3.30	0.675	Implemented

3. ensures smooth and accurate document submissions	3.33	0.470	Implemented
4. reduces errors in application requirements through support.	3.35	0.554	Implemented
5. supplies necessary tools like computers, printers, and forms.	3.31	0.543	Implemented
6. makes support services accessible to all promotion applicants.	3.44	0.497	Implemented
Overall	3.31	0.442	Implemented

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Unimplemented); 1.50-2.49 (Partially Implemented); 2.50-3.49 (Implemented); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Implemented).

The level of implementation in terms of administrative and technical support is presented in Table 11. The grand mean of 3.31 is interpreted as “Implemented. This means that the administrative and technical support is aid, resources and facilitation given by school or division offices to assist teachers to meet the requirements and processes for career development. The finding suggests that public elementary schools have these support systems in place, but they are not yet fully institutionalized across all contexts and are implemented to a moderate extent. There are structures and resources in place but the level of responsiveness, systemization and hands-on support varies from school to school.”

The availability of support services to applicants, the highest rated indicator, shows that schools generally provide teachers access to key materials including templates, checklists, guidelines and reference documents required for promotion. This suggests the presence of informational support with teachers being able to independently access resources to clarify what is required for promotion. For example, teachers may refer to RPMS tools, updated memoranda, sample portfolios and online or printed references to guide them in their application process. This is important because it minimizes initial confusion and allows teachers to align their requirements with accepted standards. This is in line with the Department of Education (2007) through DepEd Order No. 66 that stresses the uniformity of requirements and completeness of documents for promotion. Availability of guidelines and reference materials increases transparency and procedural preparedness ensuring that the applicants know the expectations on the outputs and documents. However the indicator with the least rating on helping teachers prepare promotion documents has a prominent implementation gap in terms of hands-on assistance. But there doesn't seem to be systematic provision of individualized guidance. This points to a more document-driven than mentorship-driven approach to administrative and technical support, in the sense that the focus is on the provision of resources rather than on coaching the teachers through the intricacies of preparing and validating requirements. This difference could be explained by contextual pressures such as heavy administrative burdens, shortage of personnel and the lack of structured technical support programs specifically designed for promotion preparation.

School leaders and administrative staff are often overburdened with too many simultaneous activities that may limit their ability to coach each candidate individually. This gap is directly related to the definition of monitoring and feedback mechanisms in the study. This definition includes the systems and activities for continuous observation, evaluation and support of the implementation of career advancement processes. Without regular or formal technical assistance, teachers may not receive the guidance they need to maximize the use of available resources. Fellow teachers are often the support teachers turn to. A teacher interested in promotion, for instance, may seek help from colleagues or more experienced peers to review their IPCRF entries, check for completeness of their portfolio or clarify documentation requirements. Such peer-to-peer support can be useful but it is informal, inconsistent and based on availability of networks rather than institutional systems. This means that the quality of guidance applicants get varies.

This points to an important implementation gap, the gap between availability of resources and availability of structured technical support . “Even where the materials are in place, not all schools have

systematic coaching and guided help. This impacts on the notion of administrative and technical support in the study, which is not only to have access to resources but also active facilitation to help teachers to successfully comply with career progression requirements. The average ratings for indicators concerning personnel guidance and availability of tools and resources suggest that systems of support still are in development. The basic structures exist, but they have not yet evolved into an institutionalized mentoring and technical assistance structure for career advancement. This is similar to Tony Bush and Les Middlewood (2013) who suggest that a good administrative system should provide resources as well as structured support and guidance to help professionals navigate complex organizational processes. People may have difficulty doing well even with formal guidelines without such support.

Linda Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) similarly find that “strong institutional supports for professional growth (such as mentoring, coaching, and expert assistance) are critical to ensuring equitable professional growth and improving teacher competence” and that “professional growth systems are most effective when supports extend beyond documentation to ongoing capacity-building and guidance. In general, the findings suggest that mechanisms for administrative and technical support exist but these require improvement in terms of structured mentoring, personalized assistance and institutionalized technical support mechanisms. With dedicated promotion support teams, formal mentoring programs and regular technical assistance sessions to improve these areas, teachers will not only be provided with resources but actively supported in accomplishing their promotion requirements effectively, thus increasing equity, efficiency and effectiveness in career progression in the Department of Education system.

Table 12*Extent of Implementation of the Career Progression as to Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms*

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The monitoring and feedback mechanisms...</i>			
1. provide feedback after each stage of the promotion process.	3.34	0.551	Implemented
2. ensure fairness through continuous monitoring.	3.27	0.658	Implemented
3. address gaps in implementation based on monitoring.	3.36	0.624	Implemented
4. offer constructive feedback helpful for future applications.	3.46	0.499	Implemented
5. track the progress of each applicant.	3.41	0.493	Implemented
6. communicate to the teachers.	3.42	0.494	Implemented
Overall	3.38	0.451	Implemented

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Unimplemented); 1.50-2.49 (Partially Implemented); 2.50-3.49 (Implemented); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Implemented).

Table 12 presents the implementation of career progression in terms of monitoring and feedback mechanisms, with an overall mean of 3.38 interpreted as “Implemented” which means, monitoring and feedback mechanisms refer to the systems and practices established to regularly track, review, and provide feedback on the implementation of career progression programs. This result indicates that such mechanisms are present in public elementary schools and are being practiced to a reasonable extent. However, the rating also suggests that these mechanisms are not yet fully standardized or consistently maximized across all stages of the promotion process. The differences in the rating of the indicators indicate differences in the way feedback is provided, documented and used for professional growth.

The highest rating of the indicator indicates that when feedback is given, it is generally relevant and focused on teacher development, offering constructive feedback that is beneficial for future applications,

demonstrating that evaluators can pinpoint strengths and areas for improvement that can inform future promotion efforts. In practice, teachers get feedback on instruction, classroom management, developing a portfolio, or how evidence supports RPMS indicators. This feedback is in line with the study's concept of personal growth and professional development which is the ongoing enhancement of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices of teachers to improve teaching effectiveness.

This is consistent with John Hattie (2012) who argued that feedback is one of the most powerful influences on professional improvement when it is specific, timely and actionable. The relatively high score indicates that the quality of feedback, when given, tends to be useful and relevant to teachers' development needs. The lower-rated indicator on providing feedback after each of the stages in the promotion process indicates an implementation gap in terms of consistency and systematic delivery of feedback. There is some feedback but not at each stage of the promotion cycle. This may be due to work pressure, time constraints or lack of a standard protocol of providing documented feedback at each stage by the evaluators.

As a result, some teachers may receive only the final or summary results of the evaluation with little detailed feedback as to the strengths and weaknesses of their performance. Alternatively, feedback could be untimely or informal and so less useful for immediate improvement. This inconsistency prevents the system from developing and reduces teachers' ability to react properly to evaluation results. This indicates a gap in the monitoring and feedback mechanisms, where feedback has not yet been fully institutionalized as a continuous and structured process in all stages of career development. Ideally monitoring should ensure that feedback is systematic, timely and documented, and that it is part of a continuous cycle of improvement rather than a one-off event. In the absence of this structure feedback becomes a function of the evaluator's individual practices as opposed to a standardized institutional procedure.

The moderate level of implementation also reflects the limited integration of monitoring results with professional development and training. In this study, professional development and training refer to the seminars, workshops or courses that are undertaken to enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge and professional competence. Ideally, feedback from promotion stages should inform targeted coaching, mentoring and training interventions. However, this link is inconsistent and constrains the long-term developmental impact of monitoring systems.

The results are in support of the findings of Linda Darling-Hammond (2017) who argued that continuous and structured feedback systems are important to strengthen teacher competence and for meaningful professional growth.

Similarly, Thomas Guskey (2000) argued that feedback must be systematic and provide opportunities for reflection, support and improvement to be effective. Overall, the results indicate that mechanisms for monitoring and feedback are in place within the system, but need to be enhanced in terms of standardizing feedback across all stages of promotion, timeliness and consistency, documentation practices, and connecting feedback with mentoring and professional development systems. Attending to these areas will help to ensure that monitoring and feedback not only evaluate performance, but also consistently lead to instructional improvement and support more effective career advancement within the Department of Education system.

Table 13

Level of Teachers' Competence in terms of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The content knowledge and pedagogy...</i>			
1. demonstrate mastery of the subjects taught.	3.65	0.477	Highly Competent
2. use varied teaching strategies suited to learners' needs.	3.62	0.486	Highly Competent
3. reflect deep understanding of the	3.59	0.492	Highly Competent

curriculum in teaching.			
4. adapt teaching methods based on learner performance.	3.51	0.501	Highly Competent
5. integrate new strategies to improve instruction.	3.58	0.494	Highly Competent
6. deliver lessons that show coherence and mastery of content.	3.56	0.497	Highly Competent
Overall	3.59	0.228	Highly Competent

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Needs Improvement); 1.50-2.49 (Developing); 2.50-3.49 (Competent); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Competent).

Table 13 presents the teachers' competence in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy with an overall mean of 3.59 interpreted as "Highly Competent". Content knowledge and pedagogy refer to the mastery of subject matter by the teacher and the ability to apply effective teaching strategies suited to the needs of the learners. This result reveals that teachers exhibit a strong level of competence both in disciplinary knowledge and instructional practice, reflecting effective preparation to classroom teaching. It further implies that career progression systems, along with continuous professional development opportunities, may help in strengthening teachers' instructional competence and overall teaching effectiveness.

The highest-rated indicator showing mastery of the subjects taught suggests that teachers have strong knowledge in the assigned learning areas. This may involve the engagement in continuous professional learning activities like seminars, workshops, LAC sessions, in-service trainings, and graduate studies which are frequently encouraged as part of the requirements for promotion and career advancement. In practice, teachers who want to move into higher positions tend to use such professional development opportunities to update their subject expertise, renew their material knowledge and improve their teaching skills. They are better at explaining lessons effectively, relating concepts meaningfully and responding to learners' inquiries confidently. This mastery leads to a better organized, believable and successful classroom instruction.

This finding is congruent with the Department of Education (2017) through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) which considers content knowledge and pedagogy as a key domain of teacher competency. The PPST highlights that effective instructors possess mastery of their subject matter and select and employ pedagogical approaches that are conducive to meaningful learning. This also resonates with the wider objectives of career progression frameworks associating higher jobs with evidence of professional competence and continuing professional development.

The indicator on adapting teaching methods to learner performance, however, received a slightly lower score, suggesting that teachers may be strong content knowledge holders, but may struggle to translate this into differentiated instruction. This indicates a disconnection between subject-matter expertise and pedagogical adaptability. In real classroom situations, teachers may be aware of different teaching methods, but struggle to implement them consistently due to challenges such as large class sizes, different learner abilities, inadequate teaching resources and limited preparation time.

For example, a teacher in a heterogeneous class may have to provide an enrichment work for advanced learners while at the same time provide support for struggling learners in need of remediation. In such instances, teachers may turn to entire class instruction rather than completely differentiated tactics even though they are aware of learner-centered approaches. This shows that, although teachers may possess the pedagogical knowledge, environmental restrictions may inhibit the extent to which adaptive teaching approaches are routinely adopted. This issue is also related to the study's definition of variety of learners which refers to the ability of the instructor to detect and respond to the diverse learning needs, background and abilities of pupils.

Good teaching is not only mastery of the subject matter but also responsive to learner variety through flexible instructional design, scaffolding and different assessment methodologies. The report also highlights

the significance of curriculum and planning which it describes as the competence of a teacher to create, administer and assess lesson plans based on the curriculum standards. Responsive planning that takes into account learner preparation, pacing and diverse activities best supports good subject knowledge. The results are consistent with OECD (2019) that emphasizes the importance of teachers' subject matter knowledge and their capacity to adjust instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners across high-performing education systems.

In the same vein, Linda Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasized that teacher success is a function of knowledge of topic, pedagogical skills and sensitivity to variances in student learning. In a similar vein, Lee Shulman (1987) introduced the notion of pedagogical content knowledge which highlights that successful teaching involves not just topic knowledge but also understanding of how content may be presented in such a way that learners can grasp.

Overall, the results show that teachers are quite competent in topic knowledge and pedagogy, and are strong in their subject areas and in the delivery of education in general. However, there is room for growth when it comes to differentiated education, adaptive teaching methodologies and planning for the learners' requirements. The translation of strength in content mastery into inclusive and effective pedagogical practices through the implementation of tailored professional development, mentorship and classroom support mechanisms will be key thereby leading to better learner outcomes and creating a sustainable cadre of competent teachers in line with the career progression structure.

Table 14*Level of Teachers' Competence in terms of Learning Environment*

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The learning environment ...</i>			
1. creates a classroom that supports active engagement.	3.52	0.501	Highly Competent
2. promotes discipline and order through routines.	3.66	0.475	Highly Competent
3. encourages collaboration among learners.	3.60	0.491	Highly Competent
4. ensures a safe and welcoming environment.	3.76	0.426	Highly Competent
5. encourages student participation through classroom setup.	3.38	0.486	Highly Competent
6. manages classroom behavior.	3.72	0.448	Highly Competent
Overall	3.61	0.226	Highly Competent

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Needs Improvement); 1.50-2.49 (Developing); 2.50-3.49 (Competent); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Competent).

Table 14 indicates teachers' competence in learning environment with an overall mean of 3.61 which is interpreted as "Highly Competent." The learning environment pertains to the creation and maintenance of a classroom atmosphere that supports active learning, respect, and positive discipline. The finding suggests that teachers are very capable of creating and maintaining conducive classroom conditions for learning. It also suggests that classroom management and development of positive learning spaces are well-developed competencies among public elementary school teachers, perhaps enhanced through continuous professional development and the implementation of child-centered and inclusive education policies. The highest scoring indicator, 'safe and welcoming environment' indicates the constant focus of teachers on safety, emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging of learners. This suggests good awareness and implementation of principles of child protection, inclusive education practices and standards for classroom management. Teachers create a well-defined set of rules of conduct for the classroom, develop respectful relationships and apply positive reinforcement strategies to guide learners' behaviors. They are empathetic in responding to learners'

emotional and academic needs and create a supportive environment in which students feel valued, safe and motivated to participate.

This finding is consistent with Department of Education (2012) through DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012, or the Child Protection Policy which requires the establishment of safe and learner-friendly schools free from bullying, abuse, discrimination and other forms of harm. This also coincides with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) introduced by Department of Education (2017) where the establishment of a positive learning environment is considered as a core professional domain.

The high rating means that these policy principles are well adopted into day-to-day classroom practices. But the measure of the classroom environment supportive of active participation was slightly lower, and points to the ongoing challenge of keeping learner engagement high. In general, the teachers are able to control and discipline the classroom; however, they do not always manage to make the students interested. This contradiction can be explained by contextual variables including unavailability of instructional resources, big and heterogeneous class sizes, students' motivation level and external distractions that impair their concentration and engagement. In a traditional classroom, the teacher may have used group work, class discussion, games or hands-on learning activities, but some students may be passive or disengaged due to differences in interest, learning styles, personal concerns or academic self-confidence.

The results showed a clear distinction between establishing an organized and safe classroom environment and promoting active learner engagement. Teachers may be skilled in establishing order and positive discipline, but may need more support in promoting more learner engagement, collaboration and sustained attention. This is directly related to the study's concept of content knowledge and pedagogy where teachers are expected to use effective teaching methods that are responsive to the needs and diversity of learners requiring responsiveness to different backgrounds, levels of readiness and learner capabilities.

Robert Marzano (2003) found evidence for this, discovering that when teachers combined clear expectations along with positive relationships, effective classroom management was positively related to higher student achievement and engagement. John Hattie (2012) identified that the positive classroom climate had a significant impact on the learner's motivation, participation, and academic success.

Likewise, UNESCO (2020) highlighted the importance of a supportive and inclusive learning environment to improve access and quality in education. An effective classroom that fosters a safe, respectful and inclusive environment makes it more likely for learners to participate, voice and engage in academic tasks. Classroom environment is thus not only a physical set-up but also a pedagogical space that is affected by teacher practices, attitudes and interaction strategies. In real school contexts, teachers who consistently adopt clear routines, positive discipline and supportive communication tend to have fewer behavioural disruptions and more productive learning sessions.

Overall, findings suggest that teachers are very competent in creating safe, respectful and supportive classrooms. However, continuous professional development should be geared towards enhancing tactics for student engagement, differentiated instruction, collaborative learning approaches and utilization of interactive teaching tools. Strengthening these areas will help ensure that classrooms are not only orderly and secure, but also highly participatory, learner-centered, and effective in improving student outcomes.

Table 15
Level of Teachers' Competence in terms of Diversity of Learners

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The diversity of learners ...</i>			
1. modifies lessons to address different learner needs.	3.64	0.480	Highly Competent
2. uses strategies to support struggling learners.	3.51	0.501	Highly Competent

3. values the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students.	3.66	0.474	Highly Competent
4. applies differentiated instruction techniques.	3.51	0.501	Highly Competent
5. adjusts pacing based on learners' abilities.	3.60	0.491	Highly Competent
6. ensures inclusivity in all classroom activities.	3.57	0.495	Highly Competent
Overall	3.58	0.216	Highly Competent

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Needs Improvement); 1.50-2.49 (Developing); 2.50-3.49 (Competent); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Competent).

As shown in Table 15, teachers have highly competent on diversity of learners with an overall mean of 3.58 interpreted as "Highly Competent." According to the study, diversity of learners is the teacher's ability to identify and respond to the diversity of learners' learning needs, backgrounds and abilities. This means that teachers have strong capability to respond to the differences of learners such as differences in ability levels, pace of learning, interests and needs for instruction. This also means that the inclusive and learner-centered approach to teaching is generally well developed among public elementary school teachers probably reinforced through experience in teaching and continuous professional development consistent with career advancement.

The highest-rated indicator, pacing according to learner ability, indicates that teachers are particularly adept at pacing and sequencing instruction based on the speed at which learners are mastering concepts. This suggests that teachers are very sensitive to instructional needs, able to detect the heterogeneity in their classrooms and naturally adjust their instructional delivery. This can be manifested in slowing down lessons when students are challenged with basic skills, giving more examples or accelerating instruction when students show mastery of skills and readiness for more complex tasks. This flexible pacing is a key component of differentiated instruction and demonstrates that teachers treat learner readiness as an important consideration in instructional decision-making.

The finding is consistent with the Department of Education (2017) through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) that highlights responsiveness to learner diversity and the use of developmentally appropriate and inclusive teaching strategies. It also affirms the principles of inclusive education promoted by UNESCO (2020) that effective teachers adapt their instruction to facilitate the participation and learning of all learners regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. The result suggests that teachers do not deliver content uniformly but actively and meaningfully respond to learner differences.

However, the somewhat lower rated indicators, particularly in the use of strategies to support struggling learners, and the use of differentiated instruction techniques, indicate implementation issues in the full operationalization of learner diversity practices in everyday teaching. Teachers might be familiar with the different instructional methods but their consistent use might be difficult. This points to a gap between the knowledge of differentiation strategies and the systematic use of these strategies in real classroom situations. Such challenges in many classrooms may include large class size, lack of time, pace of curriculum, and limited instructional materials. Teachers may have difficulty developing multiple tasks, assessments, or activities for different levels of learners in a single class period.

As a result, differentiation may be expressed as a simplified or intermittent example instead of as a fully embedded daily instructional practice. For example, after a lesson a teacher may provide remediation for struggling learners, peer tutoring during group work or be prepared with enrichment tasks for advanced pupils. These are positive strategies but it can be difficult to use all forms of differentiation consistently across lessons, especially when managing many learners with different academic and behavioural needs. This shows that teachers respond but structural barriers may hinder the full implementation of inclusive practices. This issue is closely related to the study's concepts of content knowledge and pedagogy, where teachers are required to apply strategies suited to learners' needs, and curriculum and planning, which involves designing

and implementing lessons aligned with curriculum standards while considering learner differences.

Strong competence in learner diversity does not only mean awareness, but also means intentional planning, flexible pedagogy and access to adequate resources. These results corroborate with Carol Ann Tomlinson (2001) who stated that effective differentiated instruction requires intentional planning, flexible groupings, and adaptation of content, process and assessment to address learner variability. Darling-Hammond (2017) also highlights the importance of the practice of responsive teaching for promoting equity and improving student outcomes in diverse classrooms. Inclusion is considered an essential characteristic of teacher competence in the present educational system by UNESCO (2020).

In general, the findings indicate that teachers are prepared to address learner diversity, particularly in adjusting the speed and responding to variations in learner readiness. Still, there is capacity to further enhance the sustained application of differentiated instruction, targeted support for struggling learners, the availability of instructional resources, and professional development on inclusive teaching approaches. Closing these gaps would help to translate teachers' high level of adaptability into reliably positive support for all learners in the classroom.

Table 16

Level of Teachers' Competence in terms of Curriculum and Planning

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The curriculum and planning ...</i>			
1. create detailed lesson plans aligned with the curriculum.	3.53	0.500	Highly Competent
2. prepare materials that supplement lessons.	3.71	0.456	Highly Competent
3. maintain daily lesson logs that reflect organized teaching flows.	3.58	0.494	Highly Competent
4. allocate time efficiently during lessons.	3.67	0.470	Highly Competent
5. ensure planning supports achievement of lesson goals.	3.55	0.498	Highly Competent
6. use curriculum guides in planning.	3.52	0.501	Highly Competent
Overall	3.59	0.219	Highly Competent

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Needs Improvement); 1.50-2.49 (Developing); 2.50-3.49 (Competent); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Competent).

Table 16 shows an overall mean of 3.59 interpreted as "Highly Competent" indicating that teachers demonstrate strong proficiency in curriculum and planning which means curriculum and planning include the teacher's skill in designing, implementing, and evaluating lesson plans aligned with curriculum standards. The results show that teachers are generally successful in translating the curriculum guides to classroom instruction and in developing instructional plans that lead to meaningful learning experiences. This also implies that instructional planning is a well-developed competence of teachers that is likely to be enhanced by teaching experience and curriculum-based professional development under the career progression framework.

The most important indicator is the preparation of supplemental materials for lessons, suggesting that teachers are very resourceful in enhancing instruction beyond the prescribed curriculum materials. This involves a high level of initiative in the development or adaptation of instructional material like worksheets, visual aids, manipulatives, digital presentations and contextualized examples to aid the learners' understanding. In fact, teachers regularly supplement their lessons with locally relevant materials or simple resources to help make the concepts more understandable, especially in diverse classroom environments with learners with different needs. The teachers' resourcefulness is a manifestation of creativity, adaptability and responsiveness to learners which are essential qualities in effective curriculum implementation.

Such conclusion supports the Department of Education (2017) through the Philippine Professional

Standards for Teachers (PPST) which stipulates that teachers shall use a variety of instructional tools in support of curriculum delivery and maximize learner's involvement. It also shows the ideas of contextualization under the K to 12 curriculums where the instructor is meant to relate learning content with real-life events and experiences of the learners. The good ranking also means that teachers are not just implementing the curriculum standards but also improving the delivery of instruction for improved understanding and involvement.

However, the slightly lower ranking for ability to construct thorough lesson plans from the curriculum and for use of curricular guides in the planning process suggest instructors are effective planners, but possibly not as detailed or consistent in formal preparation. This may be due to practical concerns such as enormous workloads, multiple supplementary assignments, administrative duties and limited preparation time. This may impact on the detail of teachers' written lesson plans. Especially for more experienced instructors, there is the possibility to develop semi-detailed or simplified lesson plans, therefore having more time to teach and less time for superfluous paperwork. Curriculum guides will still be important, though the short-term impact of this element may wear off over time as teachers become more and more familiar with content standards, the pace and sequence of lessons from experience, perhaps adjusting from more of a structured planning perspective to a more flexible, experiential one.

For example, new teachers often spend considerable time preparing detailed lesson plans to meet curriculum standards. Experience could make the planning more efficient and intuitive so that changes can be made based on student input and the flow of the classroom. This is a sign of professional development but external variables such as paperwork, reports and extracurricular obligations can still affect the regularity and depth of written planning material.

This indicates an essential gap between documenting of a formal curriculum and the capacity to teach in practice. Written plans may be less elaborate, but teachers may be highly competent in presenting curriculum-based lessons. However, errors in documentation may influence on instructional continuity, monitoring and evidence of planning activities. This issue is also related to the study's ideas of content knowledge and pedagogy as successful lesson planning requires both knowledge of the subject matter, effective teaching strategies, and an awareness of the diversity of the learners since effective planning must take into consideration the varied readiness, interests, and abilities of the learners. These findings concur with the work of Ralph Tyler (1949), who argued that effective curriculum planning requires clear objectives, organized learning experiences, and ongoing evaluation. In the same way, Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005) noted that high-quality lesson design should integrate standards, assessment, and instruction to achieve meaningful learning outcomes.

In the same way, Linda Darling-Hammond (2017) noted that expert teachers combine planning competence with adaptive judgment that responds to classroom realities. The general findings suggest that teachers are very competent in curriculum and planning, particularly in their resourcefulness in instruction and practical implementation of lessons. However, there is a need for continuous support to improve consistency in curriculum alignment, to balance documentation demands and workload, and to encourage a strategic use of curriculum guides in planning practices. Improving these aspects will help to enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of curriculum-based teaching within the career progression framework.

Table 17
Level of Teachers' Competence in terms of Assessment and Reporting

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The assessment and reporting ...</i>			
1. use different assessment tools to measure learning.	3.82	0.387	Highly Competent
2. align with learning objectives.	3.60	0.491	Highly Competent

3. use assessment results to improve instruction.	3.54	0.499	Highly Competent
4. communicate learners' progress to parents as needed.	3.52	0.501	Highly Competent
5. maintain transparent grading practices.	3.61	0.489	Highly Competent
6. encourage students to use feedback to improve performance.	3.60	0.491	Highly Competent
Overall	3.61	0.233	Highly Competent

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Needs Improvement); 1.50-2.49 (Developing); 2.50-3.49 (Competent); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Competent).

As shown in Table 17, teachers were rated “Highly Competent” in assessment and reporting practices with an overall mean of 3.61. This suggests that teachers have a strong capability in designing, administering, and interpreting learner assessment and reporting learning progress. The result suggests that assessment is a well-developed professional skill among teachers and is a reflection of the strengthening influence of competency-based standards and career progression pathways on instructional practice. Special emphasis is placed on the timely reporting of learner progress as this is a critical aspect of effective teaching and accountability. Timeliness in reporting of learner progress ensures that learners, parents and school stakeholders are provided with prompt feedback regarding academic performance, strengths and areas of improvements. When progress reports are provided in a timely manner, educators will be able to enable immediate interventions, adjust teaching methods and assist students in achieving better learning outcomes. It also enhances school-home collaboration by keeping parents informed and involved in their child’s learning growth.

The top-rated indicator is learning, measured in a range of assessment tools. This suggests teachers are well equipped to use a variety of appropriate assessment methods. This includes the use of written tests, performance assignments, rubrics, portfolios, oral assessments, and other formative and summative tools. In practice, this reflects teachers’ awareness that learning cannot be assessed with only one approach, but requires multiple sources of evidence to capture various aspects of student understanding and skills. This competence indicates a high degree of alignment with current assessment principles of validity, reliability and authenticity in assessing learning outcomes. This strength indicates the teachers’ flexibility in assessment design, perhaps due to training, classroom experience and exposure to performance-based assessment systems under DepEd policies. It also indicates their capacity to adapt assessment practices to different learners and learning competencies.

The relatively lower-rated indicator, communicating learners’ progress to parents, indicates an implementation gap in the relational and communication aspect of assessment. Teachers are highly skilled in technical assessment practices but may find it more challenging to maintain regular and structured communication with the parents or guardians. Teachers often do not have the time to communicate with parents on an ongoing basis due to the heavy teaching load, administrative duties, scheduling difficulties, and the multiple classes they have to teach. Teachers have many duties making it difficult to keep parents informed regularly. Communication usually comes in the form of periodic report cards, scheduled parent-teacher conferences, or informal communication as needed. These are good faith efforts, but they do not offer consistent, proactive communication about student progress. Teachers generally begin professional development with traditional assessment practices such as quizzes and written tests

. As teachers develop experience and participate in professional development, they begin to expand their assessment repertoire to include performance-based tasks, group work, projects and rubric-based assessments. This development reflects a growing understanding of learner-centered assessment practices and contributes to their “Highly Competent” rating in this domain. A teacher’s lived experience can also be illustrative of this development. Assessment might begin with grading using tests and quizzes. Over time,

teachers learn that learners demonstrate understanding in a variety of ways: some through written assignments, others through performance tasks or group work. This more sophisticated view leads to a broader application of assessment tools and fairer assessment practices. Teachers do agree that engaging with parents is difficult, though, and they make an effort to keep parents regularly updated through report cards, parent-teacher meetings and informal discussions, but pressures of time often limit their ability to communicate. Still, teachers' attempts reflect their desire for transparency and to support students even when time is limited.

This is consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) who argue that good teaching can be characterized by a good understanding of assessment literacy and the ability to communicate learner progress to stakeholders. Assessment practices are one of the key aspects of teacher effectiveness and professional competence, including data-informed instruction and clear reporting systems. In general, the data shows that teachers have a good understanding of assessment practices and the use and application of different assessment tools. However, the data shows that there is room for improvement in the communication systems with parents, institutionalization of regular reporting systems and provision of a time-support system that will allow for more consistent stakeholder involvement. Progress in these areas would promote more transparency and collaboration in assessment practices and support learner development.

Table 18

Level of Teachers' Competence in terms of Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Indicators	M	SD	VI
<i>The community and professional engagement ...</i>			
1. regularly communicate with parents regarding student needs.	3.62	0.485	Highly Competent
2. engage with community partners to enhance learning.	3.59	0.493	Highly Competent
3. collaborate with colleagues for instructional improvement.	3.59	0.493	Highly Competent
4. attend professional meetings or conferences.	3.63	0.484	Highly Competent
5. maintain positive relationships with stakeholders.	3.66	0.474	Highly Competent
6. value partnerships that support student achievement.	3.55	0.498	Highly Competent
Overall	3.61	0.196	Highly Competent

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Needs Improvement); 1.50-2.49 (Developing); 2.50-3.49 (Competent); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Competent).

Table 18 shows that teachers are rated "Highly Competent" with an overall mean score of 3.61 in terms of community linkages and professional engagement. This means that teachers are highly engaged not only in school-based roles but also in other professional and community-based roles. The result shows that teachers are actively engaged in professional development activities and are generally aware of the importance of collaboration between schools and outside stakeholders to support learner achievement.

This is in line with the operational definition of community linkages and professional engagement which highlights the active engagement of teachers in building relationships that support student achievement. It is also indicative of the influence of the ECPS and DepEd's continuous professional development policies that require teachers to engage in structured professional learning activities.

The highest rated indicator is attendance in professional meetings or conferences which shows a high

level of teacher engagement in institutional learning activities such as LAC sessions, division trainings, seminars and conferences. This is in accordance with professional standards under the PPST where continuous learning is a fundamental expectation.

This finding is strongly supported by Desimone (2009) who stresses that continuous professional development improves instructional quality through continuous, content focused and collaborative training. This is also consistent with DepEd Order No. 42, s.2017 (PPST) which considers professional involvement as an important element in the development and career advancement of teachers.”

Teachers understand the importance of partnerships, but the lower rated indicator regarding valuing partnerships as a means to support student achievement suggests some inconsistency in the depth of actual community engagement as the practice of meaningful collaboration with parents, LGUs, NGOs and community stakeholders may not be optimized in all contexts.

This variability is consistent with findings in the literature on school-community partnerships, which note that the quality of partnerships often depends on institutional support structures, leadership initiatives and community readiness (Epstein, 2011). Partnerships in many public-school settings remain program-dependent rather than systematized, leading to inconsistent implementation.

Teachers often begin their careers with compliance engagement in professional activities, such as participating in mandatory trainings or meetings. Within the career progression frameworks, they gain strong professional agency over time – participating in dialogues, initiating collaborations and engaging with parents beyond the formal requirements.

An example of this lived experience progression is that early-career teachers often attend meetings for compliance, but then see them as opportunities for professional exchange and collaboration. Parent involvement also progresses from formal reporting to more meaningful participation in school events and learner support initiatives. This growth is compatible with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) which claims that professional behaviors evolves through observation, experience and reinforcement within institutional structures. It also illustrates the philosophy of teacher leadership development where engagement is the transition from participation to contribution and collaboration.

Teachers’ engagement in seminars, trainings, LAC sessions, and collaborative programs provides opportunities to update their pedagogical knowledge, share best practices, and develop professional networks that are useful for the enhancement of their instruction. Similarly, meaningful collaboration with parents and community stakeholders helps establish a conducive learning environment that positively influences learner development and school performance. In actual school settings, teachers who are actively involved in community outreach programs, parent-teacher activities, and professional organizations generally become more competent in communication, leadership, and collaborative skills.

However, challenges such as limited time, lack of stakeholder participation, and absence of structured partnership programs impede deeper engagement. Therefore, the mechanisms that support school-community partnerships should be improved to make the best of this area of competence.

Overall, the findings show that teachers are highly competent in professional engagement, especially in structured professional development activities. However, ongoing, structured and system-supported community partnerships need to be improved in order to further increase their impact on learner achievement and school improvement.

Table 19

Level of Teachers’ Competence in terms of Personal Growth and Professional Development

Indicators				M	SD	VI
<i>The personal growth and professional development</i>						
...						
1.	pursue	opportunities	for professional learning.	3.57	0.495	Highly Competent

2.	attend webinars, trainings, and seminars for improvement.	3.58	0.494	Highly Competent
3.	set goals for my professional advancement.	3.62	0.485	Highly Competent
4.	seek mentorship to improve my skills.	3.56	0.497	Highly Competent
5.	commit to lifelong learning as an educator.	3.53	0.500	Highly Competent
6.	evaluate strengths and weaknesses periodically.	3.57	0.496	Highly Competent
Overall		3.57	0.209	Highly Competent

Legend: 1.0-1.49 (Needs Improvement); 1.50-2.49 (Developing); 2.50-3.49 (Competent); 3.50-4.0 (Highly Competent).

Table 19 shows an overall mean of 3.57 which is interpreted as “Highly Competent” meaning that teachers show a strong commitment to personal growth and professional development which in this study is defined as the ongoing process of enhancing knowledge, skills, attitudes and professional practices to improve teaching effectiveness. Teachers participate in development opportunities that provide for career progression and teaching improvement, exhibiting a strong commitment towards lifelong learning as part of their professional identity.

This finding is in line with the operational definition of professional development and training in the study which includes such activities as seminars, workshops and structured learning experience to improve pedagogical ability. This is also in line with the influence of the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) and Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) which consider continual professional improvement as an essential criterion for career advancement and competency development.

The highest ranked indicators, goal setting for professional development and attendance to trainings and seminars, reflect high intentionality and goal-directed professional behavior of the teachers. This is a good sign of the fact that teachers are not simply passive recipients of training but active planners of their career trajectory and development according to competency standards and promotion demands. In reality this is realized through the development of career progression routes where teachers recognize their skill gaps and engage in structured learning opportunities to address them. This result is consistent with adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980) which describes that professionals learn best when they are self-directed, goal-oriented and the development is relevant to their practice.

Participation at trainings and seminars is also a manifestation of adherence to DepEd’s policies on ongoing professional development particularly under the PPST framework that regards professional reflection and learning engagement as core elements of teacher quality. Findings suggest that teachers are receptive to the institutional requirements and involved in capacity building efforts to improve instructional effectiveness.

However, the somewhat lower-rated factors, such as being committed to lifelong learning as an educator and seeking mentorship, imply a disconnect between formal enrollment in training programs and more in-depth, ongoing professional development activities. Even though teachers are actively involved in structured learning activities, more sustained and self-directed learning practices seem to be less consistently upheld. This finding is related to the definition of support and guidance from leadership that emphasizes mentoring, coaching and organized professional support as important enablers of teacher growth.

The lower score reflects the possible lack of institutionalization of mentorship systems or their availability across schools. This limitation is supported by Darling-Hammond et al for instance, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) state that professional development is best supported in environments with strong mentoring cultures and professional learning communities rather than in isolated training workshops, while Hargreaves and Fullan (2017) state that effective professional development should take place in a sustained, collaborative and practice-based context rather than episodically. Teachers may begin their professional development in the course of their daily practice through mandatory or school-based training sessions.

As their careers progress, they may seek further educational opportunities, specialization or

leadership development. However, this progression is often uneven and constrained by factors such as heavy workloads, financial constraints, lack of access to higher education and the intermittent nature of mentoring programs, all of which impact on the lifelong learning continuum. This developmental pathway is demonstrated in the context of the classroom. Initially the teacher felt insecure about her teaching and used basic teaching strategies. With continued training and reflection, she became more competent in controlling the classroom and developing curriculum while improving her teaching skills. She continued to find ways to study despite challenges such as time limits and other tasks, displaying her ongoing commitment to professional progress.

This is consistent with the study's idea that "Highly Competent" does not mean perfect, but rather that one continues to participate in growth-oriented actions despite limits. This also supports Guskey (2018) who emphasizes that important professional development is an ongoing process that directly improves the effectiveness of teaching and results in better student learning. Likewise, Avalos (2016) mentions that teachers who participate in ongoing professional development are more flexible and adaptable to the changes in education and the obstacles in the classroom.

With regard to career progression these data indicate that professional development is strongly ingrained in formal institutional requirements (e.g. trainings, seminars) but less so with regard to ongoing mentorship and lifetime learning systems. This suggests that some of the ECPS objectives have been fulfilled, with good formal involvement, but procedures for ongoing developmental assistance need to be reinforced. By participating in professional learning opportunities, teachers are able to implement innovative teaching tactics, meet the different needs of students and adapt classroom practice to contemporary educational reforms and requirements.

The heavy emphasis on continuous learning also reflects teachers' belief that professional competence is not static but needs to be constantly developed through reflection, cooperation and life-long learning. The findings reveal that teachers are capable of establishing goals and participating in professional development activities that are consistent with the standards of the PPST and ECPS. In real schools, instructors who frequently go to seminars, do postgraduate studies, or do action research, or work together with colleagues, tend to be more confident, flexible and effective in their teaching in the classroom. These experiences benefit individuals in terms of professional progression and are also linked to the general improvement of school performance and student accomplishment. However, in order to properly develop this domain, it is essential to improve the quality of structured mentoring programs, to institutionalize ongoing professional learning communities, and to provide access to opportunities for advanced professional development. The enhancement of these domains will guarantee that personal and professional growth are not only activity-based but also continuous, supported, and significantly embedded in teachers' career pathways.

Table 20

Test of Relationship between the Career Progression and Teachers' Competence in Public Elementary Schools

Career Progression Domains	Teacher's Competence						
	CKP	LE	DL	CP	AR	CLP	PGPD
Qualification Standards	0.063	0.201** *	0.166**	0.123*	0.158**	0.136*	0.217** *
Performance Evaluation	0.093	0.174**	0.077	0.122*	0.087	0.175**	0.180**
Professional Development & Training	-0.018	0.154**	0.127*	0.092	0.048	0.136*	0.107

Merit-Based Promotion	-0.019	0.165**	0.183**	0.121*	0.110	0.076	0.135*
Assessment Mechanics	0.023	0.116	0.157**	0.087	0.090	0.134*	0.210**
Opportunities for Career Mobility	0.081	0.046	0.211**	0.144*	0.163**	0.204**	*
Support and Guidance from Leadership	0.101	0.126*	0.157**	0.168**	0.155**	0.157**	0.166**

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**
Verbal Interpretation of r-value: +1.0 Perfect positive +/- association +0.8 to +1.0 Very strong +/- association +0.6 to +0.8 Strong +/- association +0.4 to +0.6 Moderate +/- association +0.2 to +0.4 Weak +/- association 0.0 to +0.2 Very weak +/- or no association
 CKP (Content Knowledge and Pedagogy) LE (Learning Environment) DL (Diversity of Learners) CP (Curriculum and Planning) AR (Assessment and Reporting) CLP (Community Linkages and Professional Engagement) PGPD (Personal Growth and Professional Development)

Table 20 depicts the relationship between career progression domains and teachers' competence in the PPST domains of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. The findings reveal statistically significant correlations that imply a significant relationship between the implementation of career progression mechanisms under the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) and the development of teachers' competence, although with different magnitudes of relationships across domains. This demonstrates that career advancement is a structural and developmental factor that promotes teacher performance. This is consistent with human capital theory which suggests that investment in professional development systems improves individual potential and productivity (Becker, 1993).

In terms of qualification standards, positive correlations were found to be significant with Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. This means that compliance to qualification standards is related to better teacher competencies particularly in sustaining effective learning environments and engaging in professional development.

This finding affirms the belief that qualification standards are basic requirements for quality teaching. Darling-Hammond (2017) and OECD (2019) found that the higher the qualifications of teachers, the better the teaching effectiveness, classroom management, and student outcomes. There were significant relationships for performance evaluation with Learning Environment, Curriculum and Planning, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. This means that performance evaluation systems like RPMS are related to better instructional practices and professional engagement particularly in the areas of reflective practice and continuous improvement.

This is supported by Guskey (2018) who claims that evaluation systems could promote the growth of teachers when they are formative and feedback-based and Stronge (2010), who emphasizes the role of performance appraisal in the improvement of the quality of instruction. Professional development and training had high correlations in Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, and Community Linkages and Professional Engagement. This means that engagement in training activities has moderate effects on the improvement of instructional delivery and stakeholder engagement.

However, the few significant relationships established suggest that training activities alone may not be enough to improve all aspects of competence unless complemented by continuous practice and mentorship which supports Desimone (2009) and Avalos (2016) assertions that effective professional development should be ongoing, practice-based, and context-specific to have a significant impact on teaching performance. Significant correlations were also observed in Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and

Planning, and Personal Growth and Professional Development for merit-based promotion. This implies that just and performance-based promotion systems are associated with better instructional responsiveness and professional motivation. When teachers perceive promotion systems as being merit-based, they are more likely to improve their teaching practices and engage in professional development.

This is in line with Herzberg's Motivation Theory, where recognition and promotion chances improve job satisfaction and performance and World Bank (2018) results on merit-based systems increasing teacher accountability. There were substantial correlations between assessment techniques and Diversity of Learners, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement and Personal Growth and Professional Development. This implies that the existence of well-designed assessment procedures is a strong foundation for reflective practice and professional development.

Findings highlight the importance of evaluation and feedback processes on effective teaching and learning outcomes consistent with the findings of Black and Wiliam (1998) and Hattie (2009). Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement and Personal Growth and Professional Development were substantially associated with Opportunities for Career Mobility. The findings suggest robust positive relationships between trajectories of career mobility and teacher competency, particularly on the factors of inclusive teaching and professional engagement. Teachers are more willing to adapt their teaching approaches when they see actual prospects for career growth. This aligns with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which indicates that perceived opportunities influence motivation and behaviours, and Fullan (2016) who emphasizes the need of career pathways to preserve teacher engagement and creativity.

Lastly, there were consistent significant correlations of leadership support and guidance across all competence domains of Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement and Personal Growth and Professional Development. This suggests that leadership support is a crucial facilitating factor in enhancing teacher competency in all categories. This finding provides strong support for Leithwood et al. (2008) who emphasize that instructional leadership significantly improves teacher effectiveness and Spillane (2006) who stresses the importance of distributed leadership in sustaining instructional improvement.

Overall, the findings of Table 20 show that career progression domains are significantly associated with teachers' competence in all PPST domains though the strength of relationships varies from weak to moderate. The strongest influences are seen in the opportunities for career mobility, leadership support, and qualification standards. These findings suggest that while the ECPS provides a strong structural foundation for teacher professional development, its effectiveness depends on consistent implementation, institutional support, and the integration of professional development systems. Career progression will be further improved through strengthened mentoring programs, equitable access to career progression opportunities and strengthened leadership support structures thus improving teachers' capabilities and teaching effectiveness.

Table 21

Test of Relationship between the Implementation Procedure and Teachers' Competence

Implementation Procedures	Teacher's Competence						
	CKP	LE	DL	CP	AR	CLP	PGPD
Clarity of Guidelines	0.112	0.120*	0.149*	0.142*	0.090	0.182**	0.176**
Transparency and Fairness	0.100	0.048	0.140*	0.094	0.065	0.174**	0.202** *

Timeliness and Efficiency	0.088	0.118*	0.187**	0.156**	0.151*	0.190**	0.207** *
Administrative and Technical Support	0.127*	0.066	0.097	0.106	0.091	0.178**	0.145*
Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms	0.134*	0.080	0.174**	0.169**	0.151*	0.186**	0.193**

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Verbal Interpretation of r-value: +1.0 Perfect positive +/- association +0.8 to +1.0 Very strong +/- association +0.6 to +0.8 Strong +/- association +0.4 to +0.6 Moderate +/- association +0.2 to +0.4 Weak +/- association 0.0 to +0.2 Very weak +/- or no association CKP (Content Knowledge and Pedagogy) LE (Learning Environment) DL (Diversity of Learners) CP (Curriculum and Planning) AR (Assessment and Reporting) CLP (Community Linkages and Professional Engagement) PGPD (Personal Growth and Professional Development)

The table shows the relationship between implementation procedures and teachers' competence with respect to the domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. The results revealed several statistically significant positive correlations implying that the effective implementation procedures are significantly related to the improvement of teacher competence.

However, the correlations are mostly weak to moderate, implying that implementation processes are contributors to competence but other factors like individual motivation, school context, and leadership are also important. This is consistent with systems theory in education that states that organizational processes affect performance outcomes when aligned effectively (Fullan, 2007). There were significant positive correlations between clarity of guidelines and, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. Thus, well-articulated institutional policies and procedures can lead to better classroom management, accommodating diverse learners and professional development in teaching. Clear guidelines reduce ambiguity, and encourage consistency in teaching practices. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) concur, maintaining that well-articulated professional standards increase instructional quality and teacher effectiveness.

Diversity of Learners, Community Linkages, and Professional Engagement and Personal Growth and Professional Development were significantly associated with transparency and fairness. Results suggest that faculty are more likely to engage in inclusive teaching and professional development activities, if they believe the implementation mechanisms are perceived as fair and transparent. Transparency builds trust and motivation which are vital for professional involvement.

This finding is consistent with the organizational justice hypothesis (Colquitt et al., 2013) which posits that fairness in organizational processes promotes employees' commitment and performance. Significant associations were observed between timeliness and efficiency and Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement and Personal Growth and Professional Development. This means that the right and quick methods of implementation help instructors to be more productive in their work, notably in preparing for instruction, assessing learners and professional development. Timely processes enable teachers to spend more time teaching and less time on administrative delays. This is in line with Fullan (2007) who pointed out that efficient organizational processes enable sustained school improvement and teacher effectiveness..

In terms of administrative and technical support, significant relationships were noted with Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. This implies that access to administrative assistance and technical resources

enhances teachers' instructional competence and professional engagement. However, the few significant relationships in other domains indicate that support systems may not be uniformly experienced by all teachers. Administrative support, as noted by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), is a key to teacher development, but its effects depend on the adequacy and relevance of the support offered.

There were significant positive correlations between the monitoring and feedback systems and Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages and Professional Engagement, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. This means that continuous evaluation and feedback is very important in improving teacher competence in different areas. Feedback promotes reflective practice by helping teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This is strongly supported by Hattie (2009), who identified feedback as one of the most influential factors on teaching effectiveness and student learning results.

To conclude, the results indicate that implementation procedures are significantly related to teachers' competence in all domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, but with different levels of strength of association. The most consistent effects are observed in timeliness and efficiency and monitoring and feedback mechanisms. The findings reveal that stronger institutional processes including clear guidelines, fairness, more efficiency and better feedback systems can lead to improved teacher competence. However, to optimize the benefits of these processes, schools need to pair them with strong leadership, ongoing professional development and a supportive school culture.

Focus Group Data

This section presents the thematic analysis of teachers' responses to their experiences, perceptions, and challenges under the Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS). Responses were clustered based on emerging themes and categorized based on the school contexts: mega, large, medium, and small schools.

Table 22

Thematic Table for the Challenges in Career Progression

Themes	Verbatim Transcribed	Coding Matrix
1. Challenges in Career Progression - High Competition for Promotion - Excessive Documentation Requirements - Limited Professional Growth Opportunities - Lack of Resources and Mentorship	"Competition is very high, making promotion difficult despite qualifications." 1 – K1 "The volume of required documents is overwhelming due to strict screening." 1 – K2 "Time constraints due to heavy workload limit preparation for promotion." 1 – K3 "Recognition of individual efforts becomes difficult because of the large number of teachers." 1 – K4 "Balancing teaching responsibilities and document preparation is challenging." 2 – K1 "There are many requirements, and completing them on time is stressful." 2 – K2 "Limited time for professional growth due to administrative tasks." 2 – K3	1 Mega School 2 Large School 3 Medium School 4 Small School K1 – Key Informant 1 K2 – Key Informant 2 K3 – Key Informant 3 K4 – Key Informant 4

	“Time constraints due to heavy workload.” 2 – K4 “Unclear communication of promotion guidelines creates confusion.” 3 – K1 “Some requirements are difficult to meet due to limited exposure.” 3 – K2 “Support exists but is not always consistent.” 3 – K3 “Limited training opportunities hinder career advancement.” 4 – K1 “Lack of access to resources affects document preparation.” 4 – K2 “Fewer mentors available to guide teachers.” 4 – K3	
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In theme 1, the focus group discussion revealed that teachers’ career progression is affected by the competition, workload demands, documentation requirements, and institutional constraints across school sizes. In mega and large schools, the participants stressed that promotion is very competitive due to the number of qualified applicants. This situation is explained by the merit-based ranking system under DepEd Order No. 66, s. 2007 where promotion is based on the comparative evaluation of qualifications, performance and eligibility. The Expanded Career Progression (ECP) System under DepEd Order No. s. 024. The competency-based pathway, to be implemented in 2025, is expected to reduce the dependency on vacancy positions.

However, the teachers are still faced with the reality of actual promotion as the implementation continues to be readjusted at the field level. 5. In the view of key informants, the problem was not a lack of competence, but the reality of systemic workload pressures and structural constraints. In addition to full teaching loads and administrative duties, teachers reported that the heavy burden of documentation greatly reduces time for promotion preparation. This is because teachers are required to simultaneously deliver classroom instruction, meet the evidence requirements aligned with the PPST, and prepare ECP-related documents. The burden is more pronounced in large schools where the teacher population is high, thus making individual recognition more difficult. In addition, limitations such as lack of time for professional development and variation in mentoring opportunities may impede career progression. In medium and small schools, the issues relate to unclear promotion criteria, inconsistent support and limited access to training programs.

The findings show that ECP is a common framework for national career mobility, but success depends on the competence of the individual school, support from school leadership and availability of resources. The OECD (2025) supports this, stating that administrative burden and variation in institutional capacity continues to be a significant barrier even in systems where promotion is competency based. As such, policy design, implementation, workload and access to support structures influences career progression.

Table 23*Thematic Table for the Challenges in Policy and Administrative Impact*

Themes	Verbatim Transcribed	Coding Matrix
2. Policy and Administrative Impact • Delayed Approval Processes • Complex Documentation Requirements • Inconsistent Policy Communication • Lack of Timely Updates • Limited Administrative Assistance	“Policies are clear but implementation is slow due to many applicants.” 1 – K1 “Administrative procedures are systematic but time-consuming.” 1 – K2 “Approval processes take longer because of volume.” 1 – K3 “Policies are helpful but need faster processing systems.” 1 – K4 “Policies provide direction but documentation is complex.” 2 – K1 “Administrative support is present but sometimes delayed.” 2 – K2 “Processes are organized but require simplification.” 2 – K3 “Teachers need clearer step-by-step guidance.” 2 – K4 “Policies are helpful but not consistently explained.” 3 – K1 “Lack of updates affects preparation.” 3 – K2 “Support depends on school leadership.” 3 – K3 “Policies are manageable but limited manpower slows processing.” 4 – K1 “Less administrative support compared to bigger schools.” 4 – K2 “Need for clearer dissemination of policies.” 4 – K3	1 Mega School 2 Large School 3 Medium School 4 Small School K1 – Key Informant 1 K2 – Key Informant 2 K3 – Key Informant 3 K4 – Key Informant 4

The focus group discussion for theme 2, showed that the policy on career progression is generally clear and well-structured, but the administrative implementation is lengthy and complex. Participants from mega schools shared that even if the promotion policies are clear, the large number of applicants and multi-layered approval processes cause delays

This conforms to the operational needs of DepEd Order No. 66, s. 2007 involves time consuming and stringent evaluation and ranking procedures in high volume environments. 42, s. 2017 (Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers) and the ECP system under DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025 has brought about stronger competency-based requirements for promotion but teachers also reported this has increased the complexity of documentation and contributed to slower processing. The responses indicate that even with good policy frameworks administrative bottlenecks such as limited personnel, paper processing in some offices and multiple levels of validation are barriers to implementation. Large schools reported systematic but slow processes, whereas medium and small schools reported inconsistent dissemination of updates and limited manpower support. These findings seem to indicate that the problems with policy implementation are caused by the constraints on institutional capacity and the unequal distribution of administrative resources, rather than by the weakness of the policy itself. As OECD (2020) notes, the success of education policies is strongly dependent on the capacity of implementation at the organizational level. The efficiency of the administration,

the flow of communication and the availability of the manpower are crucial to how the policies are experienced in practice.

Table 24

Thematic Table for the Challenges in Competency and Skill Development

Themes	Verbatim Transcribed	Coding Matrix
3. Competency and Skill Development - Improve Research Skills - Strengthen Leadership Skills - Stronger Collaboration Skills - Improve ICT Integration Skills - Training in Differentiated Instruction	“Need to improve research and leadership skills.” 1 – K1 “Enhancing innovation in teaching is necessary.” 1 – K2 “Developing advanced assessment strategies is important.” 1 – K3 “Need stronger collaboration and leadership competencies.” 1 – K4 “ICT integration skills need improvement.” 2 – K1 “Classroom management strategies should be enhanced.” 2 – K2 “Need to develop instructional innovation.” 2 – K3 “More training in differentiated instruction is needed.” 2 – K4 “Need to improve assessment and data analysis skills.” 3 – K1 “Enhancing teaching strategies for diverse learners.” 3 – K2 “More knowledge in curriculum planning is needed.” 3 – K3 “Need more exposure to modern teaching strategies.” 4 – K1 “Need training in technology integration.” 4 – K2 “Limited opportunities to develop professional skills.” 4 – K3	1 Mega School 2 Large School 3 Medium School 4 Small School K1 – Key Informant 1 K2 – Key Informant 2 K3 – Key Informant 3 K4 – Key Informant 4

Theme 3: Continuous improvement in teachers’ competencies Focus group discussion revealed a strong need for continuous improvement in teachers’ competencies particularly on research skills, leadership, ICT integration, instructional innovation, assessment literacy, and curriculum planning. These competencies are directly related to the domains in DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 (PPST) and are further reinforced by the ECP system (DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025) where these competencies are foundations for career progression.

The responses show that teachers understand professional standards; however, there are gaps because of unequal access to ongoing professional development opportunities. Training programs are too often limited, generic or not tailored enough to the real needs of the classroom, teachers said. This is due to the fact that professional development opportunities are not equally available for all types of schools, with small and medium schools receiving less specialized training.

These gaps are mainly due to the lack of adequate and structured support for applying the skills after the training sessions. Teachers often attend seminars or workshops but they are not provided with follow-up

coaching or mentoring to enhance their learning. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stress the importance of sustained, collaborative, and practice-based professional development in order to realize significant instructional improvement. Therefore, competency gaps do not result from teachers' lack of knowledge but from their limited access to ongoing and applied learning opportunities

Table 25

Thematic Table for the Opportunities in Professional Development

Themes	Verbatim Transcribed	Coding Matrix
4. Professional Development - Effectiveness of Seminars and Workshop - Importance of Mentoring Programs - Peer Collaboration as a Learning Strategy - Contextualized Professional Development	"Large-scale trainings provide diverse learning experiences." 1 – K1 "Seminars enhance teaching strategies." 1 – K2 Workshops help improve instructional practices." 1 – K3 "Professional conferences broaden knowledge." 1 – K4 Mentoring programs are very helpful." 2 – K1 "Workshops provide practical applications." 2 – K2 "Training sessions improve teaching competence." 2 – K3 "Peer collaboration enhances learning." 2 – K4 "LAC sessions are most helpful." 3 – K1 "Collaborative learning improves teaching." 3 – K2 "Hands-on workshops are effective." 3 – K3 "Online courses provide access to learning." 4 – K1 "Webinars are useful due to limited resources." 4 – K2 "LAC sessions are most helpful." 4 – K3	1 Mega School 2 Large School 3 Medium School 4 Small School K1 – Key Informant 1 K2 – Key Informant 2 K3 – Key Informant 3 K4 – Key Informant 4

In theme 4, the focus group discussion noted that teachers highly regard professional development activities as vital tools for instructional improvement and career advancement. Participants identified seminars, workshops, conferences, mentoring programs, LAC sessions, peer collaboration, and online courses as significant avenues of professional learning. DepEd Order No.35, s. 2016 institutionalized Learning Action Cells (LAC) as a school-based professional development strategy and DepEd Order No. 001, s.2020 highlights the accessibility and contextuality of NEAP-led professional development programs which strongly supports this.

These activities were useful for the teachers as they provided practical strategies, encouraged collaboration and developed the competencies required by the PPST and ECP frameworks. However, there were differences across school types. Mega and large schools were more responsive to planned training programs whereas medium and small schools depended more on LAC sessions, peer cooperation and online learning due to limits on resources and access.

This gap is related to finance, training access and institutional support. Flexible learning modalities are therefore more important because smaller schools usually do not have opportunities for external trainings. This finding is supported by Vescio, Ross and Adams (2008), who argue that collaborative professional learning communities greatly improve teaching practice when they are continuous and institutionally supported. Hence, the effectiveness of professional development is dependent on its accessibility, relevance and sustainability.

Table 26*Thematic Table for the Opportunities in Mentoring and Coaching*

Themes	Verbatim Transcribed	Coding Matrix
5. Mentoring and Coaching - Effectiveness of Mentoring in Career Development - Time Constraints in Providing Mentoring - Inconsistency of Coaching Programs - Peer Mentoring as a Key Support System	“Mentoring is helpful but less personalized.” 1 – K1 “Limited time for mentoring due to many teachers.” 1 – K2 “Coaching programs need improvement.” 1 – K3 “Support exists but not always consistent.” 1 – K4 “Mentoring is effective but needs regular follow-up.” 2 – K1 “Experienced mentors provide valuable guidance.” 2 – K2 “Coaching helps in career preparation.” 2 – K3 “More structured mentoring programs are needed.” 2 – K4 “Mentoring is personalized and effective.” 3 – K1 “Support from school heads is strong.” 3 – K2 “Coaching improves teaching practices.” 3 – K3 “Mentoring is limited but helpful.” 4 – K1 “Peer mentoring is commonly practiced.” 4 – K2 “Support depends on available personnel.” 4 – K3	1 Mega School 2 Large School 3 Medium School 4 Small School K1 – Key Informant 1 K2 – Key Informant 2 K3 – Key Informant 3 K4 – Key Informant 4

The findings from focus group discussion for theme 5 shows that mentoring and coaching are important for teacher development and career progression, but their effectiveness is dependent on the school context. This was supported by DepEd Order No. 024, s.2025 (ECP) and DepEd Order No.67, s. 2021 (RPMS-PPST Guidelines) where coaching and mentoring are considered as important strategies to develop the performance and competencies of teachers. Mega schools have mentoring as a practice but it is not individualized due to the number of teachers, thus, one-on-one support is limited. In large schools, mentoring is present but it needs follow-up for better impact. Mentoring was more effective in medium schools due to close supervision and better involvement of leadership. Small schools depend largely on peer mentoring due to limited personnel and access to formal coaching systems.

These differences are largely explained by availability of mentors, workload of senior teachers and

institutional set-up. According to the OECD (2023), the most effective mentoring is structured, sustained, and supported by feedback mechanisms. Without these, mentoring is not consistent and less effective. Therefore, the effectiveness of mentoring is contingent on not just its existence, but also its organization, sustainability and institutional support.

Overall, the study findings suggest that teacher career progression is influenced by the combination of legislative frameworks, institutional capacity, workload demands and access to professional development. The DepEd has institutionalized many processes such as the DepEd Order No. 66, s. 2007 (Promotion Guidelines), DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 (PPST) and DepEd Order No. Even at the passage of 2024 s. 2025 (Expanded Career Progression System) The Expanded Career Progression System (ECPS) at the school level continues to be implemented sporadically. Teachers are aware of the expectations for the competencies and professional standards but still face hurdles such as workload, administrative delays, lack of opportunities for training and inconsistent access to mentoring support. These issues are indicative of an implementation gap in the field rather than a policy gap in policy design and policy execution. The ECPS as a whole provides a good footing for competency-based progression. However, for successful deployment, there must be improved administrative processes, equal professional development opportunities, and incorporation of structured mentoring programs in all educational settings.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

(1) The findings revealed that some domains of career progression have strong relationships with teachers' competence, whereas other domains do not exhibit significant relationships with particular competency areas. Specifically, some dimensions of teachers' competency were strongly related to qualification standards, performance evaluation, merit-based promotion, career mobility prospects, and support and guidance from leadership. However, several variables such as professional development and training, and assessment systems did not demonstrate substantial associations in all domains of competence. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no substantial association between career growth and teachers' competency was partially upheld.

(2) The results also revealed that some parts of implementation procedures are highly related to teachers' competence, whilst some aspects were not significantly related to specific domains of competence. More specifically, clarity of guidelines, transparency and fairness, punctuality and efficiency, monitoring and feedback mechanisms, and administrative and technical support were substantially associated with numerous domains of teachers' competence. However, not all indicators of implementation technique were consistently significant across all skill domains. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no substantial association between implementation procedures and teachers' ability was partially upheld.

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