



Challenges Faced by Basic Education Teachers in Achieving Professional Growth and Job Promotion: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

For teachers, advancing professionally and getting job promotions are essential because they encourage hard work and high-quality work. Promotion affects employee performance significantly, and professional development has a significant positive effect on teachers' work commitment while achieving this is consistently coupled with challenges; this study was to identify the challenges teachers encounter in their pursuit of job promotion and growth as professionals. The research sample comprised thirteen participants at the Philippines' Division of Misamis Oriental at the Tagoloan Central School selected through purposive sampling and used a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological research design. There were thirteen participants by purposive sampling. The data were collected using an interview guide and then subjected to the Moustakas data analysis approach. Online and in-person interviews were employed to collect the data. The study emerged with four

themes: inadequate motivation and guidance from superiors; lack of knowledge about job promotion; low self-efficacy in one's ability to develop oneself, particularly in professional development; lack of budget to finance professional development; and prioritizing needs of their family. Thus, teachers encounter obstacles in their professional growth and job advancement. It suggests that supervisory leaders should always encourage teachers to look for opportunities for professional advancement. Encourage teachers to pursue further study, always inform teachers about job promotions available, and mentor teachers on the necessary papers. Administrators are the backbone in assisting teachers in pursuing chances for career advancement and professional development. Therefore, this area should be attention as an administrative goal and mission so that there will be no teacher that retires in lowest as teacher 1.

Keywords: professional growth, job promotion, teachers, phenomenological research, Philippines.



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1 Introduction

Teachers must continue professional development to enhance their abilities and knowledge to be effective teachers, and continual learning and development are necessary for success in any field, including teaching. Professional development is the process of school systems to ensure that teachers uphold and enhance their practice in their teaching careers. It is a set of resources, workshops, and other events to help teachers become more skilled and productive, knowledgeable about their field, receive mentoring, and learn new pedagogies and teaching techniques [7, 19].

Teachers' feelings about professional development operate through independent channels to mediate the impact of work experiences on their devotion to the school [9]. Through professional development, educators can acquire the information and abilities necessary to meet the learning issues of their students as well as improve their time management and organization skills; teacher professional development is a crucial topic in school management that has to receive more scholarly because it is a tool for employee motivation. Maslow (1954) stated the importance of self-esteem as esteem for oneself, dignity, achievement, mastery, independence, and the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g., status, prestige). In this manner, teachers' effectiveness depends on academic and pedagogical, as well as a correlation between their training and skills and their position, workload, and work encouragement [14].

However, the barrier to quality professional development is often due to less qualified personnel to help teachers encourage and pursue professional growth [4]. According to the study on principals, exercise influence on teacher professional development and revealed four areas where principals have the opportunity to have a substantial impact on teacher learning: principal as an instructional leader and learner, creation of a learning environment, involvement in the design, delivery, and content of professional development and assessment of professional development outcomes [8].

Few studies addressed barriers to professional development that teachers face, including a lack of funding, inadequate administrative skills, a lack of professionalism, efficacy, and self-worth, as well as the fact that some teachers find professional development unsurprising. Frequently face practical challenges, unpredictability, a lack of trained facilitators, and

financial constraints [4]. Budgetary restrictions, a dearth of trained facilitators, and logistical difficulties are challenges in the achievement of professional development of teachers [4].

On the other hand, for teachers to devote their efforts, they need to see that they are valued and supplied with the things necessary to accomplish their duties. When teachers are at school, they require a conducive workplace environment to conduct their profession effectively. They also need adequate remuneration [9]. In this regard, Soegoto et al. [16] attested that employees or teachers are attracted to jobs that make it possible for them to meet their daily needs. Unless these needs are satisfied, teachers cannot realize their full potential and will become less committed to teaching. Teachers expressed satisfaction when they are secure in their well-being. And this includes job promotion to have good salaries or good economic status. Financial rewards serve satisfaction with teaching and related services. Arguably, when teachers feel secure about their income, especially their remuneration, their accountability is boosted [9]. Maslow (1954) also theorized that once an individual's physiological needs are satisfied. People want to experience order, predictability, and control in their lives. These needs can be satisfied by employment.

High pay is essential to addressing teachers' financial situation. Many studies have shown that money is a motivating factor in education; if teachers are to make ends meet, they will not be able to give their students their full attention. There needs to be some relationship between teachers' duties and pay, even though there may not be a perfect correlation between the two. If a teacher's salary is insufficient to cover their family's essential expenses, they may need to look for other sources of income or reduce their time spent at school. A teacher who must worry about money won't be able to give the students their whole attention and will have to think about what to eat for dinner.

In the Philippines, according to Department of Education Order No. 54, series of 1993 "entitled The Department of Education Culture and Sports System of Ranking Positions and Employees on the principles of merit and fitness, objectivity and uniformity in evaluation, and strengthening of the selection process for other teaching, related teaching, and non-teaching personnel in the Department, significant revisions and promotion may only be resorted if there is a vacant item due to retirement, promotion, or transfer resulting vacancy of an item once a promotion occurs.

Reclassification, which results in a change in the position title and the issuance of an appointment with a corresponding rise in rank and pay, is another route to advancement. Only filled regular positions in the national government (NBC 2005–5) are eligible for this; once an item is not yet assigned, there is reclassification. Reclassification is only permitted following two years of Outstanding Performance from the affectivity of the most recent appointment or three years of at least.

Issues about the job promotion of teachers were brought to light by a study on the difficulties they face when pursuing promotions. It found that teachers faced challenges during promotions: irregular and untimely release of promotion information, lengthy procedure in the application, too many documents required, and untimely disclosure of promotion results. The challenges affect teachers' work output and psychological, social, and emotional well-being. And it is no doubt that when teachers are not receiving what is due them after going through bureaucratic processes and meeting all requirements, they would be upset. Again, if the pains and anguish they experience do affect them, they will not give their best at work [13].

It is observable that some teachers in the Department of Education retire at the lowest rank. Each of them has the skills for job promotion that the Department of Education offers while they are still in the service, and they are all eager to further their professional development and bring attention to those issues so that everyone can enjoy and access any available job promotions. They also want to further their professional development while they are in the service and recognize the obstacles that teachers experience and overcome to advance the teachers careers and access career advancement and professional development opportunities, enabling teachers to elevate their career path and pursue their professional development under the direction, inspiration and skilled of administrators.

Defining a teacher's professional development and job promotion stages accomplishes two things: it draws attention to problems associated with these procedures, helps to find solutions, and raises the bar for academic standards and teacher efficacy in the classroom. Professional development and job promotion can help teachers and students, but the biggest gain is that teachers will become more qualified and capable future school administrators [6].

This study aimed to disclose challenges experienced by teachers in their pursuit of job promotion and

professional development. For numerous reasons, the outcomes are fundamental to different school administrators. To manage and adapt new strategies promoting teachers' professional growth and job promotion, school administrators will find value in the study's identification insights and contribution to literature. Furthermore, school administrators might look for ways to prepare themselves to be skilled and knowledgeable to support the professional development and job promotion of teachers, as these outcomes always depend on the ability, drive, direction, and assistance of the school administrator.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The research design used in the study was phenomenological. The meaning of experiences is the central concern of the phenomenological approach [5]. Transcendental phenomenology aids in the researcher's comprehension of the meaning of an experience for those who have had it and can give a thorough account of it. The design was deemed suitable for examining the challenges experienced by teachers as they pursue their job promotion and professional development.

2.2 Participants of the Study

Thirteen participants from Tagoloan Central School in the Philippines' Region X, Division of Misamis Oriental, participated in the study. Researchers employ a purposive sampling technique for the selection of the participants. The selection criteria included being a teacher with at least five to ten years of experience, being employed at the central school, and providing permission to be involved in the study. An unstructured interview guide or interview protocol to collect participant experiences as they pursue their job promotion and professional development. Eight of the participants were female, and five were males. Three were in their 50s and 60s, two were in their 40s and 50s, and the teachers were in their 30s and 40s. Moreover, one of the teachers assigned to kindergarten, five teachers were teaching grade one, two teachers were teaching grade two, and one was teaching grade six. One of the teachers has 5 -10 years of teaching experience, six teachers have 10 -20 years of teaching experience, and three have 20- 30 years of teaching experience. This study yielded the following themes: low self-efficacy in one's ability to develop oneself, particularly in professional development, lack of budget and prioritizing family needs, inadequate

motivation and guidance from superiors, and lack of knowledge about job promotion.

2.3 Data Collection

At the start of the interviews, the researcher greeted the participants and stated the purpose of the study, and the interview started following an interview guide or interview protocol. The questions were open-ended, and the characteristics of phenomenological interviews are evident. The researcher encouraged the participants to share the details of their experiences. Probing questions are used in the interview to evoke detailed descriptions and shed light on participants' statements regarding the challenges they face in pursuing career advancement and professional development. The researcher interviewed the respondents in the study with an assurance that ethical principles in conducting and planning were adhered to. First, the study has the full consent of teachers who were the participants of this study. Secondly, the researcher observed the right to privacy and the confidentiality of the information of the individuals involved in the study.

2.4 Instrument/s of the Study

Interviews using a semi-structured interview guide created by the researcher to get participants' experiences when they pursue job promotion and professional development is typical of phenomenological interviews with open-ended questions encouraging the participants to share the specifics of their experiences was The formulation of insightful questions to obtain comprehensive accounts of the experiences required for the study and to clarify the meanings of the participant' statements regarding their struggles and challenges as they pursued job promotion and professional development.

2.5 Data Analysis

Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological reduction appears in this study as a data analysis technique. The transcripts of all participants gathered from the interviews were analyzed using the following steps: (1) Bracketing, (2) Horizontalization, (3) Clustering into Themes, (4) Textural Description, (5) Structural Description, and (6) Textural-Structural Synthesis.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher ensured that no harm came to the participants by following the ethical standards and conduct guidelines in conducting research as participants in the study, including the

parents and guardians of the study participants, gave their full consent to share the challenges they faced as they pursue their job promotion and professional growth, researcher respected the subjects' right to confidentiality and privacy regarding their data, and permission from the guardian's views and experiences with parents who expressed their experiences regarding the challenges they faced in the new standard of education.

3 Results and Discussion

Achieving professional growth and job promotion has brought challenges to some teachers while they are in service. This study yielded the following themes: low self-efficacy in one's ability to develop oneself, particularly in professional development; lack of budget and prioritizing family needs; inadequate motivation and guidance from superiors; and lack of knowledge about job promotion.

3.1 Low Self-Efficacy in One's Ability to Develop Oneself, Particularly in Professional Development

According to Tze et al. [18], instructional practices, student academic achievement, and teaching effectiveness correlate to teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom. Additionally, teachers with high levels of self-efficacy report higher levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of stress related to their jobs, and less difficulty handling misbehaving students. Thus, working toward effectiveness and improvement have primary antecedents of teachers' self-efficacy. However, some teachers have shown low levels of self-efficacy. These participant statements demonstrate their low level of self-efficacy.

- "I stopped attending school since I knew I wouldn't be able to make it. For this reason, I did not enrol myself and I had no desire to advance because I was aware of my limitations" P5
- "I stopped attending school since I knew I wouldn't be able to make it. Now it seems that I cannot understand the lesson anymore. For this reason, I did not enrol myself and I had no desire to go further because I was aware of my limitations and I am afraid that I will only fail." P7
- "I am quite happy with what I have accomplished thus far. Although I still want to go to school, I prefer to do so in a group so that I have someone to ask questions of because I am afraid of being by myself. I am embarrassed to face the crowd, which is why I am

afraid to go to school.” P4

Professional development anchored by self-efficacy cited by participants Five and Seven stated that they gave up on continuing their education after realizing their limitations, and this indicates low self-efficacy. Thus, self-efficacy mediates the effect of ongoing professional development. To increase teacher self-efficacy, Li et al. [11] noted how crucial it is to support educators in their ongoing professional development activities.

Teachers must cultivate their self-efficacy, but some teachers have low self-efficacy. Participant 4 stated she stopped attending school because she knew she could not make it evident of low self-efficacy. Thus, teacher self-efficacy is a crucial foundation for teachers to continue their professional development despite hurdles. A study on teachers' self-efficacy: the significance of individual motivations or confidence in their capacity to successfully manage the responsibilities, difficulties, and tasks associated with their line of work [3].

Participant 5 showed low self-efficacy as she did not enroll in her advanced study because she concluded her self-limitations. Self-efficacy correlates to teacher engagement in ongoing professional development mediated the relationship; results show that self-efficacy correlates with teachers' work engagement, involvement in continuing professional development, and pedagogical, learner-related, and psychological effects on teachers. There are multiple subcategories within each consequence of teachers' psychological health, level of burnout, and job satisfaction [1].

3.2 Inadequate Motivation and Guidance from Superiors

Teachers are empowered to strive for excellence and growth in their instructional practices, so education leaders should figure out ways to keep them motivated because administrators can impact a teacher's motivation, which can lead to new directions in professional development and job promotion. School administrators' empowerment, effective implementation of good governance strategies, and participatory management motivate teachers to continue their professional development and develop a desire for job promotion. However, professional development and teacher job promotion are often the last things on the minds of school administrators during a hectic school day [17]. These are the

participants' statements.

- *“Before, I truly liked my principal from my previous school since she regularly visited our classroom and inspired us to pursue our further education and apply for promotions. She was always telling us to keep going to school and to apply for jobs. Now our current principal is not constantly remind us, and we have a tendency to forget, which deters us from being motivated. She's probably busy in her hectic office”P10*
- *“Our previous principal. She always encouraged us to apply for promotions and reminded us of the requirements, which inspired us and made us feel better, but our principal she no longer pushes us as much . It lessens our motivation to put in the effort necessary to advance. I'm not as motivated because my principal isn't encouraging me constantly especially that I am a shy person”P3*
- *“My principal before she used to advise me to apply for promotions, but our principal now she no longer constantly remind us , so I felt embarrassed and hesitant to do so. If we are motivated by our heads, it feels different. It encourages us to do more and helps us grow”P8*
- *“I like that my principal will tell to submit papers for promotion because it motivates me” P3*

Lack of motivation and guidance about job promotion from superiors make teachers uncertain and hopeless. As cited by Participant Three, she needs motivation from her superior in applying for a job promotion for her to be motivated. Job promotion is challenging because of low motivation and a lack of opportunities, slow processing, volume of requirements, restrictions, lack of items for higher positions, and ratios between teaching items. Many teachers retired as Teachers 1 of the system's issues, which kept them in entry-level or Teacher I positions for almost 15 years or longer. According to the two lawmakers, the lack of available positions consistently creates a barrier to teaching personnel advancement.

According to research, there is a need for support for teachers to take advantage of opportunities for job promotion. Participant Three stated she is less inclined to apply for a job promotion if her superiors do not encourage her because teachers have with their work schedules and the dearth of opportunities for professional growth that would enable them to pursue job promotions. Howley et al. [9] state that a factor influencing teachers' job satisfaction is job promotion with fair compensation packages for their labor input,

and it is vital to take into account their concerns and address those about compensation, working conditions, and timely promotions, to strengthen their emotional and physical ties to their jobs. Teachers who are unhappy in their positions might search for other sources of income.

3.3 Lack of Budget and Prioritizing Family Needs

Every teacher has at least one story about how they have grown professionally and one way educators can advance their careers and raise student achievement because proficient educators are more adept at imparting knowledge to pupils. Teachers are better prepared to become effective educators when they have access to resources for professional development and opportunities for ongoing learning, particularly if their students have special needs or are performing at or above grade level [10]. These are the remarks made by educators who share financial and family needs issues. Despite their willingness to pursue further professional development, the participants faced obstacles.

- *“My financial situation prevented me from attending school. I find it difficult to study on a tight budget. My financial issue will cause me to lose concentration in class. Perhaps not this time; if my finances allow, I’ll carry on with my studies”*P13
- *“Financial, because I have my family already. I need to priorities the need of my family”*P8
- *“I was not able to attend because of my pitiful salary teaching in a private school for eight years, which did not allow me to continue my education. I got married, switched to public school, and already had kids. I was no longer able to attend school since I had to put my family’s needs first. Having a family makes it difficult to attend school because your finances are constantly being used to support them”*P12
- *“I intend to attend school in order to grow professionally and acquire an adequate wage/promotion. I must, however, put my family and my kids first. My family’s needs are met exclusively by my salary. I have no additional funds for my studies”*P11

Participants 13, 8, 12, and 11 stated that they did not pursue their professional development because they had to prioritize their families and didn’t have the funds to pursue their studies. Despite this, they still need to continue developing professionally as educators. Those who receive little to no professional support, according to research, might never fully have

confidence in their teaching abilities, and believing they are not fit for the job makes it difficult to love it, and all work against the interests of students and teachers alike, against the quality of instruction and learning, against student learning, and against the idea that teaching is a noble and desirable profession [4].

3.4 Lack of Knowledge about Job Promotion

Kampen et al. [10] concluded that school administrators should keep giving teachers the chance to advance in their careers and broaden their horizons. For teachers to learn about job availability and other topics, there need to be sessions on job opportunities. Teachers have challenges, but administrators shouldn’t stop them from improving themselves and taking advantage of opportunities for job advancement. Administrators need to feel empowered to support other teachers in their pursuit and application for job promotions because there is a relationship between timely promotion and teachers’ motivation for doing their jobs well [15]. These are the participant’s shared statements about their experiences getting job promotions.

- *“I want to apply for job promotion, but, I feel I don’t have enough ideas on the documents needed. It is very nice if there coaching time or sessions on what are the documents needed”*P3
- *“To be honest I need someone to assist me in gathering the corrects documents in applying promotions”*P7
- *“I want to apply but I don’t know when to submit the documents and what kinds of documents I will going to collect in applying for promotion”*P9
- *“I hope there is a dissemination of hard copies coming from our principal’s office on the documents we need to apply for promotions. Although there is an online information but it is different if we are guided in person from our heads and it give us inspiration”*P10

Some educators lack sufficient knowledge about how to prepare documents for job promotions. Participants 3, 7, 9, and 10 claim they haven’t enough details preparing the necessary documents for a job promotion. A study discloses the obstacles to teacher promotion in public schools; keeping records and information management should be improved for promotion; promotion rights for promoted employees should coincide with employee rights like salary increases; and training job promotion criteria and procedures must be clear to teachers to make them aware of these criteria [2].

Participant 10 stated that she was unaware of job promotions and needed copies of the necessary guidelines from her principal's office to apply for promotions. Even though there is information online, she has to have it at hand with the guidance of her school head. Thus, limited promotional posts, according to research, keep teachers from not moving up the teacher career ladder to employment and promotion [12]. Bates & Morgan concluded by developing and enhancing job promotion opportunities project for school administrators so that teachers can understand by facilitate positive school climate change by providing a deeper understanding of teacher motivation and developing a performance management model that promotes capacity building and motivation of teachers including job promotion motivation and knowledge.

4 Conclusion

The teachers have faced several factors that hinder their professional development and job promotion opportunities. In professional development, teachers encountered low self-efficacy in their ability to develop themselves, particularly in professional advancement and lack of budget and prioritizing family needs. Moreover, in job opportunities, teachers encountered inadequate motivation and guidance from superiors and a lack of knowledge about job promotion. The principals did not constantly motivate them to go to any professional development. Also, the principals do not always inform teachers about the information on job promotion as to availability and documents needed and the required documents used when they apply for job promotion. According to many administrators, during a hectic school day, teacher job promotions and professional development are the last things on their list of priorities [10]. However, teachers still aim for professional development at the right time and budget. Teachers are still hoping for promotions to get a higher salary, especially having families to provide for their needs. Thus, the role of administrators is crucial in pursuing professional development and job promotion opportunities for teachers.

5 Recommendations

This study recommends that principals provide equity, access, and support for teachers, especially in their professional development and job promotion opportunities, and inspire teachers to progress in their professional development and pursue job promotion, constantly guide teachers and coaches on documents

needed in applying for job promotion. Always find ways that teachers can avail of job promotions for high salaries. Since budget is the number one problem, they cannot continue their graduate study. Therefore, it is helpful to the teachers if they can receive higher salaries. Furthermore, the principal should boost teachers' self-efficacy to have the drive to further their education, and those who have low self-efficacy will raise their self-esteem. Because administrators are the backbone of supporting teachers in pursuing opportunities for career advancement and professional development, professional development and job promotion for teachers should be an administrative goal and mission, and this will ensure that no teacher retires in the lowest position—teacher 1.

Data Availability Statement

Data will be made available on request.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable.

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