

Teacher Growth And Career Mobility: A Sequential Mixed-Method Analysis Of Expanded Progression Framework

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the implementation of Expanded Career Progression (ECP) and its relationship with teacher professional growth among selected public elementary schools in the Leyte Division during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it described the demographic profile of school leaders and teachers, assessed the level of ECP implementation in terms of career progression awareness and orientation, access to PPST-aligned professional development, leadership and mentoring opportunities, and institutional support and recognition mechanisms, evaluated teachers' professional growth, identified the challenges encountered, examined the relationship between ECP implementation and teacher professional growth, and developed a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a quantitative approach. A total of 135 respondents, consisting of 35 school heads/master teachers and 100 teachers from Palo I Central School, Tanauan I Central School, Abuyog South Central School, and Hilongos South Central School, were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using a validated researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, ranking, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that the implementation of Expanded Career Progression was generally Agree, particularly in career progression awareness, PPST-aligned professional development, leadership and mentoring opportunities, and institutional support. Teachers likewise demonstrated a high level of professional growth in instructional competence, professional collaboration, mentoring and coaching engagement, and instructional leadership practices. A significant positive relationship was found between Expanded Career Progression implementation and teacher professional growth ($r = 0.642$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that improved implementation of ECP contributes to enhanced professional growth among teachers. The major challenges identified included limited promotion opportunities, complex documentation requirements, heavy workload, and insufficient professional development opportunities. Based on these findings, a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework was developed to strengthen career progression implementation, promote teacher leadership, improve professional development, and enhance institutional support for sustainable teacher growth and career mobility in the Leyte Division.

Keywords: Expanded Career Progression, Teacher Professional Growth, Career Mobility, Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), Professional Development, Instructional Leadership, Leyte Division

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Teacher career progression systems have become central to improving teacher quality worldwide. Expanded frameworks allow for professional growth, leadership, and competency development beyond traditional promotions (OECD, 2022). These systems recognize advancement through instructional, mentoring, and leadership roles. Well-defined pathways enhance motivation, retention, and instructional effectiveness, positively influencing student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021).

Expanded career progression models introduce differentiated roles, such as master teachers, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders. These roles let experienced teachers share expertise, mentor peers, and lead innovation while teaching (UNESCO, 2023). When teachers see clear advancement aligned with standards, they engage more in professional development and collaboration (Schleicher, 2022). Structured career ladders are thus vital for strengthening instructional leadership in schools.

In the Philippine context, teacher career progression has been strengthened through policy reforms aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the Expanded Career Progression System for Public School Teachers. The Department of Education institutionalized career stages—Beginning, Proficient, Highly Proficient, and Distinguished—to provide a competency-based progression pathway (DepEd, 2022). This system aims to recognize teachers' expertise, leadership capacity, and instructional excellence while providing opportunities for advancement without requiring them to leave classroom teaching. Such reforms reflect national efforts to professionalize teaching and improve instructional quality across basic education.

Recent Philippine studies affirm that expanded career progression positively influences teachers' professional growth and instructional practices. For instance, Ramos and Castillo (2023) found that competency-based promotion systems aligned with PPST standards enhance teachers' motivation for continuous learning and participation in leadership. Similarly, Villanueva et al. (2022) reported that teachers occupying advanced career stages demonstrate stronger mentoring practices and collaborative engagement within schools. However, these studies largely focus on general teacher development and rarely examine localized implementation across specific districts or divisions.

In Region VIII (Central Visayas), the Department of Education promotes career progression through capacity-building, mentoring, and leadership development aligned with PPST. Regional efforts strengthen instructional leadership and develop highly proficient teachers for professional learning communities (DepEd Region VII, 2023). Despite these efforts, little empirical research explores how career progression is experienced at the district level, especially in elementary schools.

Leyte Division, a highly urbanized area, has launched professional development and promotion initiatives for teachers. The division deploys master teachers, runs mentoring programs, and provides

leadership opportunities through Learning Action Cells (LACs). Nevertheless, informal disparities in promotion access, support, and recognition exist across districts. This highlights the need to examine implementation and perceptions of career progression in specific contexts like Leyte Division.

In Leyte Division, teachers serve diverse students in urban and semi-urban settings. Many show competencies for higher PPST stages, but progression is shaped by plantilla availability, leadership, and access to development and mentoring. Teachers often take on grade leadership, LAC facilitation, and mentoring without formal recognition. This can affect motivation, identity, and career advancement.

Moreover, expanded career progression is expected to strengthen instructional leadership and collaborative professional culture within schools. However, limited empirical evidence exists on how elementary teachers in the Selected Schools in Leyte Division perceive the fairness, accessibility, and effectiveness of these career pathways. Understanding these perceptions is essential because teachers' engagement in professional growth and leadership roles is strongly linked to improvements in student learning and school effectiveness (Santiago & Morales, 2024).

Despite supportive national and regional policies (DepEd, 2022; DepEd Region VII, 2023), how these frameworks translate into actual teacher career progression in elementary schools remains underexplored. Most notably, the lived realities of career progression and professional recognition within divisions such as Leyte Province remain poorly understood.

This study, titled “Expanded Career Progression for Teachers in Leyte Division, addresses a research gap by examining how expanded career pathways are implemented, the opportunities provided, and teachers’ perceptions of them. Key recommendations include establishing transparent progression criteria, increasing access to professional development, and formally recognizing expanded roles such as grade leadership and mentoring. By focusing on empirical insights within broader contexts, the study aims to guide educational leaders and policymakers in creating equitable, meaningful advancement systems that ultimately support sustainable teacher leadership and improved instruction in Leyte Province.

Theoretical Background

The study considers Expanded Career Progression as a Framework for Teacher Occupational Improvement in Leyte Division. It is anchored in several theories on career development, career advancement, leadership development, and motivation inside educational organizations. These theories explain how structured career progression systems can improve teacher competence, leadership, and engagement by informing the design and objectives of the framework.

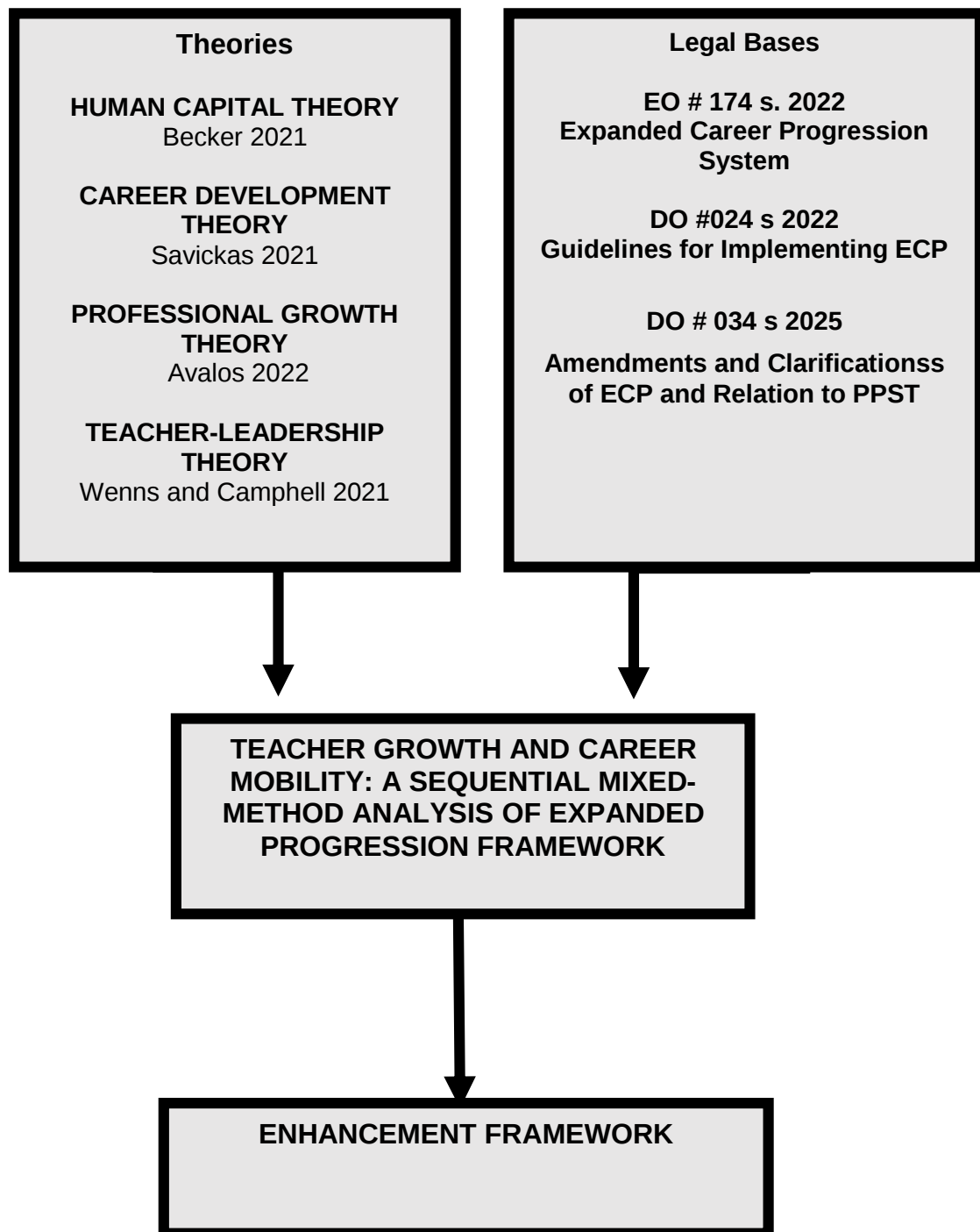


Figure 1

Theoretical Framework

One foundational theory underpinning Expanded Career Progression is Human Capital Theory, which claims that investment in education, training, and professional development increases individuals' productivity and professional growth prospects (Becker, 2021). In the context of teaching, career progression systems such as ECP recognize accumulated competencies and expertise, thereby encouraging

teachers to invest in consistent learning and skill development. The Expanded Career Progression System in the Philippines similarly links advancement to professional standards and competencies, strengthening the human capital perspective that teacher quality improves by structured career development pathways.

Another relevant theory is Career Development Theory, particularly the contemporary perspective that careers evolve through stages influenced by individual goals, organizational structures, and surrounding factors. This theory illustrates how teachers' career paths can be shaped and advanced by structured systems, such as the Expanded Career Progression framework. competencies, experiences, and opportunities (Savickas, 2021). Expanded Career Progression reflects this theory by establishing sequential career stages and role differentiation, permitting teachers to progress through teaching and leadership pathways without leaving classroom practice. The Philippine ECP framework institutionalizes this staged advancement through additional teaching ranks and career lines.

The study is also supported by Career Development Theory, which emphasizes that professional competence develops via reflective practice, mentoring, and joint learning (Avalos, 2022). Expanded career progression promotes mentoring roles, instructional leadership, and joint engagement among teachers, in line with this theory's assertion that career development is socially mediated and experience-based. Studies on ECP implementation likewise highlight mentoring and leadership engagement as outcomes of career progression structures (Endencia, 2025).

Closely related is Teacher Leadership Theory, which views teachers as leaders who influence instructional improvement and school development beyond classroom teaching (Wenner & Campbell, 2021). Expanded Career Progression institutionalizes teacher leadership roles, such as Master Teachers and instructional mentors, enabling experienced teachers to guide peers while remaining in teaching positions. The Philippine ECP policy explicitly created higher-level teaching positions to strengthen instructional leadership within schools.

The framework is further grounded in Motivation Theory, particularly Self-Determination Theory, which proposes that autonomy, competence, and recognition enhance intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2021). Career progression systems increase teachers' sense of competence and recognition through promotion and role expansion. Philippine policy discussion on ECP likewise highlights that clearer career pathways improve teacher motivation and retention in the profession.

Another theoretical anchor is Organizational Career Path Theory, which explains how structured career ladders within institutions guide employee advancement and performance (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). Expanded Career Progression functions as an organizational career pathway within the Department of Education, defining teaching and administrative tracks and the criteria for promotion. Such structured pathways have been shown to improve job satisfaction and professional commitment in educators.

The study also draws on Transformational Leadership Theory, which posits that leadership roles authorize individuals to effect organizational change and professional development (Bass & Riggio, 2021). ECP promotes transformational teacher leadership by enabling highly proficient teachers to mentor colleagues and lead professional learning communities. This is consistent with DepEd's intent to strengthen instructional leadership through career progression structures.

Another relevant perspective is Competency-Focused Professional Development Theory, which states that professional advancement should be based on demonstrated competencies rather than tenure (Mulder, 2021). Expanded Career Progression in the Philippines explicitly links promotion to professional standards, such as PPST and PPSSH, reflecting competency-based advancement principles.

The framework is further supported by Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy), which emphasizes that adults learn best through self-directed, experience-based, and goal-oriented professional learning (Knowles et al., 2022). Career progression encourages teachers to pursue relevant professional learning aligned with career goals and competencies, thereby operationalizing adult learning principles within professional development systems.

The Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system within education is grounded in contemporary understandings of teacher career development as a dynamic, developmental process that evolves across career stages. One relevant theoretical anchor is the Teacher Career Cycle Theory, which explains how teachers move through phases such as induction, competence building, enthusiasm and growth, career frustration, stability, and leadership renewal. Recent scholarship emphasizes that career progression systems must recognize those evolving professional needs and provide differentiated pathways for advancement, mentoring, and leadership roles (Day & Gu, 2022). Within the Philippine ECP framework, this perspective supports structured advancement from Teacher I to Master Teacher and School Head positions, acknowledging that teachers' competencies, motivations, and contributions change over time and therefore require stage-appropriate professional development and recognition mechanisms.

Contemporary extensions of Teacher Career Cycle Theory also point out the importance of career-long professional identity formation. According to Avalos and Flores (2021), teacher career progression should integrate continuous learning, reflective practice, and opportunities for instructional leadership to sustain motivation and productivity throughout career stages. This is consistent with DepEd's Expanded Career Progression policy direction, which promotes vertical and horizontal career pathways (teaching, leadership, and specialist tracks). The theory suggests that when teachers perceive clear, attainable career stages supported by competency standards and professional learning opportunities, they are more likely to continue committed to the profession and pursue excellence. Thus, ECP operationalizes the career cycle concept by institutionalizing structured promotion routes aligned with professional standards, such as the PPST.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, revisited in modern organizational and educational research, further explains teacher motivation within career progression systems. Recent examinations affirm that employees, including teachers, seek fulfillment of physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs in the workplace (Taormina & Gao, 2021). In the context of ECP, early-career teachers primarily pursue security needs such as stable employment, fair compensation, and caring supervision. As they advance, social belonging as well as professional recognition become salient, while higher-level positions such as Master Teacher or School Head address esteem and self-actualization needs through leadership, influence, and professional autonomy. Hence, the Expanded Career Progression structure corresponds with Maslow's layered motivational framework by providing progressively meaningful roles and rewards.

Recent educational leadership literature also integrates Maslow's theory with career development models, noting that career advancement opportunities enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Collie (2022) explains that when teachers experience competence, autonomy, and recognition—needs closely aligned with Maslow's esteem and self-actualization levels—they demonstrate stronger engagement, instructional innovation, and devotion to school improvement. The ECP system expresses this idea by offering recognition through rank promotion, differentiated roles, and leadership opportunities without requiring teachers to leave classroom practice. This conceptual linkage suggests that career progression is not simply administrative promotion but a motivational mechanism that sustains professional fulfillment and instructional quality.

Overall, the conceptual basis of the Expanded Career Progression system integrates Teacher Career Cycle Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to explain how structured career pathways support teacher development and motivation across professional stages. Contemporary studies affirm that career-stage-responsive professional development and recognition systems improve teacher retention, effectiveness, and leadership capacity (Day & Gu, 2022; Collie, 2022). In the Philippine education context, ECP operationalizes these theories by aligning promotion with competency standards, professional learning, and leadership roles, thereby facilitating teachers' progression from novice practitioners to expert educators and instructional leaders while meeting evolving psychological and professional needs.

Finally, Systems Theory in Education offers a holistic lens for understanding career progression within an interconnected educational system encompassing policy, leadership, professional development, and organizational support (Banathy, 2021). Expanded Career Progression is a systemic reform that links teacher standards, promotion structures, and institutional support to improve overall instructional quality. The Philippine ECP policy integrates multiple agencies, such as DepEd, DBM, CSC, and PRC, in implementing career advancement pathways, showing a systems-based approach.

Collectively, these theories explain how structured career progression systems improve teacher career development through competency development, leadership opportunities, motivation, and institutional support. They provide the theoretical basis for examining Expanded Career Progression as a framework for teacher progression in Leyte Division.

The Expanded Career Progression System for teachers in the Philippines is grounded in several recent national policies and legal mandates that institutionalize teacher professional advancement and career development.

The principal legal basis of ECP is Executive Order No. 174, s. 2022, which formally established the Expanded Career Progression System for public school teachers. The order created additional teaching positions, defined dual career pathways (teaching and administration), and linked promotion to professional standards. Its objective is to promote teachers' career growth and skill enhancement within the public education system.

Supporting the implementation of EO 174 is DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025, which provides the official guidelines for implementing the Expanded Career Progression System for teachers and school

heads. The policy outlines qualification standards, assessment procedures, and mechanisms to align career stages and operationalize career progression across schools.

Further strengthening ECP implementation is DepEd Order No. 034, s. 2025, which introduced amendments and clarifications to ensure uniform and responsive implementation of the career progression system across divisions and regions. This directive addresses transition processes, record requirements, and promotion procedures for teachers.

The ECP policy is also anchored in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which have been institutionalized through national teacher development reforms. PPST defines career stages and competencies guiding teacher progression and career development. The ECP system explicitly links advancement to these professional standards.

Additionally, ECP is consistent with the Constitution of the Philippines (Article XIV, Section 5) and the long-standing Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (RA 4670), which mandates that the State promote teachers' professional advancement and improve their career prospects. EO 174 explicitly reiterates these legal foundations in establishing the new career progression system.

Recent national implementation initiatives additionally reinforce the legal framework of ECP. DepEd has accelerated promotions and created new teaching positions under the system to address career stagnation and strengthen teacher development nationwide.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the research methodology employed in the study. It encompassed the employed methodology, the study's progression, the research setting, the participants, the research instruments, the data collection procedures, the statistical analysis, the scoring methods, and the operational definitions of terms.

Design

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to examine Expanded Career Progression (ECP) as a framework for teacher professional growth in Leyte Division in the and to develop a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework. Creswell and Creswell (2021) state that descriptive–correlational designs are appropriate in educational research when the purpose was to describe current conditions and determine relationships among variables without manipulating them. This design enabled the researcher to determine the extent of implementation of Expanded Career Progression, assess teachers' professional growth, and systematically and objectively examine the relationships among these variables.

The respondents in the study comprised elementary school teachers and school leaders from Selected Schools in Leyte Division public schools in the Division of Leyte Province. Teachers at different career stages and Plantilla positions participate in the study to ensure representation of diverse professional experiences and career progression levels. Their participation provides data on awareness,

implementation, and experiences related to Expanded Career Progression and professional growth within the district context.

For data collection, the study employed a structured, validated survey questionnaire. The instrument collects data on teachers' demographic profiles, the extent of Expanded Career Progression implementation, and indicators of professional growth, including instructional competence, mentoring engagement, collaboration, and leadership practices. Ary et al. (2020) explain that survey questionnaires are effective tools in descriptive research for obtaining standardized data on perceptions, practices, and existing conditions across respondent groups. The structured instrument allowed the researcher to quantify teacher experiences related to career progression and professional development.

The instrument undergoes content validation by experts in educational leadership, teacher development, and the implementation of Expanded Career Progression to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with PPST career stages and DepEd policies. Reliability testing is conducted prior to full administration to establish the scale's internal consistency. This process ensures that the collected data accurately reflects teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding career progression and professional growth.

Data were collected by administering questionnaires to teachers across elementary schools in the Selected Schools in Leyte Division. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, to assess the extent of implementation of Expanded Career Progression and teacher professional growth. Inferential statistics, particularly Pearson product-moment correlation, are used to examine the relationship between Expanded Career Progression and teacher professional growth variables.

This research design was appropriate for the Selected Schools in Leyte Division context because it generates empirical evidence on how Expanded Career Progression is implemented and experienced by teachers within actual school environments. The findings served as the basis for developing a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework that is responsive to the professional growth needs, leadership structures, and realities of career advancement for elementary teachers in the Division of Leyte Province.

Flow of the Study

This study began by identifying the primary research issue: the need to strengthen teachers' professional growth through the effective implementation of the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system in Leyte Division in the Division of Leyte Province. It proceeds by establishing a theoretical and conceptual framework grounded in Human Capital Theory, Career Development Theory, Professional Growth Theory, Teacher Leadership Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, as well as the Department of Education (DepEd) policies on Expanded Career Progression and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). This framework emphasized the significance of structured career progression pathways, leadership opportunities, and professional development mechanisms as drivers of sustained teacher competence and advancement. Guided by this foundation, a systematic set of research questions was formulated to examine the level of ECP implementation, teacher professional growth, their relationship, and the development of a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework.

The preliminary phase of the study involves profiling participants, who were elementary school teachers from Selected Schools in Leyte Division public schools in the Division of Leyte Province. Demographic information on teachers—such as age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, current rank or position, and number of professional development training sessions attended—was collected. This profiling provided contextual grounding and illustrates the diversity of professional experiences and career progression levels among respondents.

The next phase focused on determining the level of implementation of Expanded Career Progression in schools. Teachers assess the extent of career progression awareness and orientation, access to PPST-aligned professional development, leadership and mentoring opportunities, and institutional support and recognition mechanisms. Their responses provided an empirical picture of how ECP was operationalized within the district context.

Following this, the study examined the extent of teachers' professional growth in instructional competence, professional collaboration, mentoring engagement, and instructional leadership practices. These dimensions reflect teachers' professional advancement aligned with PPST career stages and expanded leadership roles promoted under the ECP system.

Subsequently, statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the implementation of Expanded Career Progression and teachers' professional growth. This quantitative treatment ensured objectivity in evaluating how career progression structures contribute to teachers' professional development within schools.

Another vital phase of the study involved identifying the challenges teachers face regarding Expanded Career Progression. Difficulties related to limited promotion opportunities, insufficient access to professional development, unclear career pathways, workload demands, and constraints on institutional support were documented to provide a realistic account of implementation issues within the district.

The final phase integrated the findings from demographic profiling, ECP implementation assessment, professional growth evaluation, relational analysis, and identified challenges. These findings provide the basis for developing a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework to strengthen teacher advancement pathways, leadership engagement, and professional development support in Leyte Division. The study further presented a framework that may be adapted for use in other districts and divisions implementing the Expanded Career Progression System.

Questionnaires were distributed to teachers, and the returned responses were tallied and tabulated. Appropriate statistical treatments were applied to derive the intended results. The data were carefully analyzed to formulate interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations. The schematic diagram in Figure 2 served as a visual representation to facilitate understanding of the research process.

Environment

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools under the Schools Division of Leyte, located in the Province of Leyte. The Schools Division of Leyte is one of the divisions under the

Department of Education and is responsible for the administration, supervision, and implementation of educational programs and policies across public elementary and secondary schools within the province. The division consists of numerous school districts that cater to diverse communities, including urban, rural, and geographically isolated areas. This diversity provides an appropriate setting for examining the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) System and its influence on teachers' professional growth.

The selected elementary schools represent various educational settings within the division, enabling the study to capture teachers' experiences across different school sizes, organizational structures, resource availability, and leadership practices. These schools implement the provisions of the Expanded Career Progression System in accordance with the policies of the Department of Education and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). As such, they provide a suitable environment for assessing teachers' awareness, participation, and perceptions regarding career advancement opportunities and professional development initiatives.

The research environment was considered appropriate because the selected schools have teachers occupying different plantilla positions and career stages, ranging from Teacher I to Master Teacher positions and school administrators. This diversity allows the researcher to examine how career progression mechanisms are implemented across various professional levels while considering differences in teaching experience, educational attainment, and leadership responsibilities. Furthermore, the schools regularly conduct professional development activities, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, mentoring programs, classroom observations, and other PPST-aligned initiatives that support teachers' professional growth.

The findings generated from these schools are expected to provide valuable empirical evidence regarding the current implementation of the Expanded Career Progression System within the Schools Division of Leyte. The results will serve as the basis for developing a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework that may assist school administrators, district supervisors, and education leaders in strengthening teacher career development programs and improving professional growth opportunities throughout the division.

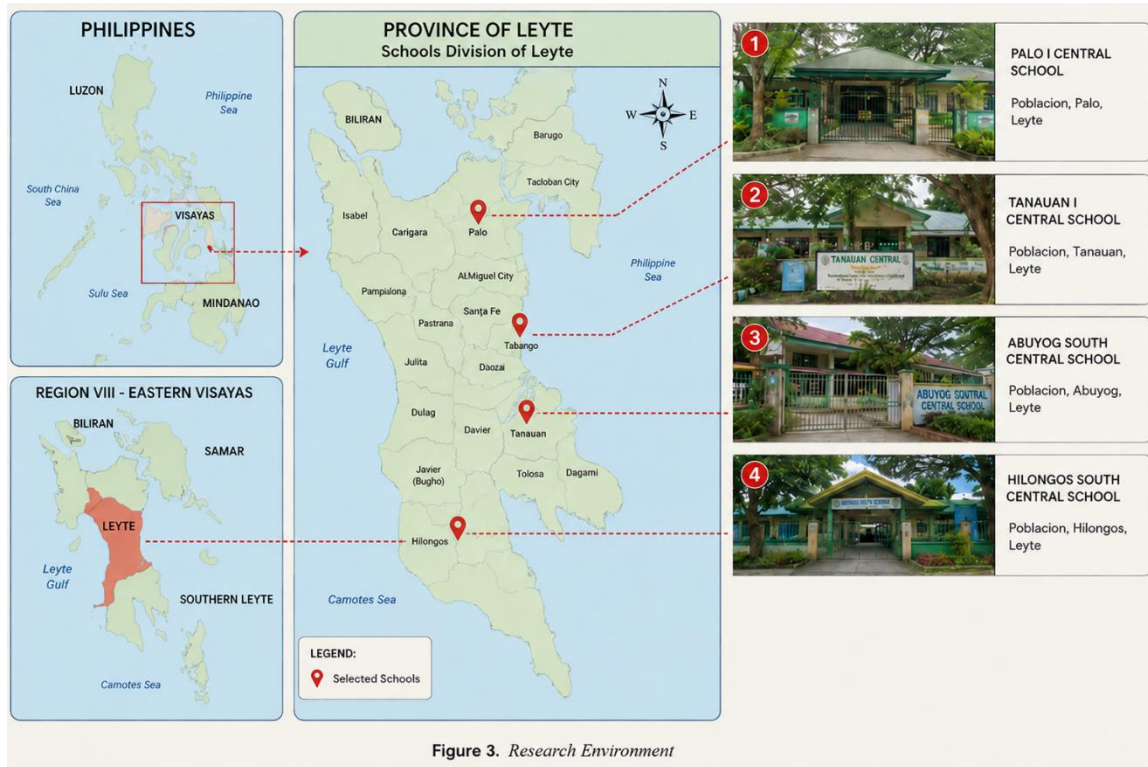


Figure 3. Research Environment

Figure 3

Research Environment

Respondents

The respondents of this study consisted of elementary school teachers, master teachers, and school heads from selected public elementary schools in the Schools Division of Leyte. To ensure that all respondent groups were adequately represented, the study employed **stratified random sampling**, wherein the population was grouped according to position (school heads/master teachers and teachers) before selecting the participants proportionately.

A total of **135 respondents** participated in the study, comprising **35 school heads/master teachers** and **100 teachers** from Palo I Central School, Tanauan I Central School, Abuyog South Central School, and Hilongos South Central School. The inclusion of administrators and classroom teachers provided diverse perspectives regarding the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) System and teachers' professional growth. Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	SH/ MTs	Teachers	Total	Percentage (%)
Palo I Central School	9	26	35	25.93
Tanauan I Central School	9	24	33	24.44
Abuyog South Central School	9	25	34	25.19

Hilongos South Elementary School	9	25	33	24.44
TOTAL	35	100	135	100

Instrument

The principal instrument for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire designed to assess the implementation of Expanded Career Progression (ECP) and the level of teacher professional growth in Leyte Division in the Division of Leyte Province. The questionnaire was adapted and contextualized from established instruments on teacher professional development, career progression systems, and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) indicators. The instrument comprises four major sections, each addressing essential dimensions of Expanded Career Progression and teacher professional growth.

The first section of the instrument determines the demographic profile of the teacher respondents. It collected information on age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, current position or rank, and number of professional development training sessions attended. These profiling variables were based on standard demographic survey practices widely used in educational research (Creswell & Creswell, 2021; Ary et al., 2020). The demographic data provide contextual grounding and enable analysis of differences in career progression experiences across teacher characteristics.

The second section measured the level of Expanded Career Progression implementation in schools. A five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree is used to assess indicators such as career progression awareness and orientation, access to PPST-aligned professional development opportunities, leadership and mentoring roles, and institutional support and recognition mechanisms. These indicators were derived from the Expanded Career Progression policy provisions and the PPST career stage descriptors, thereby ensuring alignment with national teacher development frameworks.

The third section evaluates the level of teacher professional growth. This section also used a five-point Likert scale to measure dimensions including instructional competence, professional collaboration, mentoring and coaching engagement, and instructional leadership practices. The indicators were aligned with PPST strands and teacher leadership frameworks to reflect professional advancement across career stages.

The fourth section identified the challenges teachers face regarding Expanded Career Progression. It consists of Likert-scale items addressing issues such as limited promotion opportunities, insufficient access to professional development, unclear career progression pathways, workload demands, documentation requirements, and constraints on institutional support. These items are based on the literature on teacher career progression and barriers to professional growth in educational systems.

The complete questionnaire undergoes expert validation and pilot testing. Experts in educational leadership, teacher development, and Expanded Career Progression review the instrument to ensure content validity, clarity, and alignment with PPST and DepEd career progression policies. The instrument

was pilot-tested among teachers outside the final sample to assess reliability and usability. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yields coefficients above 0.80, indicating strong internal consistency of the scales. This validation process ensures that the instrument accurately measures the implementation of Expanded Career Progression and teacher professional growth.

Data Gathering Procedure

To obtain relevant and accurate data, the researcher first secured formal authorization from the Schools Division Superintendent of Leyte Province and the principals of the identified Leyte Division. Upon approval, the researcher coordinates with school heads to identify qualified respondents, consisting of school heads, master teachers, and teachers.

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, respondents were informed of the study's purpose and asked to provide informed consent. Participation is voluntary, and confidentiality and data privacy are assured in accordance with ethical research standards.

The structured questionnaires were then distributed to respondents either in print or via a secure online platform, such as Google Forms, to maximize participation. The researcher provided clear instructions to ensure proper understanding of the items. Respondents are given sufficient time, typically three to five working days, to complete the instrument. Follow-up reminders were provided to ensure a high retrieval rate. For schools with limited internet access, printed questionnaires are distributed and collected personally.

After retrieval, responses were reviewed, coded, and organized according to the study variables: demographic profile, level of Expanded Career Progression implementation, level of teacher professional growth, and challenges encountered. The data were then prepared for statistical analysis. Throughout the data collection process, accuracy, confidentiality, and honesty of responses are maintained. This stage established the foundation for subsequent data analysis, interpretation, and the development of the Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data gathered from the respondents are organized and analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools to address the research questions.

For the demographic profile of respondents, frequency counts, and percentages are computed for categorical variables such as gender, educational attainment, and position. Means and standard deviations are calculated for continuous variables such as age, teaching experience, and the number of training sessions attended.

To determine the extent of Expanded Career Progression implementation and teacher professional growth, weighted means and standard deviations were computed for each indicator using a five-point Likert scale. The mean scores were interpreted using descriptive rating scales to determine the extent of implementation and level of professional growth.

To examine the relationship between the implementation of Expanded Career Progression and teachers' professional growth, Pearson product–moment correlation is used. This inferential statistical test determines whether a significant relationship exists between the two variables.

For the challenges encountered by teachers, weighted means and standard deviations are also computed to assess the extent to which each challenge affects the implementation of career progression.

All statistical computations are processed using Microsoft Excel. The combination of descriptive and inferential statistics enables objective analysis of the implementation of Expanded Career Progression and its relationship with teacher professional growth.

Scoring Procedure

The questionnaire items were rated on a five-point Likert scale to measure implementation of Expanded Career Progression, teacher professional growth, and challenges encountered. Each response was assigned a corresponding weight, range, category, and verbal interpretation as shown below:

Weight	Range	Category	Verbal Description
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	The indicator is highly evident and consistently observed.
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree	The indicator is generally evident and often observed.
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	The indicator is moderately evident.
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	The indicator is slightly evident.
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	The indicator is not evident.

For interpretation of levels:

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	High
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
1.81 – 2.60	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low

These scales were used to interpret the extent of Expanded Career Progression implementation, teachers' professional growth, and the challenges encountered in Leyte Division.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were operationally defined as used in this study to ensure clarity and consistency of interpretation.

Challenges in Expanded Career Progression – Refer to difficulties encountered by teachers in relation to career advancement, such as limited promotion opportunities, insufficient professional development access, workload demands, unclear guidelines, and institutional constraints.

Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework – Refers to the structured model developed in this study intended to strengthen Expanded Career Progression implementation in Leyte Division by integrating career awareness, professional development pathways, leadership opportunities, and institutional support mechanisms.

Demographic Profile – Refers to the personal and professional characteristics of teacher respondents, including age, gender, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience, current position or rank, and number of professional development trainings attended.

Expanded Career Progression (ECP) – Refers to the Department of Education's structured system of teacher career advancement based on competency-based stages, leadership roles, and professional standards that allow teachers to progress within teaching or administrative tracks.

Framework for Enhancing Teachers' Professional Growth – Refers to the conceptual structure that links Expanded Career Progression components—such as professional development, leadership roles, mentoring, and institutional support—to the improvement of teachers' competencies and career advancement.

Level of Implementation of Expanded Career Progression – Refers to the extent to which Expanded Career Progression components—awareness, professional development access, leadership opportunities, and institutional support—are practiced in Leyte Division.

Access to PPST-Aligned Professional Development – Refers to teachers' opportunities to participate in training, seminars, mentoring, and professional learning activities that are aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) competencies and career stages.

Career Progression Awareness and Orientation – Refers to the extent to which teachers are informed about Expanded Career Progression policies, career stages, qualification requirements, promotion pathways, and advancement opportunities within the teaching profession.

Institutional Support and Recognition Mechanisms – Refer to school and division-level provisions that facilitate career progression, including administrative support, recognition of teacher leadership roles, promotion processes, incentives, and professional growth monitoring systems.

Leadership and Mentoring Opportunities – Refer to roles and activities provided to teachers that involve guiding colleagues, facilitating Learning Action Cells (LAC), coaching beginning teachers, or leading instructional initiatives within the school.

Level of Teacher Professional Growth – Refers to the degree of teachers' development in competencies, collaboration, mentoring engagement, and instructional leadership as influenced by Expanded Career Progression.

Instructional Competence – Refers to teachers' ability to plan, implement, and evaluate effective teaching strategies aligned with curriculum standards and learner needs.

Instructional Leadership Practices – Refer to teachers' engagement in leading instructional improvement activities such as mentoring peers, facilitating professional learning, demonstrating effective teaching, and contributing to school academic programs.

Mentoring and Coaching Engagement – Refers to teachers' participation in mentoring or coaching activities, either as mentors or mentees, aimed at improving instructional practices and professional competencies.

Professional Collaboration – Refers to teachers' involvement in cooperative professional activities such as team teaching, Learning Action Cells, lesson planning, and shared instructional improvement initiatives.

School Leaders – Refer to school heads, principals, and master teachers who provide leadership, supervision, and professional support related to Expanded Career Progression implementation in schools.

Significant Relationship between Expanded Career Progression and Teacher Professional Growth – Refers to the statistically measurable association between the level of ECP implementation and the level of teacher professional growth as determined through correlation analysis in this study.

Teachers – Refer to public elementary school teachers in Leyte Division, Division of Leyte Province, who serve as respondents of this study and are involved in Expanded Career Progression processes.

2. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. The research focused on Teachers' Growth and Career Mobility in Leyte Division during School Year 2025–2026 as basis for an Expanded Career Progression Enhancement Framework. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using a quantitative approach. Data were gathered from 135 respondents composed of 35 school heads/master teachers and 100 teachers from Palo I Central School, Tanauan I Central School, Abuyog South Central School, and Hilongos North Central School.

Summary

The study assessed the implementation of Expanded Career Progression and the level of teacher professional growth in selected schools in Leyte Division. Specifically, it examined career progression awareness and orientation, access to PPST-aligned professional development, leadership and mentoring opportunities, and institutional support and recognition mechanisms.

The study also determined the level of teacher professional growth in terms of instructional competence, professional collaboration, mentoring and coaching engagement, and instructional leadership practices. Furthermore, the relationship between Expanded Career Progression implementation and teacher professional growth was analyzed. The challenges encountered by respondents were also identified as basis for crafting a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework.

Table 24
Summary Results

Major Area	Key Findings	Overall Result	Interpretation
Respondent Distribution	135 respondents: 35 school heads/master teachers and 100 teachers	—	Respondents represented both instructional leaders and classroom teachers.
School Leaders' Profile	Majority were female, aged 40–49, mostly Master's degree holders, and had 16 years and above of experience	Established	School leaders were professionally mature and academically prepared.
Teachers' Profile	Majority were female, aged 30–39, mostly with units in Master's, and many were Teacher I	Established	Teachers were in active career development stages and needed support for career mobility.
ECP Awareness and Orientation	Overall mean = 3.95	Agree	Respondents were generally aware of ECP policies and promotion pathways.
PPST-Aligned Professional Development	Overall mean = 4.00	Agree	Professional development opportunities were available and supported career advancement.

Leadership and Mentoring Opportunities	Overall mean = 3.97	Agree	Teachers were given leadership and mentoring opportunities.
Institutional Support and Recognition	Overall mean = 3.90	Agree	Schools provided support, but recognition mechanisms needed improvement.
Teacher Professional Growth	Overall means ranged from 4.04 to 4.17	Agree	Teachers demonstrated professional growth in instruction, collaboration, mentoring, and leadership.
Relationship of ECP and Professional Growth	$r = 0.642, p = 0.000$	Significant	Stronger ECP implementation was associated with higher teacher professional growth.
Challenges	Top issues: limited promotion opportunities, complex documentation, and heavy workload	Present	These barriers affected teachers' career mobility and professional development participation.

Findings

The findings revealed that the respondents were composed of 35 school heads/master teachers and 100 teachers from four selected public elementary schools in Leyte Division. Palo I Central School had the highest number of respondents with 35 or 25.93 percent, followed by Abuyog South Central School with 34 or 25.19 percent. Tanauan I Central School and Hilongos South Central School each had 33 respondents or 24.44 percent.

For the school leaders, most were female, aged 40–49 years old, master's degree holders, and had 16 years and above of teaching experience. Most of them were master teachers and had attended several professional development trainings. These findings indicate that the school leaders were academically prepared and professionally experienced to support teachers in relation to career progression and professional growth.

For the teacher respondents, most were female, aged 30–39 years old, with units in Master's Degree, and mostly occupying Teacher I positions. Many had 7–10 years of teaching experience and had attended 4–6 professional development trainings. These findings suggest that many teachers were in the active stage of professional development and still needed support to strengthen their qualifications, leadership roles, and career mobility.

In terms of Expanded Career Progression implementation, the respondents generally agreed that ECP was implemented in the selected schools. Career progression awareness and orientation obtained an overall mean of 3.95, access to PPST-aligned professional development obtained 4.00, leadership and mentoring opportunities obtained 3.97, and institutional support and recognition mechanisms obtained 3.90. These results indicate that ECP was present in the schools, although some areas still required

improvement, particularly recognition mechanisms, mentoring support, and regular dissemination of career advancement information.

In terms of teacher professional growth, the respondents also generally agreed that teachers demonstrated growth in various areas. Instructional competence obtained an overall mean of 4.17, professional collaboration obtained 4.14, mentoring and coaching engagement obtained 4.04, and instructional leadership practices obtained 4.04. These findings indicate that teachers showed professional growth in teaching, collaboration, mentoring, and leadership, but additional opportunities may still be provided for teachers to lead professional learning activities and receive mentoring support.

The relationship between Expanded Career Progression implementation and teacher professional growth was found to be significant. The computed r -value was 0.642 with a p -value of 0.000. Since the p -value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there was a significant positive relationship between ECP implementation and teacher professional growth. The result implies that stronger implementation of ECP is associated with higher levels of teacher professional growth.

The major challenges encountered by the respondents were limited promotion opportunities, complex documentation requirements, heavy workload, insufficient professional development access, unclear career progression guidelines, and time constraints. These findings show that although ECP was implemented, teachers still experienced barriers that affected their participation in career advancement and professional growth activities.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of Expanded Career Progression in the selected schools of Leyte Division was generally evident and positively perceived by both school leaders and teachers. The respondents agreed that career progression awareness, PPST-aligned professional development, leadership and mentoring opportunities, and institutional support were present in their schools.

It can also be concluded that teachers demonstrated a favorable level of professional growth in terms of instructional competence, professional collaboration, mentoring and coaching engagement, and instructional leadership practices. This indicates that teachers were actively developing their professional skills and were participating in activities that supported teaching improvement and career readiness.

The study further concluded that Expanded Career Progression implementation had a significant positive relationship with teacher professional growth. This means that when schools strengthen the implementation of career progression programs, teachers' professional growth also improves. Therefore, ECP may serve as an important mechanism for promoting teacher development, career mobility, and instructional leadership.

However, the study also concluded that several challenges remained. Limited promotion opportunities, complex documentation requirements, heavy workload, and insufficient access to professional development may hinder the full implementation of ECP. These challenges must be addressed through a contextualized framework that responds to the actual needs of teachers and school leaders in Leyte Division.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen ECP Orientation.** Schools may conduct regular orientations on Expanded Career Progression to ensure that teachers clearly understand promotion pathways, qualification requirements, PPST career stages, and career advancement opportunities.
2. **Improve Access to Professional Development.** The Schools Division and school administrators may provide more PPST-aligned training, seminars, Learning Action Cells, mentoring sessions, and coaching programs that directly support teacher promotion and professional growth.
3. **Enhance Mentoring and Coaching Systems.** Master teachers and experienced school leaders may be assigned formal mentoring roles to guide teachers in instructional improvement, career planning, portfolio preparation, and leadership development.
4. **Provide Clearer Career Progression Guidelines.** Schools may develop accessible and simplified career progression guides that explain requirements, documentary evidence, ranking procedures, and expected competencies for each career stage.
5. **Reduce Documentation Burden.** School administrators may provide technical assistance and organized documentation support to help teachers prepare promotion requirements without adding excessive workload.
6. **Strengthen Recognition Mechanisms.** Schools may recognize teacher leadership, mentoring roles, professional development participation, and instructional contributions through awards, commendations, and school-based recognition programs.
7. **Support Teachers in Lower Ranks.** Since many teachers were Teacher I and Teacher II, targeted support may be provided to help them complete graduate studies, attend trainings, assume leadership roles, and prepare for promotion.
8. **Develop and Implement the Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework.** The proposed framework may be adopted by the selected schools to strengthen career awareness, professional development, mentoring, institutional support, and teacher leadership opportunities.
9. **Conduct Future Research.** Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other districts or divisions using larger samples, mixed-method approaches, or longitudinal designs to further examine the long-term effects of Expanded Career Progression on teacher growth and career mobility.

3. OUTPUT OF THE STUDY

CONTEXTUALIZED CAREER PROGRESSION ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK

RATIONALE

The implementation of Expanded Career Progression in the selected schools of Leyte Division is essential in strengthening teachers' professional growth, career mobility, instructional competence, and leadership development. Career progression provides teachers with clearer pathways for promotion, professional advancement, mentoring roles, and instructional leadership opportunities. It also supports the alignment of teacher development with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers and the professional needs of schools.

The findings of the study revealed that Expanded Career Progression was generally implemented in terms of awareness and orientation, access to PPST-aligned professional development, leadership and mentoring opportunities, and institutional support and recognition mechanisms. However, challenges such as limited promotion opportunities, complex documentation requirements, heavy workload, insufficient access to professional development, unclear career progression guidelines, and time constraints were identified. Because of these concerns, a Contextualized Career Progression Enhancement Framework is necessary to strengthen support systems, improve teacher readiness for promotion, and enhance professional growth among teachers in Leyte Division.

OBJECTIVES

This framework aims to:

1. Strengthen teachers' awareness and understanding of Expanded Career Progression policies and promotion pathways.
2. Improve access to PPST-aligned professional development programs.
3. Enhance mentoring, coaching, and instructional leadership opportunities for teachers.
4. Provide clearer guidance on career mobility, promotion requirements, and documentation processes.
5. Strengthen institutional support and recognition mechanisms for teacher professional growth.
6. Reduce barriers that limit teachers' participation in career advancement activities.
7. Develop a sustainable school-based support system for teacher growth and career progression.

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