

Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of the 21st Century Career Progression System: A Mixed-Methods Approach

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Abstract:

The Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS), or the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) System, was first introduced on 2022 through Executive Order No. 174, which established a new career progression framework for public school teachers in the Philippines. The Department of Education adopted this system to promote a competency-based and merit-driven approach to teacher and school leader advancement. This study assessed teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding the objectives, principles, implementation, and opportunities provided by the ECPS. A convergent-parallel mixed-methods design was employed, wherein quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Concurrently, it was analyzed separately, and then merged to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the findings. In the quantitative component, survey data were collected from 145 teachers and administrators using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including weighted mean, and inferential analysis through one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized to analyze respondents' perceptions and determine significant differences based on selected profile variables such as age and position. Results revealed that both teachers and administrators generally expressed strong agreement with the objectives and guiding principles of the ECPS, highlighting its potential to promote fairness, transparency, and professional growth. However, the findings also showed concerns regarding the complexity of documentation requirements, workload implications, and the need for clearer implementation guidelines. Simultaneously, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 25 purposively selected respondents. Thematic analysis generated key themes emphasizing the value of competency-based advancement, the need for simplified processes, and stronger institutional support. The integration of quantitative and qualitative results demonstrated convergence on the strengths of the ECPS, while also providing nuanced insights into implementation challenges. Based on these findings, a policy brief and implementation framework were proposed to enhance the effective and equitable implementation of the ECPS in public schools.

Keywords: Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS), Teacher Career Advancement, Stakeholders' Perceptions, Competency-Based Professional Development, Convergent-Parallel Mixed-Methods

Introduction

Rationale of the Study

Globally, educational systems are shifting from traditional, linear, seniority-based career ladders toward more flexible and competency-driven progression systems that support multiple leadership pathways (UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning [1]). Recent international reforms further emphasize professional standards frameworks that elevate teacher autonomy, continuous professional learning, and evidence-informed practice (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), alongside the expansion of career-long learning structures that integrate micro-credentialing to recognize specialized competencies aligned with evolving educational demands [2]. Research likewise underscores the increasing significance of teacher and middle-leadership roles that enable educators to influence instructional quality and school improvement beyond formal administrative positions [3], reinforcing global leadership development models that privilege distributed, instructional, and change-oriented leadership over purely positional authority[4]. In the Philippines, similar reforms aim to establish clearer career lines, merit-based promotion, and multiple pathways that strengthen teacher development and leadership preparation (Department of Education), complemented by the nationwide alignment of progression mechanisms with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers to reinforce competency-based expectations across career stages (Philippine National Research Center for Teacher Quality [5]). Likewise, emerging local initiatives promoting school-based leadership cultivation and professional learning communities further support collaborative expertise and shared instructional leadership within basic education contexts [6]. Collectively, these international and local developments underscore the need for educators to navigate competency-based, context-responsive career systems aligned with 21st-century demands.

Despite these promising developments, several issues challenge the effective implementation of modern career progression systems. Many school systems continue to prioritize seniority or credential-based promotion rather than performance, leadership capacity, or pedagogical innovation, which may limit the recognition of emerging teacher leaders. Moreover, the perceptions and lived experiences of teachers and administrators, key actors in career progression, remain insufficiently documented, leaving gaps in understanding their motivations, constraints, and expectations[7]. In the Philippine context, limited plantilla positions, bureaucratic delays, and uncertainties regarding advancement persist, particularly for teachers who prefer to remain in instructional roles[8]. Additionally, rising demands for digital competence, collaborative leadership, and continuous professional growth place pressures on educators that traditional frameworks may not fully address[9]. These gaps emphasize the need for locally grounded evidence on how career progression reforms are understood in practice.

This study aims to examine the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the 21st-century career progression system that links classroom practice to leadership roles. It seeks to explore teachers' views of modern career pathways, including their distinctions between instructional leadership and formal administrative positions, as well as the barriers they encounter in pursuing advancement. Similarly, it investigates administrators' perspectives on readiness, criteria, and systemic challenges that influence teacher mobility. Through these objectives, the study intends to identify features of an effective career progression model, such as competency-based promotion, flexible pathways, and leadership development opportunities that both teachers and administrators perceive as meaningful and relevant.

By focusing on stakeholder perspectives in the Sogod District, this study contributes to the limited empirical literature on contemporary career progression systems in Philippine education. The findings are expected to inform DepEd policymakers, school heads, human resource development units, and training institutions seeking to refine career systems that foster teacher leadership, strengthen retention, and enhance professional satisfaction. Classroom teachers aspiring for career development, administrators mentoring potential leaders, and learners who benefit from improved instructional and leadership capacity also stand to gain from the insights generated. Ultimately, this research supports the development of a career progression framework that is equitable, competency-based, and responsive to the evolving demands of 21st-century education.

Theoretical Background

This study is built on how leadership and career ideas have changed over time. We are looking at how teachers move up in today's schools, moving away from the old-fashioned "top-down" style where only the people with official titles held all the power. As educational organizations grew more complex and interdependent, scholars criticized the limitations of hierarchical leadership, emphasizing the need to recognize the collaborative, fluid, and expertise-driven nature of instructional work.

This major turning point culminated in **Spillane's Distributed Leadership Theory (2006)**, which redefines leadership as an organizational practice emerging from the dynamic interactions among leaders, followers, and the situations in which they operate. Spillane explains that leadership is "stretched over people and situations," enacted through shared routines, tools, and expertise rather than confined to individuals occupying formal positions.

Later research backs up this way of thinking. Hargreaves and O'Connor[10] demonstrated how collaborative professionalism expands teacher influence and drives school improvement, while Wenner and Campbell[11] showed that teacher leadership functions best when leadership is distributed across formal and informal structures. Naicker and Mestry[12] found that distributed leadership practices strengthen instructional coherence and teacher empowerment in developing contexts, and Nguyen, Ng, and Yap[13] concluded that distributed leadership enhances organizational adaptability in rapidly changing educational environments. Hallinger and Bryant[14] similarly emphasized that distributed leadership fosters collective efficacy and sustainable school improvement. These studies collectively highlight how distributed leadership creates conditions that nurture teacher agency, build school capacity, and cultivate leadership competencies essential for career advancement.

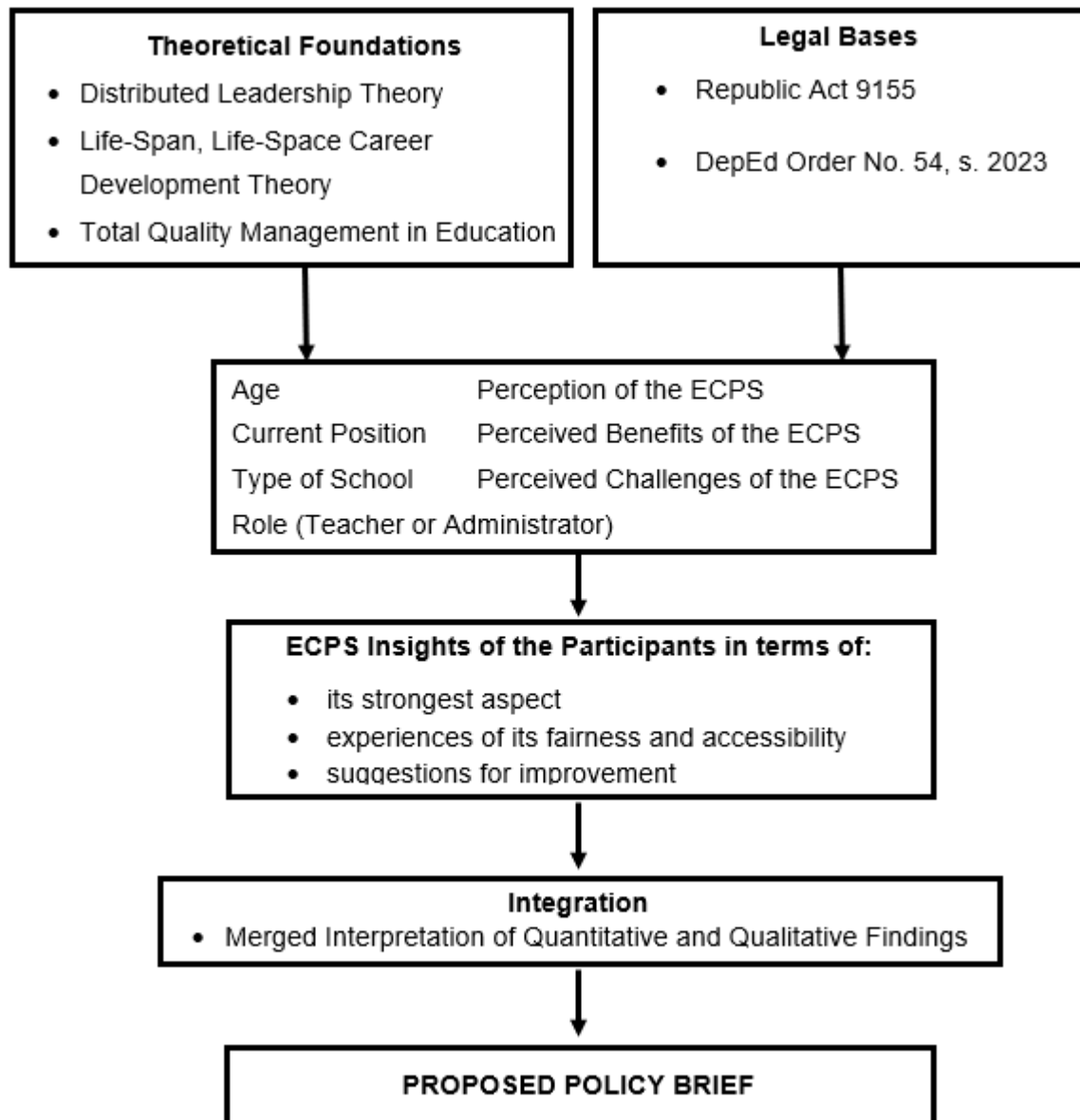


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This theoretical orientation is highly relevant to teacher career progression. In contemporary schools, teachers routinely contribute to curriculum design, mentoring, professional learning communities, digital innovation, and school improvement projects—forms of leadership that extend beyond classroom instruction. Distributed Leadership Theory thus provides a lens for understanding how teachers and administrators perceive systems such as the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS), which institutionalizes teacher leadership as a key dimension of professional advancement. By acknowledging that expertise is not monopolized by administrators but is practiced collectively, the theory supports the idea that career progression frameworks should recognize varied leadership contributions across the organization.

Parallel to the reconceptualization of leadership, career development scholarship underwent its own developmental transformation. Earlier career models viewed advancement as linear and largely determined by fixed traits or vocational fit. In contrast, **Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Career Development Theory** [15] introduced a dynamic, holistic perspective, conceptualizing career development as a lifelong process shaped by evolving self-concepts and the multiple social roles

individuals occupy. Super's framework highlights that individuals move through stages growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement, each accompanied by age and context-specific tasks, decisions, and adjustments. Career behavior is influenced by personal aspirations, competencies, environmental supports, and role salience.

Additional scholarship supports the applicability of Super's ideas in education. Savickas[16] advanced Super's model by emphasizing career adaptability as a critical factor shaping career decisions over time. Richardson and Watt[17] found that teachers' career motivations shift across stages, directly affecting their engagement in leadership tasks and aspirations for advancement. Klassen and Chiu demonstrated that self-efficacy and workload stress—both components linked to evolving self-concept—predict teachers' career intentions. Canrinus[18] highlighted the interplay between professional identity, job satisfaction, and career commitment, while Hobson and Maxwell[19] showed that mentoring experiences shape the developmental transitions teachers undergo as they assume more complex professional roles. These studies affirm the relevance of Super's theory to understanding how teachers interpret developmental expectations and opportunities across their careers.

In the teaching world, Super's theory shows how a teacher's drive, confidence, and identity as a leader change as they move through different stages of their career. As teachers navigate shifting commitments such as balancing instructional duties with leadership responsibilities or reconciling professional aspirations with family roles, they continuously reassess their career trajectories. This makes Super's model particularly relevant to the ECPS, which emphasizes developmental progression, competency-based evaluation, and multiple pathways for advancement. The theory helps explain how teachers and administrators interpret opportunities, barriers, and expectations embedded in such systems.

These theories are not just ideas on paper but real-world studies show they actually work and have a huge impact on how schools are run today. Research in distributed leadership (e.g., Harris[20]; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins[21]; Gurr[22]) consistently shows that shared leadership enhances collaboration, empowerment, instructional quality, and organizational capacity, conditions that support teacher growth and readiness for advanced roles. Similarly, studies on teacher identity, self-efficacy, and career motivation (e.g., Day & Gu[23]; Torres[24]) align with Super's propositions by showing that career decisions are shaped not only by structural opportunities but also by evolving self-concepts and contextual influences. Research on structural facilitators and barriers (Balyer & Özcan[25]; Castle & Shakman[26]) further demonstrates how institutional systems and competency-based pathways affect educators' willingness to pursue leadership positions.

Complementing these leadership and career theories is the framework of **W. Edwards Deming's Total Quality Management (TQM) in Education**. Originally a management philosophy focused on continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction, TQM in an educational context shifts the focus toward systemic excellence and the optimization of human resources. In the realm of teacher advancement, Deming[27] and Sallis[28] claim that organizational "quality" is achieved only when there is a commitment to the continuous professional development of its staff.

This theory is particularly relevant to the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) because it frames the system as a quality assurance mechanism. By replacing seniority-based promotions with a competency-driven model, the ECPS aligns with the TQM principle of process management, ensuring that the "output" (promoted teacher leaders) meets high standards of professional "input" (demonstrated skills and outcomes), as emphasized by Oakland[29].

Using the basic ideas of Total Quality Management, many researchers have shown how TQM fits perfectly into the way we handle career growth today. For instance, maintains that quality in education is a dynamic target necessitating a culture of continuous improvement, a concept that positions the ECPS as the essential structural vehicle for the constant upgrading of teacher

standards. This drive toward excellence is further supported by Murgatroyd and Morgan[30], who emphasize that "Total Involvement" is a cornerstone of TQM; they suggest that when career pathways such as the ECPS are perceived as fair and accessible, both teacher commitment and overall organizational quality significantly increase.

Along with getting everyone involved, Arcaro[31] points out that things also need to stay fair and objective, emphasizing that decisions in schools should be based on real data. This perspective directly supports the ECPS's reliance on evidence-based portfolios and merit-based advancement rather than subjective tenure. Beyond objective evaluation, TQM also focuses on efficiency, as explored by Detert, Kopel, and Mauriel[32]. Their research on reducing organizational "waste" suggests that the ECPS prevents the loss of human capital by providing pathways that retain expert teachers in the classroom where their instructional impact is most profound. Ultimately, as Ng[33] demonstrates, the successful application of these TQM principles leads to improved school climates. When educators are presented with a clear and rewarding path for their professional efforts, it fosters a pervasive "culture of excellence" that provides long-term benefits for the entire institution.

These changes in theory match the big shifts we're seeing in Philippine education policy. Republic Act 9155 institutionalized school-based management and participatory decision-making, creating organizational conditions consistent with principles of distributed leadership. DepEd Order No. 54, s. [34], which operationalizes the National Career Progression System for Teachers, reflects a developmental, competency-based model of advancement aligned with Super's career stages, Spillane's practice-based view of leadership and Deming's Total Quality Management in Education. The ECPS formally recognizes diverse leadership contributions, supports structured professional growth, promotes a career system responsive to teachers' evolving roles and identities, and effectively operationalizing the principle of continuous improvement by ensuring that the system constantly refines and optimizes teacher quality. Collectively, these policy reforms signal a systemic move away from hierarchical career structures toward more inclusive and developmentally responsive models of teacher leadership and advancement.

When you put them all together, Distributed Leadership, Super's Career Theory, and Total Quality Management give us a solid, well-rounded way to look at how the ECPS works in schools today. These theories collectively highlight (1) how leadership is enacted, (2) how career identities evolve, and (3) how systemic quality is maintained through clear, competency-based progression. This theoretical alignment is firmly rooted in the Philippine legal landscape, specifically Republic Act 9155, which institutionalized school-based management and created the participatory environment necessary for leadership to be distributed across the faculty. Furthermore, the operationalization of these frameworks is realized through DepEd Order No. 54, s., which provides the official roadmap for the National Career Progression System. This mandate ensures that the developmental stages of a teacher's career are met with corresponding institutional support and quality-assured evaluation standards. Anchoring the study in these combined theoretical and legal frameworks enables a nuanced analysis of both the organizational efficiency and the individual meaning-making of educators within the ECPS context.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

This study assessed the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System to determine its effectiveness, fairness, and areas for improvement as basis for policy brief.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

- 1.1. age;
- 1.2. current position or rank; and
- 1.3. type of school?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers and administrators on the Enhanced Career Progression System?
3. What are the perceived benefits of the Career Progression System in terms of:
 - 3.1. enhancing teachers' motivation;
 - 3.2. instructional competence; and
 - 3.3. leadership capacity?
4. What challenges do teachers and administrators experience or anticipate in the implementation of the Enhanced Career Progression System?
5. Are there significant differences in the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System when grouped according to the following:
 - 5.1. age;
 - 5.2. current position or rank; and
 - 5.3. type of school?
6. Is there a significant difference between the teachers' perceptions and the administrators' perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System?
7. What insights can be obtained from the teachers' and administrators' perceptions on the Enhanced Career Progression System in terms of:
 - 7.1. its strongest aspects;
 - 7.2. the fairness and accessibility of opportunities; and
 - 7.3. their suggestions for improving the ECPS to better support 21st-century educational leadership and professional growth?
8. How do the qualitative and quantitative findings converge, complement, or diverge in explaining teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System?
9. Based on the integrated findings of the study, what policy actions may be proposed in a policy brief to enhance the effectiveness, fairness, and implementation of the Enhanced Career Progression System?

Statement of the Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H₀₁):

There are no significant differences in the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System when grouped according to the following:

- 5.1. age;
- 5.2. current position or rank; and
- 5.3. type of school.

Null Hypothesis (H₀₂):

There is no significant difference between the teachers' perceptions and the administrators' perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will serve as a basis for the following entities and sectors:

Department of Education (DepEd) Policymakers. The results of this study may provide evidence-based insights to guide the refinement and implementation of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). Understanding teachers' and administrators' perceptions of fairness, effectiveness, and accessibility may help policymakers identify areas for improvement, enhance merit-based promotion mechanisms, and strengthen professional development initiatives aligned with 21st-century educational reforms.

School Administrators and Education Leaders. School heads, supervisors, and other education leaders may use the findings to better understand how career progression systems influence teacher motivation, instructional competence, and leadership engagement. The study may inform the development of supportive school-level structures such as mentoring programs, professional learning communities, and leadership opportunities that foster teacher growth and align with the objectives of the ECPS.

Teachers. Classroom teachers, particularly those pursuing career advancement, may benefit from insights on opportunities and expectations under the ECPS. The research highlights pathways for developing leadership competencies while maintaining instructional excellence, empowering teachers to make informed decisions regarding their professional growth and career progression.

Human Resource and Training Institutions. The study may assist human resource personnel, teacher education institutions, and professional development providers in designing programs that strengthen teachers' readiness for leadership roles. Findings on perceived barriers, professional needs, and preferred pathways may inform competency-based training programs and continuous professional learning initiatives.

Future Researchers. By integrating quantitative and qualitative perspectives, the study contributes to the limited empirical literature on teacher career progression and leadership development in the Philippine context. It may serve as a reference for future investigations into teacher leadership, educational reform implementation, and competency-based career advancement.

Learners and the Broader Educational Community. Strengthening career progression systems supports the development of highly motivated, competent, and empowered teachers. When teachers are effectively supported, instructional quality and leadership capacity are enhanced, contributing to improved school performance and benefiting learners and the broader educational community.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited to the perceptions of teachers and administrators within the Sogod District regarding the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS), specifically examining the system's effectiveness, fairness, and impact on professional variables such as instructional competence and leadership. While the convergent-parallel mixed-methods design is employed to synthesize broad trends with deep qualitative insights, the research is intentionally bounded by its geographic and temporal context. Consequently, these parameters introduce several inherent limitations regarding generalizability and data subjectivity, as detailed below.

Geographically, the research is confined to schools within the Sogod District of Cebu, meaning the findings may not fully represent the perceptions or educational contexts of other districts or regions.

Regarding respondent selection, participation is confined to teachers and administrators who voluntarily chose to engage with the study which may introduce a self-selection bias where the perspectives of those who opted out remain uncaptured. By focusing on people with strong opinions, we might miss the more balanced views of the "silent majority," which could give a lopsided picture of how the ECPS is actually working.

Since we are using surveys and interviews, we are relying only on what people say about themselves. This means the results might be affected by people wanting to look good, misremembering details, or just having a biased view of how the ECPS works. Also, this study only shows how people feel right now; if the policies change later on, these findings might not apply anymore.

By setting these boundaries, the study keeps its findings realistic and focused on the Sogod District, while still offering useful ideas for teacher growth across the Philippines, and even though the data comes from a specific place and time, the main themes still apply elsewhere. By using both surveys and interviews to look at the ECPS, the study reveals the bigger challenges and opportunities that teachers face nationwide. In the end, this approach allows a close look at one local area to provide important lessons for the entire national school system.

Methodology

This section outlined the research methods and procedures used to investigate the study's objectives. It described the research design, participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis techniques employed. The chosen methodology aimed to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings while addressing the research questions effectively.

Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods research approach, specifically a Convergent - Parallel Design, to comprehensively assess teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). As developed by Creswell and Creswell[35], the convergent-parallel design is appropriate as it allows for the simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data during a single phase of research. This design ensures that the strengths of both numerical trends and in-depth narratives are combined to provide a more holistic understanding of the ECPS's effectiveness, fairness, and areas for improvement.

The quantitative component of the study employed a descriptive-comparative design. The descriptive aspect was used to (1) profile respondents according to age, current position, and type of school, and (2) measure their perceptions of the objectives and benefits of the ECPS, such as motivation and leadership capacity. Data were gathered through standardized Likert-scale survey questionnaires to produce numerical data suitable for statistical summarization. Simultaneously, the comparative component determined whether significant differences in perceptions existed when respondents were grouped according to demographic variables.

Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews or open-ended responses aimed at exploring how respondents interpreted the fairness of the system and what contextual factors influenced their views. This phase employed thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and core sentiments regarding the implementation of the ECPS.

Following the convergent-parallel approach, two types of data were brought together during the final discussion to see how they compared and what they meant. By merging these two independent strands of data, the study generated a validated and comprehensive conclusion, bridging statistical generalizations with rich, evidence-based explanations of how the ECPS is perceived within the 21st-century educational context.

Flow of the Study

Following the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, this study utilizes respondents' profiles and perceptions of the ECPS as input, which are then subjected to mixed-methods data collection and analysis during the process phase. This systematic flow culminates in the output: evidence-based recommendations designed to improve the fairness and implementation of teacher career pathways.

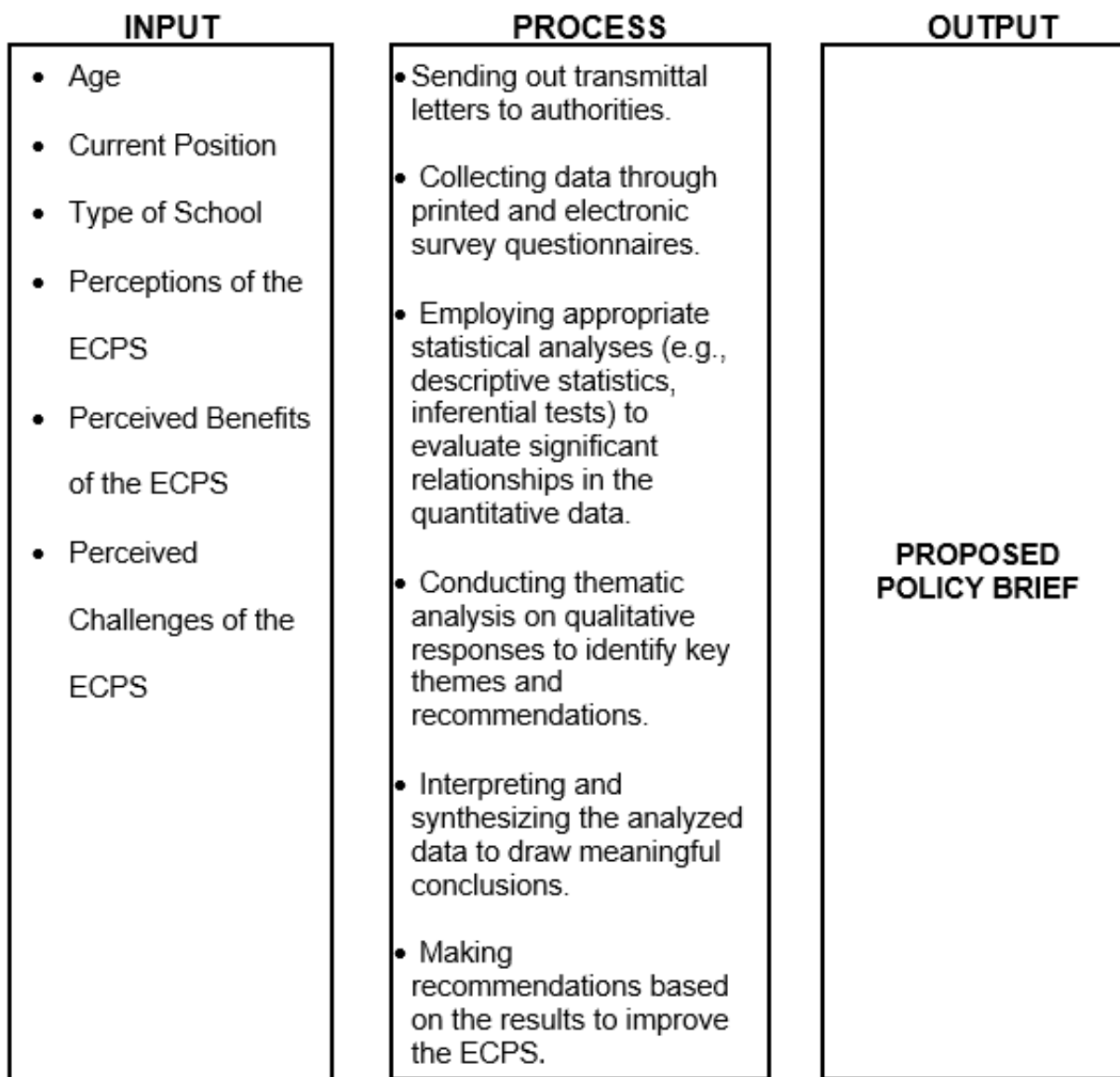


Figure 2. Flow of the Study

Environment

This study was conducted in the Municipality of Sogod in the northern part of Cebu Province, Philippines. A first-class municipality located about 61 kilometers from Cebu City, Sogod consists of coastal and upland barangays whose residents are largely engaged in agriculture, fishing, and small-scale commerce. These socioeconomic conditions influence the district's educational environment, including resource allocation and the professional contexts in which educators and school leaders operate.

The study involved respondents from selected public elementary and secondary schools within the Sogod District under the Division of Cebu Province. As indicated in Table 1, the research locale consists of 16 public schools, 10 elementary and 6 secondary, employing a total of 229 teachers and supervised by 16 school heads. This distribution reflects the district's varied school types, enrolment sizes, and administrative demands.

As a whole, Sogod District provided a diverse educational setting, with schools located in barangays that differ in geography, accessibility, and community support. This variety allowed us to

see how the new career system (ECPS) actually works in different real-world settings and the specific challenges teachers and leaders face in each.

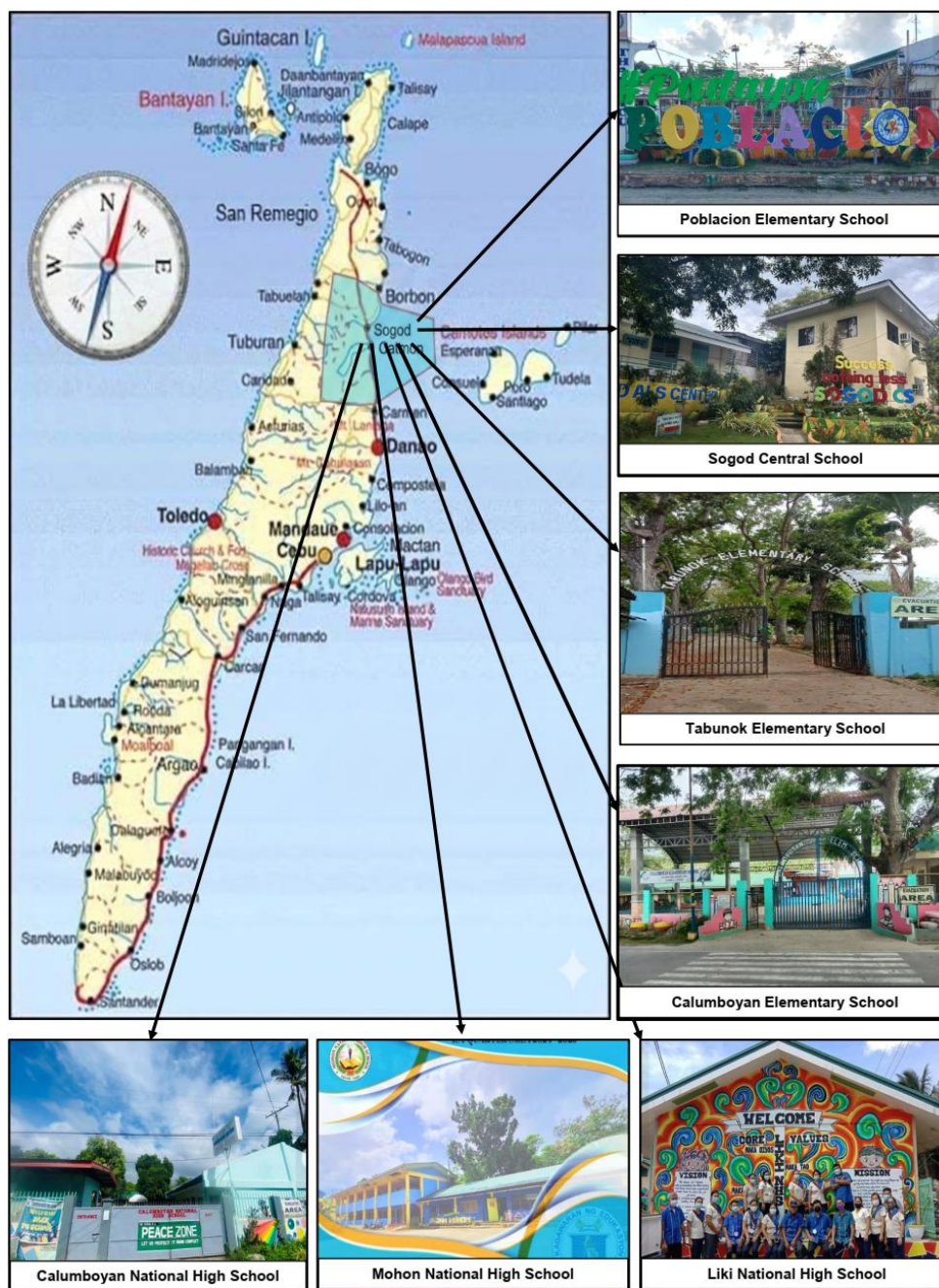


Figure 3. Location Map of the Study

Respondents

This study focused on teachers and administrators from various public elementary and high schools across the Sogod District of Cebu. Every participant joined on a voluntary basis, with the final group consisting of those who were available and willing to share their honest thoughts and experiences regarding the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS).

A total of 145 respondents participated in the study, composed of 137 teachers and 8 administrators from both elementary and secondary schools. From the elementary level, there were 68 teachers and 5 administrators representing nine (9) schools: Bagakay Elementary School, Calumbuyan

Elementary School, Daat Elementary School, Damolog Elementary School, Mangadlao Elementary School, Nahus-an Elementary School, Pansoy Integrated School, Poblacion Elementary School, Sogod Central School, and Tabunok Elementary School.

At the secondary level, the respondents included 69 teachers and 3 administrators from six (6) schools: Cabalawan National High School, Calumboyan National High School, Liki National High School, Mohon National High School, Servillano Aranco National High School, and Sogod National High School.

These participants were selected because they are directly involved in the implementation and experience of the Enhanced Career Progression System, making them suitable sources of information regarding its effectiveness, fairness, benefits, and implementation challenges within the district.

In general, the group of people who took part in the study represented a good mix of respondents from schools of all sizes and settings throughout the Sogod District. By including this variety, we made sure to hear from both elementary and high school levels, as well as from classroom teachers and school leaders. This balanced mix was key to getting a complete picture and meeting the goals of our study.

Table 1. Selected Schools and Corresponding Number of Respondents

No.	Name of School	No. of Teachers	No. of School Heads
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			
1	BAGAKAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	6	
2	CALUMBOYAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	10	1
3	DAAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	5	
4	DAMOLOG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	12	1
5	MANGADLAO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	4	1
6	NAHUS-AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	3	
7	PANSOY INTEGRATED SCHOOL	3	
8	POBLACION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	13	
9	SOGOD CENTRAL SCHOOL	3	1
10	TABUNOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	9	1
	SUB-TOTAL	68	5
SECONDARY SCHOOLS		No. of Teachers	No. of School Heads
1	CABALAWAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	10	
2	CALUMBOYAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	14	
3	LIKI NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	9	
4	MOHON NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	21	1
5	SERVILLANO ARANCO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	4	1
6	SOGOD NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL	11	1
	SUB-TOTAL	69	3
	OVERALL TOTAL	137	8

Instruments

The main tool used for this study was a structured questionnaire composed of five major sections. To make sure the questions were accurate and professional, ideas from previous studies on leadership and teacher-growth were used, adapting them to fit the local context while giving credit to the original creators.

The first section focused on basic background information that might shape how teachers and administrators view the career system. Based on established models for analyzing career paths in

the Philippines, things like age, gender, education, and years of experience were included. Collecting these details makes it easier to understand who the participants were to let the researcher compare different groups during the data analysis.

The second part of the survey used a ten-item Likert-scale to see what the respondents think about the ECPS, specifically if it is clear, fair and follows the right principles. Items were adapted from the perception themes used in Al-Nuaimi [36], which examined teacher views on national career advancement reforms, and from the leadership-oriented dimensions of Mora-Ruano[37], which assess clarity of purpose, fairness, and instructional leadership principles. The section utilizes a five-point agreement scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*) to quantify the degree to which stakeholders perceive the ECPS as transparent, equitable, principle-driven, and aligned with 21st-century leadership values.

The third section of the questionnaire looked at the benefits of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) across the three main areas: teacher motivation, teaching skills, and leadership ability. Each area included five specific points to see how much participants agreed that the ECPS actually helps them grow professionally.

The first subscale, focused on teacher motivation which was based on well-known studies by Barkhuizen[38], Deci and Ryan[39], and Skaalvik and Skaalvik[40]. These questions explored whether the ECPS improves a teacher's drive, makes them feel more recognized, and builds their confidence in reaching their goals.

The second subscale looked at instructional competence, drawing on the work of Darling-Hammond[41], Shulman and Goe. Here, the goal was to see if teachers felt the ECPS helped them improve their teaching methods, encouraged them to keep learning, and prepared them to use modern, 21st-century classroom techniques that work for all types of students.

The final subscale covered leadership capacity, using ideas from experts like Spillane[42], and Harris[43]. These items checked if the system creates real chances for staff to take on leadership roles, collaborate with others, and have a bigger say in school decisions and management.

The fourth section focuses on the common hurdles found in the ECPS rollout, using another ten-item scale to measure perspectives. These questions were based on the work of Al-Nuaimi, who identified structural roadblocks in career reforms, and Mushi[44], who pointed out issues with resources, training, and oversight. This part of the survey looks into problems like confusing rules, uneven implementation, lack of support, heavier workloads, favoritism, and tech gaps. The feedback gathered here is vital for fine-tuning the policy and understanding how it works on the ground.

The fifth and final tool used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide, created to gather detailed personal stories from different participants. Adapted from proven methods used the guide consists of four main parts: (a) a consent script explaining that the study is voluntary and private; (b) introductory questions to build rapport and get a sense of each person's role and knowledge of the ECPS; (c) the main questions regarding the system's pros, cons, and areas for improvement; and (d) a wrap-up question for any final thoughts. This setup allowed participants to share their experiences in a natural way while still keeping the conversation focused on the research goals.

These instruments used supported a convergent-parallel mixed-methods design, where quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed at the same time to provide a complete view of how stakeholders perceive the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). By pairing the Likert-scale surveys with personal interviews, the study was able to connect broad statistical trends with the actual, day-to-day experiences of the respondents.

Combining these two methods allowed for the triangulation of data, ensuring that the study's conclusions and final suggestions for the system are backed by both solid data and a real understanding of the local context.

Data-gathering Procedures

The researcher started by creating a detailed proposal and submitted it to their adviser and faculty panel for review. After making the suggested revisions, formal approval and endorsement letters were obtained from the adviser and the Dean of the Graduate School. These letters, along with official requests, were sent to the Division Superintendent, District Supervisor, and school principals to get permission to collect data.

Once the school principals gave their approval, the researcher created two Google Forms for the study. The first form was a questionnaire covering background info and three key areas: views on ECPS principles, its benefits, and implementation challenges. The second form was intended for the semi-structured interviews. Using an online format made it easier for everyone to access the tools while keeping the data organized and efficient.

The researcher personally coordinated with the school principals and contact persons of each participating school to ensure an orderly distribution of the research instrument. A formal message containing the Google Form link, along with a copy of the approved communication letters, was disseminated through institutional email or official school communication channels. A total of 145 respondents, comprising teachers and administrators from various elementary and secondary schools were selected using total sampling to obtain complete, comprehensive and accurate information from all individuals who possess the characteristics relevant to the study.

To add more depth to the survey results, the researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews at each school. A total of 25 people were interviewed, which is a suitable size for the thematic analysis approach suggested by Braun and Clarke[45]. This method focuses on the quality of information rather than just a specific number. Data was collected until the researcher noticed recurring themes, showing that enough information had been gathered. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the final number of interviewees also depended on their availability and the study's timeline.

Interviews took place either in person or online, depending on what worked best for the participants. Prior to the interview, the researcher secured informed consent and clarified the interviewee's right to withdraw at any time. Participants were also promised that their information would stay confidential and be used only for school purposes. With their permission, the conversations were recorded so the researcher could accurately transcribe and categorize the main ideas later.

The survey responses were automatically saved in Google Forms, then cleaned and analyzed using statistical methods. At the same time, the interview notes were studied and grouped into themes. Following a mixed-methods approach, both sets of data were compared and combined during the final analysis. This allowed the researcher to see where the numbers and the stories matched or differed, making the study's overall conclusions much stronger.

Treatment of Data

The quantitative data gathered from the survey questionnaires were organized, coded, and analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

To answer the first research question about the participants' backgrounds like their age, gender, education, and experience descriptive statistics like counts, percentages, and averages were used. These measures provided a clear summary of the characteristics of the teacher and administrator respondents and helped contextualize the subsequent analysis of their perceptions.

To determine what the respondents think about the goals and benefits of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS), weighted means and standard deviations for the survey questions were

calculated. These scores showed the general level of agreement or disagreement on how the system affects things like motivation and teaching skills. Interpretation of mean scores then followed an established descriptive scale to ensure consistent evaluation of perception levels.

To see if there were any real connections or differences between the participants' backgrounds and their opinions, inferential statistics was used. Specifically, a one-way ANOVA to check if views on the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) differed significantly based on school type, age, or current position. This allowed the researcher to compare multiple groups at once; if the test showed a significant difference, the "post hoc" tests followed to pinpoint exactly which groups disagreed with each other.

For the interview data, Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis was employed. This is a flexible way to pull out the main "themes" from what the respondents said.

Responses were coded and categorized into themes such as system strengths and implementation problems to get the kind of deep, personal insight that numbers cannot capture.

Following the convergent-parallel design, quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed independently and at the same time. While the statistics showed the big trends, the thematic analysis captured the personal details. This way, both the data and the personal narratives were treated as equally important.

In the final step, integration occurred by comparing the two sets of findings side-by-side. Rather than one phase informing the other, the findings were merged to determine if they converged, diverged, or complemented each other. This helped back up the statistical trends with lived experiences and used any conflicting results to show the fine details of how the ECPS is working, giving a strong foundation for the final recommendations.

Scoring Procedures

Participants rated the ECPS using a five-point Likert scale with assigned numerical weights. For each item and theme, the weighted mean was calculated by multiplying response frequencies by their weights and dividing by the total number of respondents. These means were then matched against descriptive categories to evaluate levels of agreement, benefits, and challenges.

Table 2. Five-point Likert Scale and Interpretation Guide for Weighted Mean Scores

Scale	Range of Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Descriptive Meaning
5	4.21–5.00	Strongly Agree	The aspect is perceived as highly evident or strongly manifested among teachers and administrators.
4	3.41–4.20	Agree	The aspect is evident and often observed in the implementation of the ECPS.
3	2.61–3.40	Neutral	The aspect is sometimes evident; further improvement is needed.
2	1.81–2.60	Disagree	The aspect is rarely evident in the implementation of the ECPS.
1	1.00–1.80	Strongly Disagree	The aspect is not evident or strongly lacking in the ECPS implementation.

(Adapted from Likert scaling interpretation guidelines commonly used in educational research, e.g., Magdaraog; Al-Nuaimi)

Scoring was aligned to each section to evaluate the ECPS. Section II measured views on clarity and fairness, Section III assessed growth and leadership benefits, and Section IV identified

implementation hurdles. Higher means in Sections II and III indicate positive perceptions, while lower means in Section IV represent fewer obstacles, providing a clear framework for analysis.

Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and a common understanding of the concepts discussed, the following terms are operationally defined based on their use in this study:

Administrator. Refers to school heads or principals in public elementary or secondary schools within the Sogod District. They are responsible for school management, instructional supervision, and the local implementation of DepEd policies, specifically the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS).

Career Progression. The structured advancement of school personnel through ranks based on qualifications and performance. In this research, it refers specifically to the mechanisms defined by the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS).

Challenges in ECPS Implementation. The barriers or constraints encountered by teachers and administrators when applying the ECPS. These include procedural, structural, resource, and competency issues identified through both quantitative and qualitative data.

Competency-Based Promotion. A system where advancement is based on demonstrated skills and leadership behaviors rather than just seniority. This study examines this as a core feature of the ECPS.

Convergent-Parallel Design. A mixed-methods framework where quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed simultaneously. This allows the researcher to merge statistical trends with personal narratives for a more comprehensive view.

Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). A multi-pathway career framework by the Department of Education providing structured advancement in teaching or leadership. It is the primary policy evaluated in this study.

Mixed-Methods Approach. A research methodology that involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. In this study, it specifically utilizes a convergent-parallel design, wherein survey data and semi-structured interviews are gathered and analyzed independently during the same phase. The two sets of results are then integrated during the final interpretation to triangulate findings, allowing for a more substantial and comprehensive understanding of the ECPS than either method could provide alone.

Perceived Benefits of the ECPS. The positive outcomes stakeholders associate with the system, such as increased motivation, skill improvement, and leadership growth.

Teacher. Refers to licensed public school educators assigned to elementary or secondary schools within the Sogod District. In this study, teachers are respondents who provide insights into their experiences and perceptions of the ECPS as classroom practitioners and potential instructional leaders.

Total Quality Management. Is a management philosophy focused on continuous improvement, data-driven decision-making, and shared responsibility for quality across all levels of an organization. In this study, it provides the theoretical basis for understanding the implementation of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) in terms of process quality and effectiveness.

2. Presentation, Analyses and Interpretation of Data

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the first hand data gathered to evaluate the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). The analysis follows a convergent-parallel mixed-methods design, wherein quantitative results and qualitative insights were processed independently and subsequently integrated. This

methodological framework facilitates a direct comparison between statistical trends and personal narratives, serving to validate findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

This study combines quantitative data with personal narratives to get a complete picture of the ECPS. While the statistics highlight demographic trends and measure how well the program met its goals, the interviews provide the necessary context, capturing the actual experiences of those involved. By looking at these two perspectives together, we can see the "why" behind the numbers. This approach offers a more grounded look at how policy works on the ground and ensures the final recommendations are rooted in real-world evidence.

By bridging the gap between broad trends with educators' daily realities, the study offers a holistic view of the system's impact. This ensures that the resulting recommendations are both practical and responsive to the human side of career progression.

Profile of The Respondents

This section shows the participants by their demographic details, like age or role, using simple counts and percentages. These details are important because they help us understand who the respondents were and provided a better context for their views on the Enhanced Career Progression System.

Table 3. Profile of the Respondents

	Age	f	%
	55 years old and above	6	4.14
	45 to 54 years old	23	15.86
	35 to 44 years old	42	28.97
	34 years old and below	74	51.03
Current Position or Rank			
	Principal	6	4.14
	Head Teacher	2	1.38
	Master Teacher	6	4.14
	Teacher III	49	33.79
	Teacher II	27	18.62
	Teacher I	55	37.93
Type of School			
	Elementary	71	48.97
	Secondary	71	48.97
	Integrated	3	2.07

Table 4 presents the profiles of the 145 respondents by age, current position or rank, and type of school. In terms of age, the majority are 34 years old and below (74 or 51.03%), followed by those aged 35–44 years old (42 or 28.97%), 45–54 years old (23 or 15.86%), and 55 years old and above (6 or 4.14%). Regarding current position or rank, most respondents are Teacher I (55 or 37.93%) and Teacher III (49 or 33.79%), followed by Teacher II (27 or 18.62%). A smaller proportion occupies higher positions such as Principal (6 or 4.14%), Master Teacher (6 or 4.14%), and Head Teacher (2 or 1.38%). As to the type of school, an equal number of respondents come from elementary (71 or 48.97%) and secondary schools (71 or 48.97%), while only 3 (2.07%) are from integrated schools.

The data reveals that the participants were mostly young educators in the early stages of their careers. This was shown by the high number of respondents under 34 and those holding entry-level Teacher I positions. This profile suggested a developing pool of educators who were still building

experience and moving up the ranks. As Ingersoll and Smith noted, early-career teachers often made up a large part of the workforce, especially in growing education systems. This concentration in entry and mid-level roles also followed the career progression stages described by Day and Gu, who explained that teachers typically move toward leadership roles as they gain experience. This trend mirrored international findings from the OECD[46], which showed that many teachers globally were concentrated in these early stages. Additionally, the small number of administrative roles likely reflected the natural hierarchy of schools, where there were far fewer leadership spots than teaching positions. Since the study included an equal number of elementary and secondary teachers, the findings provided a balanced representation across the two major levels of basic education, helping ensure that the findings reflect perspectives from both teaching environments.

Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators on The Enhanced Career Progression System

This section explores how stakeholders perceived the ECPS, highlighting the clarity of its objectives and its alignment with values like fairness, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The data also offered insights into how the program recognized excellence and ensured equitable advancement. Using mean scores and verbal descriptors the analysis identifies strengths and areas for improvement.

Table 4. Perceptions on the Objectives and Principles of the Enhanced Career Progression System

Statements	Teachers		Administrators	
	Mean	VI	Mean	VI
The objectives of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) are clearly communicated to all teachers and administrators.	4.04	SA	4.63	SA
The ECPS is grounded on principles that promote fairness and transparency in promotion.	4.09	SA	4.63	SA
The ECPS aligns with 21st-century educational leadership values such as collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement.	4.23	SA	4.50	SA
The ECPS recognizes both teaching excellence and leadership potential.	4.16	SA	4.38	SA
The standards and criteria of the ECPS are consistent with the goals of professional growth.	4.14	A	4.63	A
Teachers and administrators were adequately oriented about the objectives and principles of the ECPS.	4.07	A	4.75	A
The ECPS provides equal opportunities for both male and female teachers to advance their careers.	4.27	A	4.75	A
The ECPS promotes a culture of accountability aligned with professional standards.	4.22	A	4.63	A
The ECPS encourages the use of evidence-based evaluation of teachers and administrators.	4.21	A	4.63	A
The ECPS encourages shared decision-making and participatory leadership among school personnel.	4.16	A	4.50	A
Grand Mean	4.18	A	4.60	A

Note: 4.21-5.00 SA (Strongly Agree)
 3.41-4.20 A (Agree)
 2.61-3.40 N (Neutral)
 1.81-2.60 D (Disagree)
 1.00-1.80 SD (Strongly Disagree)

The perceptions of teachers and administrators on the objectives and principles of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) with a total of 145 respondents is presented in Table 5. Teachers generally expressed positive perceptions, with mean scores ranging from 4.04 to 4.27, interpreted as

either Strongly Agree (SA) or Agree (A), and a grand mean of 4.18 (Agree). Administrators demonstrated even more favorable perceptions, with mean scores ranging from 4.38 to 4.75, all interpreted as Agree (A) or Strongly Agree (SA), and a higher grand mean of 4.60 (Agree). Both groups strongly agreed that the ECPS objectives are clearly communicated and grounded on fairness and transparency, while they agreed that the standards are consistent with professional growth and promote accountability. Generally, all indicators received positive verbal descriptions, indicating general approval of the ECPS objectives and principles from both teachers and administrators.

The findings show that both teachers and administrators viewed the ECPS favorably, suggesting the system's goals and principles were widely accepted. While both groups provided positive ratings, administrators gave consistently higher mean scores. This stronger level of support likely reflected their direct role in implementing the policy. Teachers' slightly more moderate scores, while still positive, suggested a sense of cautious optimism. Overall, the positive grand means for both groups indicated that the ECPS was seen as a fair, transparent, and effective framework for professional growth and career advancement.

These positive perceptions align with research by Villegas[47], which emphasized that clear and relevant evaluation systems are essential for fostering professional growth. The higher scores from administrators specifically support the idea that being closely involved in policy implementation leads to a deeper understanding and stronger endorsement of its objectives. This connection between clear structure and high affirmation is also noted by UNESCO IIEP[48], which founded that well-designed career reforms can significantly improve teacher motivation and retention.

The respondents' agreement that the ECPS encouraged shared decision-making reflects research showing that inclusive leadership boosts job satisfaction and commitment among school personnel (Teachers' Perceptions of Shared Leadership and Organizational Attractiveness, 2025). Similarly, the way ECPS standards aligned with professional growth goals matched findings that clear career pathways and targeted development were essential for supporting teachers in the middle of their careers (Mid-Career Teachers: A Mixed Methods Scoping Study, 2020). By promoting evidence-based evaluation and distributed leadership, the system empowers teachers, a practice linked to higher career satisfaction and professional efficacy (Improving Teacher Career Satisfaction through Distributed Leadership, 2023).

Collectively, these results prove that the ECPS was viewed as a fair and transparent system that was aligned with modern leadership values and supports meaningful career development for educators.

Perceived Benefits Of The Enhanced Career Progression System

This section is important because it highlights how the ECPS influenced key aspects of professional growth, including teachers' motivation, instructional competence, and leadership capacity. The findings provided insight into how the system supports goal setting, continuous development, confidence in career advancement, and the enhancement of 21st-century teaching and leadership skills. By examining these perceptions, the study identified the practical impact of the ECPS on educators' professional performance and the overall effectiveness of the system in promoting career progression within the school setting.

Table 5 shows that in enhancing teachers' motivation, teachers obtained a sub-mean of 4.25 (Strongly Agree), while administrators had a higher sub-mean of 4.40 (Strongly Agree), indicating strong affirmation from both groups. For instructional competence, teachers registered a sub-mean of 4.18 (Agree), whereas administrators posted 4.38 (Strongly Agree), reflecting positive perceptions of professional growth and instructional improvement. In terms of leadership capacity, teachers recorded a sub-mean of 4.09 (Agree), while administrators showed a higher sub-mean of 4.63 (Strongly Agree). The overall grand mean of 4.47 for both teachers and administrators,

interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicated that respondents perceived the ECPS as highly beneficial across all three areas.

Table 5. Perceived Benefits of the Enhanced Career Progression System

Enhancing Teachers' Motivation			Teacher Mean	VD	Administrator Mean	VD
The ECPS encourages me to set higher goals for my professional growth.			4.28	SA	4.50	SA
The ECPS increases my motivation to improve my teaching performance.			4.34	SA	4.38	SA
The ECPS helps strengthen my commitment to achieving school-wide goals.			4.26	SA	4.38	SA
The ECPS enhances my confidence in applying for higher career positions.			4.21	SA	4.38	SA
The ECPS makes me feel more valued and recognized as a teacher.			4.15	A	4.38	SA
Sub-mean			4.25	SA	4.40	SA
Instructional Competence						
The ECPS supports the enhancement of my instructional practices.			4.13	A	4.38	SA
The ECPS encourages me to participate in continuous professional development activities.			4.18	A	4.38	SA
The ECPS helps me integrate new teaching strategies into my classroom practice.			4.20	A	4.38	SA
The ECPS contributes to my ability to meet diverse learners' needs.			4.18	A	4.38	SA
The ECPS improves my competence in using 21st-century teaching approaches.			4.19	A	4.38	SA
Sub-mean			4.18	A	4.38	SA
Leadership Capacity						
The ECPS provides opportunities for me to take on leadership roles in the school.			4.03	A	4.63	SA
The ECPS enhances my ability to collaborate and mentor colleagues.			4.11	A	4.63	SA
The ECPS strengthens my skills in decision-making and school leadership.			4.04	A	4.50	SA
The ECPS supports my development in leading school-based initiatives.			4.12	A	4.63	SA
The ECPS gives me clearer pathways to pursue future leadership or administrative positions.			4.14	A	4.75	SA
Sub-mean			4.09	A	4.63	SA
Grand Mean			4.47	SA	4.47	SA
Note:	4.21-5.00	SA (Strongly Agree)				
	3.41-4.20	A (Agree)				
	2.61-3.40	N (Neutral)				
	1.81-2.60	D (Disagree)				
	1.00-1.80	SD (Strongly Disagree)				

The findings show that both teachers and administrators saw the ECPS as a major benefit to motivation, teaching skills, and leadership. The system's emphasis on goal setting, professional growth, and recognition appeared to effectively inspire educators, which aligns with research showing that structured career progression and well-designed professional frameworks enhance teacher motivation, engagement, and overall professional development (UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 2018; Kumari & Kumar[49]).

Regarding instructional competence, the ECPS supports continuous learning and the use of new teaching strategies to meet different learners' needs, reflecting studies that emphasize the role of collaborative professional development and ongoing training in improving instructional quality and classroom effectiveness (ScienceDirect Education, 2023).

For leadership, the system offers chances for mentoring and shared decision-making and career advancement, supporting findings that teacher leadership programs and distributed leadership practices strengthen professional efficacy, job satisfaction, and leadership development within school contexts (Homrich-Knieling[50]; Magdaraog[51]).

Overall, these results indicate that the ECPS was viewed as a fair, transparent, and professionally supportive framework that fosters motivation, enhances instructional competence, and develops leadership capacity, thereby serving as a credible mechanism for teacher development and career advancement.

Challenges And Barriers In The Implementation Of The Enhanced Career Progression System

These findings reveal the factors that might hinder the consistent implementation of the ECPS across different schools and divisions. By determining these specific challenges, it became easier to see where the system needs adjustment. This helped in creating practical strategies to strengthen the ECPS, ensuring that teachers actually experience the professional growth and career progress the policy originally promised.

Table 6. Challenges and Barriers in the Implementation of the ECPS

Statements			Teacher Mean	VD	Administrator Mean	VD
The criteria for promotion under the ECPS are not clearly defined			3.07	N	2.75	N
There is a lack of training and mentoring for teachers aspiring for higher positions.			3.31	N	3.12	N
The implementation of the ECPS varies widely among schools or divisions.			3.53	A	2.75	N
Limited resources hinder the effective implementation of the ECPS.			3.62	A	2.88	N
Teachers and administrators experience heavy documentation or paperwork requirements.			3.88	A	3.63	A
There are perceptions of favoritism or bias in ECPS implementation.			3.13	N	2.88	N
Time constraints and workload affect my participation in ECPS activities.			3.68	A	3.00	N
There is limited administrative support for teachers and staff participating in the ECPS			3.23	N	2.88	N
The monitoring and evaluation processes of the ECPS are inconsistent or unclear.			3.12	N	2.88	N
Digital or technological constraints hinder the documentation and submission requirements of the ECPS.			3.09	N	2.88	N
Grand Mean			3.36	N	2.96	N
Note:	4.21-5.00	SA (Strongly Agree)				
	3.41-4.20	A (Agree)				
	2.61-3.40	N (Neutral)				
	1.81-2.60	D (Disagree)				
	1.00-1.80	SD (Strongly Disagree)				

Table 6 presents the various challenges and barriers teachers and administrators faced when implementing the ECPS. Teachers reported a grand mean of 3.36, while administrators recorded a

slightly lower mean of 2.96; both scores fall within the "Neutral" range. Specifically, teachers identified several pressing issues, most notably the heavy burden of paperwork (3.88), general time and workload constraints (3.68), and a lack of necessary resources (3.62). They also noted that the system was not always applied consistently across different schools (3.53). Administrators, on the other hand, remained largely neutral across most categories, though they did supported that the volume of documentation was a genuine challenge (3.63). Ultimately, the neutral scores suggested that neither group viewed these obstacles as absolute constraints for the system.

These results indicate that while documentation and workload were visible pain points, they haven't yet reached a level that stakeholders consider "problematic." It is clear, however, that teachers felt the operational strain more acutely than administrators, as evidenced by their higher scores in almost every category. The consistently neutral stance from administrators might suggested they had a different perspective on the workload, or perhaps they viewed these hurdles as typical administrative growing pains. The shared concern over paperwork highlighted it as the primary area where the implementation process could be simplified.

The neutral perceptions recorded in Table 6 confirmed that while the transition to the ECPS has its friction points, these were not seen as insurmountable barriers. The specific concerns raised by teachers, such as documentation, resource scarcity, and inconsistent rollout, aligned with broader trends in educational reform. For instance, the OECD has noted that excessive administrative demands often weigh down teachers, shifting their focus away from actual classroom instruction.

Similarly, the difficulties involving limited resources and uneven policy execution are common themes in global career advancement frameworks (UNESCO IIEP[52]). The moderate anxiety teachers expressed regarding a lack of mentoring and professional support also mirrors recent findings that without proper guidance and funding, educators often struggle to pursue higher promotions[53].

Ultimately, success in these initiatives depends heavily on institutional support and access to quality training[54]. While the ECPS appeared to be functioning reasonably well without major structural failures, these findings suggested that its long-term success will likely depend on how well the department manages workload, allocates resources, and ensures the system is applied uniformly across all divisions.

Despite these potential constraints, the overall neutral perception of respondents manifests that the ECPS was not widely regarded as severely hindered by structural barriers, indicating that the system may be functioning relatively effectively while still requiring improvements in workload management, resource allocation, and implementation consistency.

Test Of Significant Difference In The Teachers' And Administrators' Perceptions Of The Ecps When Grouped According To Their Profile

Analyzing profile-related differences helps determine how demographic and professional characteristics shape educators' views of the ECPS. These variations often reflect differences in experience, job responsibilities, and exposure to the system's requirements. By identifying whether certain groups show different levels of agreement or concern, the study provides insights for school leaders to refine the system. Ultimately, this ensuring that career progression policies remain equitable, responsive to diverse needs, and supportive of long-term professional growth.

Table 7. Difference in Perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System when Grouped According to Profile

Age	Mean	F stat	p-value	Interpretation
55 years old and above	4.13	1.0590	.3687	Not Significant
45 to 54 years old	4.40			
35 to 44 years old	4.13			

34 years old and below	4.15			
Current Position or Rank				
Principal	4.67	1.7808	.12065	Not Significant
Head Teacher	4.40			
Master Teacher	3.83			
Teacher III	4.16			
Teacher II	4.00			
Teacher I	4.27			
Type of School				
Elementary	4.07	3.0336	.051276	Not Significant
Secondary	4.31			
Integrated	3.90			

* Significant when $p < .05$

Table 7 presents how perceptions of the ECPS vary according to age, professional rank, and school type. When analyzed by age, mean scores ranged from 4.13 to 4.40, with the 45–54 age bracket showing the highest level of affirmation (4.40). However, the computed F-statistic ($F = 1.0590$, $p = .3687$) confirms that these age-based differences are not statistically significant. A similar pattern emerged regarding professional rank: while principals and head teachers posted the highest means (4.67 and 4.40, respectively) and master teachers recorded the lowest (3.83), the F-statistic ($F = 1.7808$, $p = .12065$) indicates no significant disparity across roles. Finally, although secondary school respondents viewed the system more favorably (4.31) than those in integrated schools (3.90), the resulting p-value ($p = .051276$) remains just above the threshold for significance.

The data validate that the ECPS was viewed with a high degree of consistency across the board. Since all p-values exceed the .05 significance level, variables such as age, rank, or school type did not appear to fundamentally shift how the system was perceived. The near-significant p-value for school type is worth noting, as it hinted at subtle variations that might become clearer with a larger sample size, but for now, the consensus remains stable. These results implied that current implementation strategies do not necessarily require tailoring for specific demographic groups or institutional types, as stakeholders seem to share a common understanding of the system's value.

The lack of significant differences demonstrate that the ECPS has been established as a cohesive framework that transcends individual professional backgrounds. This finding is consistent with research by the OECD, which notes that well-structured career systems tend to produce uniform perceptions among educators when institutional support is strong. By maintaining transparent standards and clear professional pathways, the ECPS minimizes the "perception gaps" often found between novice and veteran teachers[55].

These findings establish that when professional development and leadership models are standardized, it creates a "shared language" across the organization. Essentially, because everyone is trained under the same framework, educators, regardless of their specific role, develop a common understanding of what career growth actually looks like. When promotion criteria are applied consistently across various institutions, the typical gaps in perception between different ranks or positions tend to disappear.

This level of system-wide consistency indicates that a centralized approach to policy design is effective when paired with uniform procedures. By removing the guesswork and local variations, the Department ensures that a teacher in a remote elementary school and a principal in a large urban high school interpret and experience advancement opportunities in a comparable way[56]. This uniformity is crucial because it builds trust in the system; when the "rules of the game" are

transparent and identical for everyone, it minimizes feelings of inequality and ensures that professional progress is based on merit rather than institutional framework.

Test of Difference Between The Teachers' Perceptions and Administrators' Perceptions of The Enhanced Career Progression System

This part examines whether significant differences existed in how the two groups evaluated the implementation and effectiveness of the system.

Comparing the perceptions of teachers and administrators is important in determining whether both groups share similar views regarding the ECPS, as they play different roles in its implementation and monitoring.

The results of the statistical analysis, including the mean scores, F-statistic, and p-value, were presented in the table below to determine whether the observed differences in perceptions were statistically significant.

Table 8. Difference Between the Teachers' Perceptions and the Administrators' Perceptions of the Enhanced Career Progression System

	Mean	F stat	p-value	Interpretation
Teachers	4.16	3.6748	.05724	Not Significant
Administrators	4.60			

Table 8 illustrates the comparative perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). The data revealed that administrators recorded a higher mean score of 4.60, while teachers followed with a mean of 4.16. These figures suggested that both groups generally hold a favorable view of the system. However, with an F-statistic of 3.6748 and a p-value of .05724, the disparity between the two groups does not reach the .05 level of statistical significance.

Results indicate that while administrators seem to hold a slightly more optimistic outlook on the Enhanced Career Progression System than teachers, this disparity failed to reach statistical significance. Consequently, the marginal variation in mean scores is likely due to random sampling fluctuations rather than a fundamental divergence in perspective between the two groups. However, the p-value's proximity to the .05 threshold hints at a latent trend that might surface as significant through a more extensive sample or localized inquiry. This outcome implied that both groups largely maintain a unified perspective on the system, signaling a shared acceptance of its overarching objectives and implementation. Even so, school authorities should prioritize qualitative engagement with teachers to maintain this harmony and resolve minor classroom issues that broad statistical metrics might overlook.

The absence of a statistically significant gap between teacher and administrator perceptions validated a cohesive understanding of the system's goals, mechanics, and results among these primary stakeholders. This consistency aligns with established research suggesting that transparent communication and methodical policy execution help both educators and leaders develop synchronized views on reform efforts. Furthermore, literature on educational leadership posits that inclusive and cooperative management styles foster a mutual vocabulary between staff and administration, leading to equivalent assessments of school-wide policies and career frameworks. In environments where leadership emphasizes transparency and shared decision-making, both groups tend to view institutional reforms through a similar lens. Such participatory approaches allow teachers to grasp the logic behind policy procedures while ensuring administrators remain grounded in the day-to-day realities of the teaching profession.

Similarly, investigations into career progression models indicate that objective promotion benchmarks and explicit evaluation standards help bridge the perceptual divide regarding

professional growth. Moreover argue that high-functioning career ladders promote a collective sense of institutional integrity, particularly when performance expectations are applied consistently across all professional ranks. Beyond structural factors, contend that a strong professional culture encourages a unified stance on policy initiatives, allowing teachers and administrators to perceive growth systems in a mutually supportive way. These theoretical frameworks provide a clear rationale for why both respondent groups in this study demonstrated such comparable perceptions of the ECPS.

In summary, while administrators post a slightly higher mean score than teachers, the statistical evidence confirmed that this gap was not significant, suggesting that both groups operate with a shared understanding of the system's value and mechanics. This alignment indicates that the Department's efforts to standardize and communicate the ECPS have successfully bridged the traditional divide between classroom-level implementation and administrative oversight. Since there is no major disagreement between teachers and administrators, the system has a strong foundation for a smooth implementation and future professional growth.

Insights Obtained from The Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions on The Enhanced Career Progression System

This qualitative phase succeeded the quantitative analysis to elaborate upon and deepen the interpretation of the statistical results. By engaging selected volunteer participants through interviews, this stage yielded nuanced insights into their lived experiences and perspectives regarding the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS), clarifying patterns observed in the numerical data.

Twenty-five (25) respondents participated in this phase, a sample size aligned with the thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006), which prioritizes data richness over fixed numerical counts. Participation remained strictly voluntary, with informed consent obtained in accordance with ethical protocols. Data collection continued until thematic depth and consistent patterns emerged, signifying data sufficiency. Practical considerations, such as time constraints and participant availability for in-person interviews, also informed the final sample size.

Process of Theme Generation

Themes were developed using Thematic Analysis, specifically following the six-phase framework. This method facilitated the systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of recurring patterns within the qualitative data. The process ensured that all themes remained grounded in participant responses and reflective of shared meanings.

Phase 1: Data Familiarization

In this initial stage, the researcher undertook an intensive immersion in the dataset, repeatedly reviewing responses to the interview guide. The objective was to comprehend the breadth of meanings expressed before attempting categorization. The analysis focused on three dimensions: frequent concepts such as promotion and fairness; contrasting views, specifically the tension between "fair theory" versus "difficult practice"; and the emotional tone, capturing sentiments ranging from professional aspiration to systemic frustration.

Five dominant patterns emerged: an emphasis on merit-based growth; recognition of fairness through standards; concerns regarding documentation burdens; a need for modern leadership competencies; and varied emotional responses to systemic pressure. This phase prevented the imposition of preconceived ideas, allowing meanings to emerge organically as the foundation for subsequent coding.

The analysis started with a thorough and repeated review of the dataset to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the participants' feedback. During this stage, several recurring themes were

identified, including merit-based advancement, perceived fairness, system accessibility, professional development, and various implementation hurdles. The following excerpts collectively illustrate these foundational patterns:

- *“The most effective aspect of ECPS, is its shift from a seniority-based model to a merit and competency-based framework.”*
- *“ECPS is fair in theory, but some teachers struggle with accessing info and meeting requirements.”*
- *“It recognizes professional growth, teaching competence, and leadership skills, which motivates educators to improve their performance.”*

These statements provided early insight into both the strengths and challenges of the ECPS.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

The researcher employed open coding to distill significant statements into meaningful units, using descriptive labels that preserved participant intent. For instance, "merit" was coded as *merit-based growth*, while "transparent" was labeled *perceived fairness*. Conversely, references to "burden" were categorized as *process challenges*. Coding also identified *21st-century competencies* and *emotional responses* like "motivation" or "competition." Codes were not mutually exclusive; a single response describing the system as "motivating but overwhelming" was captured under both categories to reflect the complexity of the educators' experiences.

This phase was essential for capturing the full breadth of participant perspectives, ensuring that no qualitative nuances were lost as the data was prepared for higher-level abstraction. To achieve this, significant statements were extracted and assigned initial codes that encapsulated their core meaning. Each response was carefully segmented into smaller thematic units and labeled with descriptive codes that remained closely aligned with the participants' original language.

Examples of coded responses include:

- *“Clear career pathways that motivate teachers through continuous professional development...”* → Code: *Career clarity and motivation*
- *“Simplify and standardize evidence and documentation.”* → Code: *Documentation burden*
- *“Some teachers—especially older staff or those with limited tech access—struggle with online application...”* → Code: *Accessibility barrier*
- *“Through transparent procedures and merit-based decisions.”* → Code: *Transparency and fairness*

This step generated a comprehensive set of codes representing the full range of participant perspectives, from positive endorsements to critical feedback.

Phase 3: Categorization of Codes

The researcher examined relationships between codes, grouping them into broader clusters based on conceptual similarity. This analysis yielded six categories: *Professional Growth and Advancement*, *Fairness and Transparency*, *Accessibility and Implementation Issues*, *Process and Documentation Challenges*, *Leadership and 21st-Century Competencies*, and *Motivational and Emotional Impact*. This stage reduced data complexity while preserving nuance, ensuring categories were internally consistent and externally distinct.

During this stage, the researcher systematically compared codes to assess their conceptual relationships, ensuring that each category remained internally consistent yet externally distinct. This phase was essential for reducing data complexity while preserving the original intent, thereby facilitating the identification of overarching patterns. Consequently, the initial codes were

consolidated into broader categories based on conceptual similarities, a process that minimized redundancy and organized the data into meaningful thematic clusters.

The following responses exemplify the formation of these categories:

- *“Since there are guidelines in every strand so it is a fair and accessible opportunity for everybody.”*
- *“That the papers would be lessen also the attachment will not be burdened to teachers.”*
- *“Pair applicants with trained mentors who can guide them in portfolio preparation...”*

From these, categories such as professional growth, perceived fairness, accessibility issues, and support mechanisms were formed.

Phase 4: Theme Development

Categories were synthesized into overarching themes that addressed the primary research questions. For example, one participant noted that the system "pushes teachers to improve... but can also feel overwhelming," supporting the integration of growth and pressure into the final narrative. The resulting themes included:

1. ECPS as a Merit-Based and Growth-Oriented Professional Framework
2. Perceived Fairness Anchored in Transparency but Challenged by Implementation Gaps
3. Need for Stronger Institutional Support and Simplified Processes
4. Alignment with 21st-Century Educational Leadership Competencies
5. Motivation, Aspiration, and Professional Identity

During this stage, the researcher performed an analytical interpretation to determine how various categories converged into meaningful narratives, ensuring the themes were reliable and representative of the collective data.

Phase 5: Reviewing and Refining Themes

To ensure validity and coherence, the generated themes underwent a rigorous refinement process. This stage involved verifying that each theme was supported by sufficient data, eliminating conceptual overlaps, and revisiting original responses to ensure accurate representation. Consequently, thematic boundaries were sharpened: Theme 2 (Fairness) was adjusted to incorporate implementation gaps, reflecting the participants' tendency to associate fairness with systemic challenges. Theme 5 (Motivation) was expanded to capture its dual nature, incorporating both professional aspiration and emotional pressure, while Theme 3 (Process Challenges) was clarified to emphasize the lack of institutional support rather than mere procedural burdens.

The researcher reviewed the themes against the raw data to confirm accuracy, consistency, and representativeness, ensuring each theme was substantiated by multiple responses and remained distinct. To further validate the findings, the analysis integrated specific participant feedback, such as the observation that the system is “well-intentioned but uneven in practice.” These qualitative insights facilitated the refinement of overlapping ideas, ensuring the final themes were precisely defined and strictly aligned with the study's core objectives.

Phase 6: Defining and Reporting Themes

In the final phase, each theme was precisely defined and presented through a structured narrative. This involved assigning formal labels, explaining core conceptual meanings, and explicitly linking findings to the research questions while supporting each point with *in toto* responses. By organizing these themes into a coherent discussion, the researcher holistically captured the participants' perspectives, transforming raw analysis into a scholarly output. This process ensured transparency

through a clear connection between data and findings, while establishing credibility through direct supporting evidence.

The integration of verbatim responses preserved the authenticity of participants' voices and ensured that the findings remained empirically grounded. Through the systematic application of Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, the study demonstrated a rigorous process of distilling qualitative data into meaningful themes.

The analysis revealed that the ECPS functions as a structured, merit-based system for growth (Theme 1) and a fair, albeit imperfect, framework in practice (Theme 2). While serving as a platform for advancement, the findings indicated a significant need for process improvements and stronger institutional support (Theme 3). Furthermore, alignment with modern leadership competencies (Theme 4) is essential to ensure the system effectively shapes professional motivation and identity (Theme 5).

Ultimately, the analysis confirmed that while the ECPS provides a solid foundation for career progression, its success is inherently tied to the quality of its implementation. The themes revealed a critical disconnect: though the design is meritocratic, documentation burdens and technological barriers can impede accessibility. Consequently, the final narrative emphasizes that the system must evolve beyond a rigid set of criteria into a responsive mechanism capable of adapting to 21st-century leadership needs and the shifting professional aspirations of educators. This synthesis ensures that the final output is a credible, scholarly reflection of how the ECPS influences the teaching force.

These findings emphasized the multi-dimensional nature of the ECPS, highlighting that its overall effectiveness is dependent not only upon its structural design but also upon the quality of its implementation, the strength of institutional support systems, and its capacity to remain responsive to the evolving professional needs of educators.

Table 9. Six-Phase Thematic Analysis Process

Phase	Phase Name	Key Activities in the Study	Outputs / Results
Phase 1	Data Familiarization	Repeated reading and immersion in responses; noted recurring ideas, contrasts, and emotional tone (e.g., motivation, frustration, fairness, difficulty)	Initial patterns identified (e.g., merit-based growth, fairness, process challenges, competencies, motivation)
Phase 2	Generating Initial Codes	Conducted open coding by labeling meaningful units from responses; codes remained data-driven and non-exclusive	Initial codes such as merit-based growth, perceived fairness, process challenges, 21st-century competencies, emotional responses
Phase 3	Categorization of Codes	Grouped related codes into broader conceptual categories based on similarity and relationships	Categories formed: Professional Growth, Fairness & Transparency, Accessibility Issues, Process Challenges, Leadership Competencies, Motivational Impact
Phase 4	Theme Development	Synthesized categories into overarching themes that interpret patterns and answer research questions	Five major themes developed (e.g., ECPS as merit-based framework; fairness with implementation gaps; need for support; leadership alignment; motivation & identity)
Phase 5	Reviewing and Refining Themes	Validated themes against data; ensured coherence, distinction, and sufficient supporting	Refined themes (e.g., fairness expanded to include gaps; motivation includes pressure;

		evidence; refined definitions	process linked to institutional support)
Phase 6	Defining and Reporting Themes	Clearly defined, named, and presented themes; linked to research questions; supported with verbatim responses	Final thematic narrative with clearly defined themes, supported by participant quotes and aligned with study objectives

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings on the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS)

Within this convergent-parallel framework, quantitative and qualitative strands were collected and examined separately, then synthesized to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). While the quantitative data identified broad, positive trends via elevated mean scores, the qualitative evidence simultaneously explored the underlying rationale by documenting detailed, lived experiences. Fusing these two distinct datasets side-by-side substantiated the statistical patterns and yielded a more nuanced, contextualized understanding of the system's operational dynamics in actual practice.

The synthesis of these dual datasets was actualized using a Joint Display, an advanced meta-inference instrument that enables a direct dialogue between numerical patterns and narrative substance. By matching the high survey scores against specific themes, like career growth, unfair gaps in implementation, and paperwork headaches, one could see exactly where the data agreed or disagreed. This integration ensured that the research findings were both scientifically reliable and deeply connected to the actual experiences of those within the school system. Ultimately, this approach closed the gap between how the policy is designed and how it works in real life. The result is a conclusion that values both the statistical evidence and the personal perspectives of the educators involved.

Table 10. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Research Dimension	Quantitative Findings (Statistical Trends)	Qualitative Findings (Thematic Insights)	Nature of Integration
Teacher Motivation	Grand Mean: 4.33 (Strongly Agree)	Theme: Motivational Instrument	Convergence: Statistical affirmation of motivation is validated by narratives of professional identity and the 'aspiration for upward mobility.'
	High scores in setting higher goals (4.39) and feeling valued or recognized (4.27).	Participants described the ECPS as a shift from seniority to merit, fostering a 'long-term vision' for their careers.	
Instructional Competence	Grand Mean: 4.28 (Strongly Agree)	Theme: Professional Validation	Convergence: High mean scores on competence align with qualitative descriptions of the system as an 'evidence-based professional validation.'
	Both groups agree it supports 21st-century approaches and professional growth.	Participants emphasized that advancement is now anchored in 'demonstrated teaching quality' rather than just tenure.	
Leadership Capacity	Grand Mean: 4.36 (Strongly Agree)	Theme: Multi-pathway Growth	Convergence with Nuance: While both agree on the benefit, the higher admin mean suggests they see
	Administrators (4.63) scored this	Descriptions of a 'defined ladder' for promotion that	

	significantly higher than teachers (4.09).	allows teachers to lead without leaving the classroom.	more leadership potential in the system than teachers currently feel.
	Grand Mean: 3.16 (Neutral)	Theme: Implementation Gaps	Expansion: The neutral statistical score hides specific qualitative 'pain points' regarding technological equity and documentary burden.
Implementation Challenges	Teachers identified 'Heavy Documentation' (3.88) and 'Workload' (3.68) as the primary hurdles.	Interviews revealed 'accessibility barriers,' specifically technological struggles for older staff and uneven info dissemination.	
	Non-Significant Difference (p = .057)	Theme: Merit-Based vs. Practice	Divergence: Statistics show a shared view of fairness, but qualitative data reveals a perceived 'gap' between policy theory and actual practice.
System Fairness	No statistical difference between teacher and admin perceptions of the policy.	Trust in CSC standards and 'meritocracy,' but concerns over 'prioritizing those about to retire.'	

Table 10 presented the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings using a convergent-parallel approach. The results showed that the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) was widely viewed as a system based on merit and professional growth. There was a strong agreement between the statistical data and the personal interviews, especially regarding how the system improves teacher motivation and teaching skills. The high "Strongly Agree" ratings for professional growth were supported by teacher stories describing a clear shift from promotions based on years of service to advancement based on actual skills.

However, the qualitative data provided more detail on the "Neutral" survey scores concerning implementation challenges. The interviews highlighted practical barriers, such as heavy paperwork and technology issues. While these problems appeared less severe in the statistics, they remain a significant challenge, particularly for older educators.

A slight difference emerged regarding fairness. Although the statistics suggested most people saw the policy as fair, the interview insights revealed concerns that the system was not always applied evenly. Some teachers felt that staff nearing retirement were sometimes prioritized over younger candidates who had already met the merit requirements.

In conclusion, while the statistics confirmed that the ECPS was a successful policy for modern teaching and leadership, the qualitative findings validated that its long-term success depends on closing the gap between the policy's design and the daily realities of school paperwork and equal access to technology.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter provides a summary of the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It combines the statistical results regarding teachers' and administrators' views on the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) with personal interview insights that help explain the data. The final conclusions and recommendations are based on evidence gathered from both parts of the research process.

Summary of Findings

The study used a convergent-parallel mixed-methods design to examine how teachers and administrators perceive the ECPS and to identify areas for improvement. These findings come from analyzing survey data and interview stories separately and then merging them to get a complete, multi-dimensional view of the system.

For the profile of the respondents, most participants were 34 years old or younger, showing that the teaching workforce in this study is relatively young. Most held Teacher I and Teacher III positions, suggesting they are in the early to middle stages of their careers. The group was almost equally split between elementary and secondary schools, providing a balanced representation of both levels of education.

In terms on the objectives and principles of the Enhanced Career Progression System, both teachers and administrators strongly agreed that the system's goals are clearly explained and based on fairness, transparency, and merit. Administrators gave slightly higher ratings, showing strong confidence in the system's purpose.

As for the perceptions on the benefits and opportunities provided by the ECPS, both groups had favorable views of the system. Teachers had a high average score (4.18), while administrators had an even higher average (4.60). These results show that respondents see the ECPS as a fair system that uses clear standards to support professional growth and evidence-based evaluations.

When it comes to the perceived benefits of the ECPS, participants strongly agreed that the ECPS provides major benefits for motivation, teaching skills, and leadership. With an overall high score of 4.47, the data suggests that the system encourages educators to set higher goals, continue their training, and take on leadership roles in their schools.

When asked about implementation problems, both groups gave "Neutral" scores (3.36 for teachers and 2.96 for administrators). While they didn't see these issues as total deal-breakers, teachers did point out specific concerns like heavy paperwork, lack of time, and limited resources. This suggests a need for better administrative support and more consistent rules across different schools.

Regarding the differences in perceptions based on profile variables, the statistical analysis showed no major differences in how people viewed the system based on their age, rank, or school type. Even though administrators gave slightly higher scores than teachers, the difference was not statistically significant. This indicates that the ECPS is viewed consistently by almost everyone, regardless of their background.

The qualitative phase of the study identified five core themes that explain how educators experience the career progression system in practice. First, the system is recognized as a merit-based growth framework, where advancement is increasingly determined by professional skills and competencies rather than just years of service. While the policy is designed to be transparent, a second theme, fairness versus practice, highlights a disconnection between the system's goals and how it is actually carried out on the ground. This leads to a third theme, the need for support, as educators expressed a strong desire for more effective mentoring and a reduction in burdensome paperwork. Furthermore, there is a clear demand for modern skills to be integrated into the system, particularly focusing on digital literacy and innovative teaching methods. Ultimately, the ECPS serves as a vital component of professional identity, acting as a primary driver for motivation by offering teachers a meaningful sense of purpose and a stable career path for the future.

By merging the numbers and the stories, the study confirmed that the ECPS is fundamentally seen as a merit-based framework. High survey scores for motivation matched the interview stories describing a "paradigm shift" toward skill-based promotions. However, the interviews explained the "Neutral" survey scores by revealing "grassroots" barriers, like heavy paperwork and technology issues, that the numbers alone didn't fully show.

While the statistics confirmed everyone saw the system as fair, the interviews revealed a slight difference in opinion regarding the gap between policy theory and real-world practice. Ultimately, while the ECPS is a successful model for modern leadership, its long-term success depends on fixing these daily operational gaps and ensuring everyone has equal access to technology.

Output of The Study

Enhancing Teacher Development and Career Advancement: Policy Recommendations for The Effective Implementation of The Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS)

I. Rationale

The teaching profession is essential for educational quality and national growth. However, teachers have long faced obstacles such as promotion delays and limited opportunities for advancement. To solve this, the Department of Education introduced the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS). This system provides a clear, skill-based path for promotion, allowing teachers to move up from Teacher I to Teacher VII or into Master Teacher and Principal roles. Unlike older systems, these promotions are based on a teacher's actual skills and performance rather than waiting for an empty position to become available. This ensures that the process is fair, transparent, and rewarding for competent educators.

While the ECPS has already helped many teachers receive timely promotions, this study shows that some challenges remain. Educators still struggle with heavy paperwork, inconsistent rules between schools, and a lack of support from their institutions. These barriers can make it harder for the system to motivate teachers and improve their leadership skills.

This policy brief offers practical recommendations to strengthen the ECPS. By addressing these areas, the brief seeks to support policymakers, school leaders, and education stakeholders in creating an enabling environment where teachers can fully realize their professional potential, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and the development of 21st-century educational leadership competencies.

Objectives

This Policy Brief on the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) aims to:

1. Improve teacher development and professional growth using a clear system based on skills and performance.
2. Offer practical solutions for common problems in the system, such as heavy paperwork, high workloads, and the need for better resources.
3. Review and improve career paths, ensuring that promotions are fair, clear, and based on actual work results rather than just years of service.
4. Ensure the system matches modern leadership standards, encouraging new ideas, teamwork, and ongoing excellence among all educators.

Scheme of Implementation

1. The researcher will share the study's findings with School Heads and the Schools Division Office (SDO). This will inform them of the system's strengths and challenges while proposing specific budgets and timelines for improvements.
2. The proposed framework and policy changes will be presented to the Schools Division Superintendent. This ensures that all recommendations follow existing DepEd rules and receive the necessary institutional support.

3. All key players, including school heads, teachers, and administrative staff, are encouraged to work together to make the system successful. For the reason that the success of the program depends on the active collaboration of all stakeholders within the educational community. By fostering a culture of shared responsibility, school leaders and staff can ensure that the system is implemented effectively and that its benefits reach every level of the organization.
4. The ECPS will be carried out according to DepEd guidelines, focusing on sharing information, evaluating performance fairly, and providing training opportunities for career growth.
5. Schools and division offices will continuously check the progress of the implementation. This ensures the system stays transparent and quickly addresses any new concerns from teachers or administrators.
6. All activities, such as training sessions and promotions, will be carefully recorded through reports, photos, and attendance logs to track the system's success. By collecting formal reports, attendance data, and visual evidence, the institution can accurately measure progress, justify future resource needs, and provide proof of professional achievements.
7. Necessary materials, such as evaluation guides and mentoring manuals, will be provided to schools to help them carry out the ECPS effectively. To ensure a smooth transition, the administration will supply all schools with standardized reference materials and practical tools. These resources, including step-by-step mentoring guides and clear evaluation rubrics, are designed to help local coordinators implement the system with confidence and accuracy.

Table 11. Implementation Plan for Enhancing Teacher Development and Career Advancement through the Enhanced Career Progression System

Areas of Concern	Objectives	Proposed Activities	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget (Php)	Source of Budget	Expected Outcome	Actual Accomplishment	Remarks
1. Lack of awareness of ECPS policies and career tracks	Strengthen professional growth through structured ECPS career tracks	Conduct orientation and information dissemination workshops on ECPS policies and procedures	District Supervisors, School Principals/Head Teachers & Master Teachers	June 2026 (Pre-opening of School Year) & Last week of October 2026 (Mid-year INSET)	20,000	School MOOE & School Educational Fund (SEF)	Teachers and administrators understand career tracks and promotion criteria.	An ECPS orientation seminar was conducted, increasing teachers' and administrators' awareness of career tracks and promotion requirements.	
2. Unclear evaluation standards; inconsistent mentoring support	Promote merit-based and competency-focused teacher advancement	Develop standardized performance evaluation rubrics; implement mentoring program	District Supervisors, School Principals/Head Teachers & Master Teachers	June 2026 (Pre-opening of School Year) & Last week of	20,000	School MOOE & School Educational Fund (SEF)	Transparent, fair, and competency-based teacher evaluations.	Standardized evaluation rubrics were developed and a mentoring program was initiated to guide teachers in	

		for teachers		October 2026 (Mid-year INSET)			competency-based career advancement.	
3. Heavy documentation; inconsistent implementation of forms	Address administrative challenges and streamline processes	Simplify documentation requirements; standardize submission forms; provide digital templates	District Supervisors, School Principals/Head Teachers & Master Teachers	June 2026 (Pre-opening of School Year) & Last week of October 2026 (Mid-year INSET)	20,000	School MOOE & School Educational Fund (SEF)	Reduced workload and improved compliance with ECPS documentation	Simplified documentation guidelines and digital templates were introduced, improving the organization and submission of ECPS requirements.
4. Limited teacher exposure to digital tools and leadership training	Foster alignment with 21st-century educational leadership competencies	Integrate training on digital literacy, collaboration, innovation, and adaptive leadership	District Supervisors, School Principals/Head Teachers & Master Teachers	June 2026 (Pre-opening of School Year) & Last week of October 2026 (Mid-year INSET)	20,000	School MOOE & School Educational Fund (SEF)	Teachers equipped with skills to meet modern leadership and teaching demands	Professional development sessions on digital literacy and instructional leadership were conducted for teachers.
5. Low morale; delays in promotion and recognition	Encourage motivation, aspiration, and professional recognition	Recognize and reward exemplary performance; provide career guidance workshops; ensure timely promotions	District Supervisors, School Principals/Head Teachers & Master Teachers	June 2026 (Pre-opening of School Year) & Last week of October 2026 (Mid-year INSET)	20,000	School MOOE & School Educational Fund (SEF)	Increased teacher motivation, engagement, and career satisfaction	Recognition activities and career guidance sessions were held to motivate teachers and clarify ECPS promotion opportunities.

Proposed Focus Areas for Future Investigations:

(1) *"Professional Motivation and Institutional Support as Predictors of Teacher Advancement under the ECPS"*, (2) *"Bridging Policy and Practice: Investigating Implementation Gaps in the Enhanced Career Progression System"*, (3) *"The Impact of Administrative Processes and Resource Allocation on Educators' Engagement with ECPS"*, (4) *"Perceived Fairness, Transparency, and Career Outcomes: A Study of Teacher Experiences in the ECPS"*, (5) *"Enhancing Teacher Development: Psychological, Professional, and Contextual Factors Influencing ECPS Effectiveness"*.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the implementation of the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS):

1. To close the "operational gap" between policy and practice, the Department of Education should prioritize creating a simpler, digital process for submitting portfolios. A unified online platform for evaluations would reduce the heavy paperwork burden on teachers and ensure that a lack of technology does not stop qualified educators from moving up.
2. Since many teachers are in the early stages of their careers, school leaders should set up structured mentoring. These programs should help teachers understand the technical side of the ECPS and help them transition from classroom teaching to leadership, helping to build the same level of confidence that administrators currently feel.
3. A standardized framework for providing resources should be created to fix inconsistencies between different schools. This would ensure that all teachers, whether in elementary, secondary, or integrated schools, have the same administrative support and digital tools they need to succeed, regardless of their school's location.
4. Training should go beyond traditional teaching methods to include leadership and digital skills. By aligning these programs with the ECPS, the shift toward skill-based promotion will be supported by actual training, particularly for younger teachers planning their long-term careers.
5. To maintain trust in the system's fairness, school leaders should hold regular meetings and feedback sessions. Openly discussing concerns, such as how staff are prioritized for promotion, will ensure the system remains a credible way to motivate teachers.

Future studies should investigate the long-term impact of the ECPS on teaching quality and career growth. This research should look at factors like teacher background, school resources, and how consistently the policy is applied. This will provide a deeper understanding of how to improve the system for different educational settings.

Conclusion

The evidence from this study shows that the Enhanced Career Progression System (ECPS) marks a major change in the public school system. It shifts the focus from promoting staff based on years of service to a system based on merit and professional skills. Both the survey data and the personal interviews agree that the ECPS improves teacher motivation, teaching ability, and leadership. This is especially true for the younger workforce, who see the system as a way to build their professional identity and plan their long-term careers. However, comparing the two types of data also revealed an "operational gap" that could affect the system's long-term success. While the statistics show the system is fair and transparent, the interviews reveal practical struggles, such as heavy paperwork and limited access to technology at the school level. This creates a disconnection: while administrators view the ECPS as a clear path for advancement, many teachers are hesitant to

participate because of the administrative workload. Given these points, the ECPS is a vital tool for modernizing teaching careers and promoting shared leadership. However, for it to be fully effective, the focus must move beyond just the design of the policy to the actual realities of school life. To improve the system, the government should simplify administrative tasks and ensure that technology is available to everyone. This will ensure that the move toward a merit-based system is not only successful on paper but also practical and accessible for all educators.

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