

Teachers' Aspirations toward Career Advancement

Charmaine B. Macapagal¹, Jhonner D. Ricafort²

Sorsogon State University Graduate School, Sorsogon City, Philippines

ABSTRACT:

This study determined the profile of teachers and their level of aspirations toward career advancement. The study employed the descriptive research methodology and used the purposive sampling method with the criteria of having at least 10 years of teaching experience and holding an entry-level teaching position, also known as Teacher I, to include a sample of 45 teachers from public schools located in the province of Sorsogon for the school year 2022-2023.

A survey questionnaire containing an adapted version of the Professional Engagement and Career Development Aspirations Scale by Watt and Richardson (2008) served as the primary instrument for collecting quantitative data. The collected data were processed and analyzed statistically using frequency, percentages, and the weighted mean.

The findings also revealed that the majority of public-school teachers are middle-aged, female, married, bachelor's degree holders, and have additional income from their spouses. The teachers' aspirations for career advancement, along with their planned efforts, persistence, and professional development, were very important, whereas their aspirations for leadership were moderately important.

Based on the results, it is recommended that public school teachers pursue graduate studies and obtain a degree in their chosen field and the Department of Education may provide opportunities to enhance their professional orientation and development, especially through the provision of graduate school scholarship grants. Also, empower teachers to become school leaders through series of leadership training and workshops. The action plan may be adopted and implemented by the school after further review and evaluation by the authorities. Future studies about teachers' aspirations toward career advancement may be conducted to supplement the findings in this study.

Keywords: teacher, aspirations, career advancement, public school teachers, Sorsogon, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

A key to a positive and quality life is a productive career. The intent for a work-life balance is constant, and so does career opportunities. People's career choices significantly impact human development, so they endure processes and make wise decisions to achieve goals. It is inevitable for everyone to develop career aspirations over time. Pagayanan (2021) stated that the success of one's career in employment depends on the individual and the opportunities available in an organization.

Teaching as a career option may be influenced by personal, economic and social factors. Low, Ng, Hui, and Cai (2017) defined triggers as events, experiences, people, or environments that either activate or inhibit an individual's inner motivation to enter the teaching profession. It has been discovered that intrinsic and social utility value appear to be the "drivers" of teaching decisions, along with a sense of compatibility of personal attributes with the nature of teaching. Educational experiences also aid in stimulating such an interest. Nager and Shapiro (2007) emphasize the importance of continuing to grow as a person and as a professional. To meet professional demands, teachers may take the initiative to develop the expertise needed to advance as a professional.

The Department of Education in the Philippines recognized the importance of professional standards in the continuing professional development and advancement of teachers based on the principle of lifelong learning. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) were used to ensure that teachers are properly equipped to effectively implement the K to 12 Program and utilized it for the selection and promotion of teachers based on the set of standards. Teachers may choose the alternative career lines in school administration or classroom teaching as stated in Chapter 6 Career Progression System for Public School Teachers. The base of the career system is the classroom teacher (Teacher I, II, and III), with the highest

classroom teaching position being Master Teacher (I, II, III, and IV). The teacher can be promoted to administrative career lines such as Head Teacher and Principal Positions.

Zamir (2018) cited the importance of career management and professional development for both individuals and organizations. She also discussed the stages of professional development, which refer to long-term processes throughout teachers' professional lives. Thus, Tantawy (2020), teachers appear to have varying preferences for opportunities throughout their career cycles. It is also stated that teachers are not a homogeneous group, but rather represent a wide range of perspectives, experience, expertise, and openness to new ideas, as well as the potential for leadership roles.

Purposes of Research

The study determined the level of career advancement aspirations among public school teachers in the Province of Sorsogon. Hence, this study specifically tackles the [1] profile of public school teachers; [2] level of aspirations of teachers toward career advancement when grouped according to their profile along planned effort, persistence, professional development and leadership; [3] action plan.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The general objective of the study is to determine the teachers' aspirations toward career advancement in the province of Sorsogon for the school year 2022-2023. This study used the descriptive-survey method of research, using a survey questionnaire with an adopted scale as an instrument.

The descriptive research design is mainly concerned with determining the research topic. Furthermore, a quantitative research method was used to quantify the study's results based on the existing attitudes, behaviors, and conditions of the study's respondents regarding some variable indicators.

Instrument

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The respondents' profile data were collected and were limited to their age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, and other sources of income. The survey questionnaire adopted the Professional Engagement and Career Development Aspirations Scale by Watt and Richardson (2008). The scale had four dimensions: planned effort (4 items), persistence (4 items), professional development (5 items), and leadership (4 items); the responses ranged from 5 (extremely important) to 1 (not at all important). The final form of the instrument consisted of two parts: the first part was concerned with the profile of public school teachers; the second included the PECDA Scale.

Participant, Sampling Procedures, and Ethical Consideration

The samples of the study were public school teachers in the Province of Sorsogon in Bicol Region. The respondents were identified through purposive sampling and only included participants who met the following criteria: (a) The participant has held an entry-level position (Teacher I) in the Department of Education for 10 years or more; (b) The participant agreed to participate regarding their personal experiences and viewpoints. The total respondents consisted of 45 public school teachers from different workstations located in fourteen municipalities and one city in the province who underwent data-gathering procedures conducted under the purposive sampling method. As part of research ethics, responses of the public school teachers were kept confidential.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The researcher asked permission from the Division Office to conduct the study, which involved public elementary and secondary teachers in the schools within their jurisdiction. Upon approval, the researcher started the distribution of the printed survey questionnaire to the respondents.

The researcher built a survey questionnaire using Google Forms and disseminated the link to respondents in remote places. This facilitated the data collection quick and accessible for both parties. The confidentiality clause was specified in a letter attached to the survey forms, which was also reflected on Google Forms distributed online.

The retrieval rate is 100 percent and the information from the survey questionnaire was collated, tallied, and combined. It was then analyzed and using the average weighted mean, the scores were interpreted with the following scale and description:

Scale	Description
4.50-5.00	Extremely Important (EI)
3.50-4.49	Very Important (VI)
2.50-3.49	Moderately Important (MI)
1.50-2.49	Slightly Important (SI)
1.00-1.49	Not at All Important (NAAI)

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Public School Teachers

This section presents the data of public school teachers who were purposively sampled for the study. The data was obtained from survey questionnaires collected from various workstations situated in fourteen municipalities and one city in the province of Sorsogon during the SY 2022-2023.

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents

Variables	f (n=45)	%
Age		
35 and below	4	9
36-40	12	27
41 and above	29	64
Sex		
Male	14	31
Female	31	69
Civil Status		
Single	10	22
Married	29	64
Solo Parent	6	14
Educational Attainment		
Master's Degree Units	20	44
Bachelor's Degree	25	56
Other Source of Income		
Spouse's Salary and Wages	22	49
Business	12	27
None	11	24

The most important details in this text are the age of public school teachers in the Province of Sorsogon. In terms of age, 4 public school teachers are under the age of 35 (9%), 12 are between the ages of 36 and 40 (27%), and 29 are ages 41 and above (64%). In terms of sex, 31 public school teachers (69% are female) and 14 are male (31%). In terms of civil status, 64% are married, 22% are single, and a minority of 6, or 14%, are solo parents. In terms of educational attainment, 20 respondents (44%) hold master's degree units, while the remaining 25 (56%) hold baccalaureate degrees. In terms of additional sources of income, 49% have their spouse's salary, 27% have businesses that also provide financial support, and the remaining 24% have no other sources of income aside from their salaries as public school teachers.

In summary, the 45 public school teachers convey the following characteristics: 64% are at least 41 years old, 69% are female, and 64% are married. 56% have a bachelor's degree, and 49% report their spouse's salary and compensation as other sources of income.

Teachers' Level of Aspirations toward Career Advancement

Table 2.A Level of Career Advancement of Teachers According to Profile on Planned Effort			
Variables	Highest Weighted Mean Average	Average Score	Verbal Description
Age	36 To 40 Years of Age	4.36	Very Important
Sex	Female	4.16	Very Important
Civil Status	Married	4.30	Very Important
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree Holder	4.23	Very Important
Other Sources of Income	No Other Sources of Income	4.33	Very Important

The study found that the age group ranging from 36 to 40 years had the highest average weighted mean score of 4.36, while the female group had the highest weighted mean average of 4.16, while the married teachers had an average weighted mean of 4.30. Those with bachelor's degrees had the highest average weighted mean of

4.23, while those with no other sources of income had a weighted mean of 4.33. The teachers' planned efforts were further described as very important. In summary, teachers' planned efforts were very important to female teachers aged between 36 and 40 who were married, had a bachelor's degree, and had no other sources of income.

Suryani (2018) found that individuals who have been in an organization for years would willingly sacrifice their life to meet the organization's objective, and older people would prefer staying in the organization than moving to a new place due to the requirement in a new job. Public school teachers' passion for their jobs is still evident, and they want to keep striving even as they age.

The teaching profession is mostly dominated by women, with 82% of public elementary teachers (Deri and Janer, 2020) and 69% of secondary public school teachers in Sorsogon are female (Flora, Renovalles, Janer, & Deri, 2021). The same authors mentioned that men are more interested in the administrative role, with 75% of school principals being male. Jena (2015) also found that marital status is a consistent predictor of organizational commitment, as married people have more family responsibilities and require more stability and security in their jobs. This makes them more likely to be committed to their current organization than their unmarried counterparts.

Artino (2012) and Liu, Cheng, Hu, Pan, and Zhao (2020) found that self-efficacy affects an individual's choice of activities, effort, and persistence. High self-efficacy increases positive task result expectancy and decreases negative task process experiences, preventing procrastination. Teachers' current level of education demonstrates a low level of self-efficacy, indicating they do not intend to perform both tasks simultaneously and would rather maintain their current working status and condition.

This study reveals that teachers who maintain their salary as the main source of their income have a higher level of planned effort toward teaching as a career compared to other groups with added financial support. This behavior may be associated with sustainable commitment, according to Putra & Masdupi (2019). This pertains to the level of organizational attachment due to the costs they incur if they quit the organization. On the other hand, those teachers with other sources of income may demonstrate affective commitment, which is developed through the encouragement of comfort, security, and other perceived benefits, such as from their spouses' salaries and businesses of their own.

Variables	Highest Weighted Mean Average	Average Score	Verbal Description
Age	41 years old and older	4.28	Very Important
Sex	Female	4.19	Very Important
Civil Status	Single	4.38	Very Important
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree Holder	4.38	Very Important
Other Sources of Income	No Other Sources Of Income	4.52	Very Important

The study found that teachers aged 41 years or older had the highest level of persistence, with a weighted mean score of 4.28. Female teachers had a score of 4.19, while single teachers had the highest score of 4.38. Bachelor's degree teachers had the highest weighted mean average of 4.38, while teachers with no other source of income scored the highest, with a score of 4.52. The teachers' persistence was further described as very important. In summary, teachers' persistence was very important to 41-year-old and older female teachers who were single, had a bachelor's degree, and had no other sources of income.

Wheatley (2002) and Rahida Aini, Rozita, and Zakaria (2018) both agree that teacher age is an important factor in teacher persistence. Working hard is not the only component of teacher persistence, but it is necessary. Additionally, older teachers are effective teachers because they are willing to learn new skills and are eager to increase the quality of learning and teaching. They are more experienced and have been teaching for a longer period of time, which improves the effectiveness of their teaching method.

Wheatley (2002) noted that the majority of research definitions of teacher persistence do not refer to the act of teaching itself, but rather to teachers remaining in the profession. Female teachers exhibited a high level of persistence, as they have been tenured for a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 31 years. However, when examining the current status, female teachers have not given much attention to their career advancement. As a result, female teachers pursued teaching as a career with tenacity, as evidenced by their constant enthusiasm, determination, and willingness to be long-term classroom teachers despite the possibility of career stagnation.

Watt & Richardson (2007) found that individuals' consideration of tasks as important is subjective in terms of their personal goals. Single teachers appear to be more persistent than others because they are at a stage in their careers where they need to establish routines and mastery in teaching. Despite the fact that such

activities require more time and perseverance, single teachers may be able to manage because they are not time-constrained like teachers who have other family obligations in addition to work. It is assumed that other work conditions, such as income and outside-of-work goals, were achievable on their level, causing them to focus on dealing with work-related conditions. As a result, single teachers have a higher level of persistence than others.

Grit and educational attainment were found to be positively correlated in a journal article by Fabelico and Afalla (2020). This suggests that the higher the educational attainment, the more serious the teacher is about showing perseverance and enthusiasm in their teaching career. However, teachers who did not apply to graduate programs throughout their longer years of service but were able to focus on their actual teaching duties and responsibilities, resulted in high scores on their level of persistence. Their behavior in not obtaining graduate programs does not necessarily imply that they do not give equal enthusiasm and effort to their teaching career, but may have different perspectives on it, such as allowing themselves to explore their perceived career path in classroom teaching and mastering skills that will also sustain them in their years of teaching. As a result, they have little chances of seeking advance teaching positions since educational advancement is always on line.

According to Ameliawati and Setiyani (2018), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) shows that a person's beliefs about something will affect one's behavior. In this case, teachers who focus solely on their own income appear to be more likely to stay in their teaching jobs because they may regard it as their primary source of income for day-to-day living and survival. Their financial experiences may have caused them to act and keep such a level of persistence at work.

Variables	Highest Weighted Mean Average	Average Score	Verbal Description
Age	36 To 40 Years of Age	4.13	Very Important
Sex	Male	4.04	Very Important
Civil Status	Single	4.02	Very Important
Educational Attainment	Master's Degree Unit Earner	4.03	Very Important
Other Sources of Income	No Other Sources of Income	4.05	Very Important

The study found that teachers aged between 36 and 40 had the highest level of professional development, with an average weighted mean score of 4.13. Male teachers had a greater inclination towards professional development activities, with a score of 4.04. Single teachers received the highest score of 4.02, while those with earned units toward a master's degree scored the highest at 4.03. Teachers with no other sources of income received the highest score of 4.05. The teachers' professional development was further described as very important. In summary, teachers' professional development was very important to male teachers aged between 36 and 40 who were single, were master's degree unit earners, and had no other sources of income.

Middle-aged teachers are more interested in professional development than their younger and older counterparts, as they have the time, money, and opportunities to reach their goals. This may be due to their already established working conditions and financial resources, making it easier and more efficient to plan for professional development.

Male teachers outperformed female teachers in this study due to a greater need for pedagogical competencies and curriculum knowledge. According to Yuner (2022), there are also two barriers to professional development that may relate to an individual's civil status: being too expensive and not having time due to family responsibilities. Single teachers were more enthusiastic about professional development due to the availability of time and resources required to sustain programs. Single teachers are more likely to create a work-life balance and may have engaged in graduate school programs, attended training and seminars outside of school, and been involved in new initiatives and publications.

This study demonstrates that teachers' orientation towards professional development is valued, but it may not always involve advanced education. It may involve activities such as in-service training, learning action cells, focused-group discussions, or short training programs available in their school or attainable within a short time frame. Teachers with no other source of income were more enthusiastic about professional development, but this may not always involve post-graduate study. This group may have chosen to fulfill their professional development requirements through the organization's initiative, but this may have limited their opportunities.

Variables	Highest Weighted Mean Average	Average Score	Verbal Description
Age	36 To 40 Years of Age	2.63	Moderately Important
Sex	Male	2.77	Moderately Important
Civil Status	Single	2.53	Moderately Important
Educational Attainment	Master's Degree Unit Earner	2.45	Slightly Important
Other Sources of Income	No Other Sources of Income	2.68	Moderately Important

The study found that teachers aged between 36 and 40 had the highest level of leadership aspirations, with an average weighted mean score of 2.63. Male teachers had the highest score of 2.77, while single teachers had the highest score of 2.53. Teachers who earned master's degree units had the highest score of 2.45, while those with no other source of income had an average weighted mean score of 2.68. The teachers' leadership was further described as moderately important. In summary, teachers' leadership aspirations were moderately important to male teachers aged between 36 and 40 who were single, were master's degree unit earners, and had no other sources of income.

Newton, Riveros, & DaCosta (2014) found that fewer teachers are considering becoming leaders. Williams & Morey (2018) found that age impacts an individual's tendency to pursue school administrative positions, with both younger and older individuals less likely to apply than middle-aged individuals. It was found that the length of teaching experience appeared to affect career aspirations, as teachers with less than 5 years of experience were more likely to aspire to the role of principal, while those with more than 10 years of experience were more likely to want to remain in the classroom. This may be true in the case of the participants in this study, regardless of age, as they have all been in the teaching service for ten years and some are nearing retirement.

Williams and Morey (2018) found that the majority of female teachers had never applied for a school leadership position and had no plans to do so in the future. Coleman (2003) found that even though the number of women in leadership roles may have been increasing, leadership is still associated with men. Women have different experiences with leadership, such as being aware of stereotypes and sexism. The role of head teacher appears to have serious implications for women's family lives, but both men's and women's head teachers have similar self-perceptions of their management and leadership styles. According to statistics, the majority of school principals are men, implying that more men than women become administrators (Flora, Renovalles, Janer, and Deri, 2021).

Williams and Morey (2018) found that five factors influenced the refusal to apply for leadership positions identified by all hierarchical levels, two of which are related to civil status: the perceived disruption to preferred family circumstances and the perception that leadership does not allow for appropriate work-life balance. Single teachers considered themselves for possible school leadership positions, but the level of importance is only marginal.

Recent studies by Deri and Janer (2020) found that many elementary teachers in Sorsogon have not pursued advanced education, and only a few have engaged in obtaining master's degree units. Flora, Renovalles, Janer, and Deri (2021) found that 61% of teachers have master's degree units, 30.3% still hold their baccalaureate degree, and only 9.7% are holders of advanced degrees. It was concluded that 90% of the teachers did not pursue advanced studies, and that time and financial management skills are essential for getting advanced degrees. Only a small percentage of teachers who aim for a higher position in their careers and are goal oriented can make schooling possible.

According to Williams and Morey (2018), remuneration and four other factors are identified as potential willingness factors to apply for school leadership positions. Remuneration is perceived to match the responsibility of the school leadership position. However, teachers' perspectives about becoming school leaders are not influenced by their financial circumstances, and there are minimal reasons for them to undertake such an endeavor. In the Philippines, it may be perceived as an increase in responsibility that is not proportional to the gain. Additionally, the organization's lack of support, such as providing necessary leadership training, is not often discussed. This scenario may have discouraged teachers from seeking professional progression due to a variety of factors, including personal finances. Even in this study, those who have no other sources of income appeared to place moderate importance on leadership.

Action Plan

The findings of the study highlighted the level of career advancement aspirations among teachers. The current study acknowledges the need for school-based career intervention programs with a focus on teachers' planned effort, persistence, professional development, leadership, and financial literacy. On the basis of this

premise, the researcher proposes an action plan to assist public school teachers in achieving their career advancement aspirations, preventing career stagnation among the teaching workforce through school-based intervention programs, and subsequently enhancing teachers' well-being.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study determined the level of career advancement aspirations among public school teachers in the Province of Sorsogon while remaining in an entry-level teaching position for at least ten years throughout their service.

Public school teachers are typically middle-aged, female, married, bachelor's degree holders, and have additional income from their spouses. It is recommended that they pursue graduate studies and obtain a degree in their chosen field for their personal and professional development.

The teachers' level of aspirations towards career advancement was grouped according to profile, with planned efforts being very important for female teachers aged 36-40 married with a bachelor's degree and no other sources of income, and persistence being very important for 41-year-olds and older single teachers with a bachelor's degree and no other sources of income. Teachers' professional development and leadership aspirations were very important to male teachers aged 36-40 who were single, earned a master's degree, and had no other sources of income. Leadership aspirations were moderately important. It is recommended that the Department of Education may promote teachers' career advancement by providing a variety of opportunities to enhance their professional orientation and development, especially through the provision of graduate school scholarship grants. Also, empower teachers to become school leaders through series of leadership training and workshops.

The action plan may be adopted and implemented by the school after further review and evaluation by the authorities. Future studies about teachers' aspirations toward career advancement may be conducted to supplement the findings in this study.

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Charmaine B. Macapagal¹
Sorsogon State University Graduate School, Sorsogon City, Philippines