

JOYS AND PAINS OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SECONDARY TEACHERS IN PROMOTION APPLICATION

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Abstract

Promotions for teachers within the Department of Education (DepEd) encounter obstacles and issues, as securing promotion opportunities can be competitive since numerous qualified teachers vie for limited positions, particularly in more attractive locations or higher ranks. The scarcity of available positions intensifies the competition among qualified teachers. This study identifies the experiences of junior high school teachers at Koronadal National Comprehensive High School (KNCHS-JHS) in seeking promotion. Using Transcendental Phenomenological Research and interviews, a thematic analysis reveals that continuous career progression through training and additional qualifications is important in the process. Fair and competitive salaries motivate teachers to seek promotions, while fairness, transparency, and equal opportunities in the promotion process are also essential. School administrators and colleagues play crucial roles in providing support and encouragement for promotion. The study recommends the DepEd ensure accountability, transparency, skill enhancement opportunities, supportive work environment, and teachers' decision-making empowerment for promotion.

Keywords: Junior High School Teachers, Promotion, Job Satisfaction, Experiences, Obstacles and Issues.

Introduction

The effectiveness of teaching and the preparation of educators are crucial elements in attaining educational objectives, improving institutions, and ensuring overall educational success. To accomplish this, teachers should develop skills like pedagogical expertise, subject knowledge, and technological proficiency through ongoing education, training, and practical experience.

Promotions are the advancement of a position with more significant challenges, more responsibility, and more authority than in a previous job. Promotions usually include pay increases to be promoted entails not only climbing to higher ranks but also a higher salary; thus, promotion will not only boost the morale of the employees but will also help their economic needs (Noe et al., 2015).

In the Philippines, the recent process of teacher training in the DepEd is complex and dynamic. DepEd Order No. 66, issued in 2007, underscores the importance of clear guidelines for appointing and promoting various personnel within the DepEd. These guidelines apply to most teaching roles, excluding master teachers and senior high school teachers, non-teaching, and teaching-related positions, excluding school head positions.

Moreover, the progress of teachers' careers is impeded by the slow handling of promotion requests, the imposition of a multitude of prerequisites, and specific constraints (Tinio, 2018). Unfortunately, some teachers do not want promotion and are just contented with their current promotion because they believe that being promoted means too much work and responsibilities. With this, a thorough evaluation of various factors must be done, including one's skills, performance, and additional considerations such as performance, qualifications, and training background.

With these issues and concerns, the researcher aims to study the joys and pains being experienced by KNCHS-JHS teachers when it comes to career advancement and promotion experiences.

This study has far-reaching implications for various stakeholders in the education sector, from policymakers and administrators to teachers and researchers, as it sheds light on the intricate dynamics of teacher job satisfaction and promotion.

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Research Questions

This study seeks to identify the joys and pains faced by teachers in public schools and answer the central research question, *"What are the experiences of public-school teachers in applying for promotion?"* It shall specifically address the following sub-questions: (a) What are the lived experiences of junior high school secondary teachers in their application for teaching promotion at the DepEd? (b) How do junior high school secondary teachers describe the contexts of their lived experiences in their application for teaching promotion at the DepEd? (c) What are the views of junior high school secondary teachers in their application for teaching promotion at the DepEd?

Methodology

The study utilized the Transcendental Phenomenological methodology to understand teachers' experiences related to promotions in teaching. This was conducted at Koronadal National Comprehensive High School-Junior High School (KNCHS-JHS), Koronadal City, South Cotabato. Through purposive sampling, three (3) KNCHS-JHS teachers were identified as the participants of the study. After obtaining the approval to conduct interviews, face-to-face interviews were scheduled and an interview protocol was provided for the key informants, which served as the consent for data gathering. The sessions were recorded with the participant's permission and ethical considerations were strictly followed during data-gathering. The Thematic analysis was also employed in local studies in the Philippines (Protacio, 2023). It began with getting acquainted with the data, generating preliminary codes and themes (initial themes), identifying themes (clustered themes), reviewing themes, defining and labeling themes (relevant themes), and producing the report.

Results and Discussion

The experiences of junior high school teachers are characterized by fifteen (15) emerging themes, which include (a) Accomplishment of Credentials and Documents, (b) Salary as Motivation for Pursuing Promotion, (c) Satisfaction in the Current Position/Designation for Professional Growth Opportunities, (d) Mixed Emotions of Happiness and Excitement After the Promotion, (e) Success after Downfalls, (f) Positive Support and Encouragement of School Administrators and Colleagues, (g) Challenges Before the Success, (h) Personal Choice for Promotion to Achieve Compensation and Professional Growth, (i) Experiences as Contributory Factors to Better Work Performance, (j) Achievements and Competency as Facets to Promotion, (k) Contentment in Being a Classroom Teacher, (l) Fair Process and Opportunities for the Application Process, (m) Professional Growth as Factors in Application for Promotion, (n) Open and Proper Communication on Promotion-Related

Matters for Teachers, and (o) Engaging in Trainings and Seminars to Prepare for Promotions.

Theme 1. Accomplishment of Credentials and Documents

In pursuing promotion for teachers, the importance of credentials takes place. According to Parsons (2022), increasing teachers' skills contributes to a teacher applicant's confidence to show credibility to the DepEd. Participant 1 (P1) shared, "I focused on strengthening my credentials, to get ready for the application. So, this required getting more qualifications. I go to training sessions and workshops, making sure my teaching portfolio showcases my accomplishments." P2 added, "Credentials, accomplishments, documents you had to include. Comply all the qualifications, to be included in the ranking."

Theme 2. Salary as Motivation for Pursuing Promotion

According to Thompson (2021), as cited by Mencias-Tabernilla (2023), teachers are overloaded with work, yet underpaid. As much as teachers enjoy being teachers, they also deserve to be compensated. P3 said, "I was motivated to get myself promoted, so that I would be compensated, with works with the loads of worth."

With this thorough process, it is justifiable that the promoted teachers must be rewarded with higher salaries. The standards and criteria, along with the higher salary given by the DepEd for applicants for promotions, teaching will become more appealing, hence, teachers' work will be compensated (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, n.d.).

Theme 3. Satisfaction in the Current Position/Designation for Professional Growth Opportunities

In Monyamane's study in 2020, promotions, including opportunities for professional development, are significant variables in achieving job satisfaction. P1 stated, "I am happy and contented with my current position because I'm doing well, and it gives me opportunities for professional development." P3 shared, "...I am happy because the work satisfaction is achieved."

Moreover, according to Akpan (2017) as cited by Monyamane (2020), promotions are directly related to the satisfaction of teachers in their profession. Teachers will most likely perform better and have an increase in their level of job satisfaction if they have an upgrade in their positions.

Theme 4. Mixed Emotions of Happiness and Excitement After the Promotion

After the long process of promotion, teachers usually feel a mix of emotions. In the theory of well-being and PERMA workshops by the Oregon State University (n.d.), the "A" in the PERMA Model stands for 'accomplishment'. Accomplishment

makes the teacher feel proud and confident of their abilities which contributes to their overall feeling of happiness and excitement. As P2 said, “There are a lot of emotions but what topped them up is, of course, the happiness and the excitement...”

Theme 5. Success after Downfalls

According to the study of Monyamane (2020), promotions, include several challenges, like graduate school, training, research, observations, etc. P3 shared, “Although you have your papers, there is always that apprehension that you don’t rely on your papers...but if the discretionary power will be used in the ranking, you cannot do anything about it...”. Also, P2 added, “...despite all those situations that can, sometimes hinder you not to going on, we keep on going.”

Despite the challenges, they needed them, because the promotion process is also a process of learning and self-discovery of the teachers.

Theme 6. Positive Support and Encouragement of School Administrators and Colleagues.

According to Ajani (2020) as cited by Aquino, J. M., Simbre, A. & Palad, I. (2023), school administrators, principals, and teachers’ colleagues play critical roles in empowering teachers’ professional development journey by giving a sense of confidence, appreciation, and value. P1 mentioned, “...the support and guidance from school administrators and colleagues played a crucial role in influencing my decision to apply for promotion...they are the ones who are encouraging me to apply, mentored me, and shared their experiences.” And P2 added, “...they are so supportive ... from the administration to pursue the position we are applying for.”

Theme 7. Challenges Before the Success

Promotion for teachers is important, simply because these are considered driving forces for teachers to continue working hard with high productivity. But with the long process of promotion, challenges are inevitable for the teachers. P2 shared, “...it’s discouraging...there are instances that out of those conflicts, it could also bring you good things and blessings in disguise.”

Theme 8. Personal Choice for Promotion to Achieve Compensation and Professional Growth

Even after many years of teaching experience, teachers still aim to develop themselves by pursuing advancement opportunities to become a good influence in their field of profession, and to develop professionally (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). According to P2, “It’s my choice to apply for that promotion...we are after our professional growth...”

For whatever reason, the teacher applicant has his or her valid reason for having a personal choice to

accomplish and follow the guidelines to be recognized and promoted in his or her teaching career.

Theme 9. Experiences as Contributory Factors to Better Work Performance

Challenges come in various experiences which lead to either success or failure. In any profession, challenges exist. This is the common thread of all professions. In the field of work, the impact of challenges is always profound (Mesch, 2023). Shared by P1, “Positive experiences such as achievements, recognition, and a supportive work environment often contribute to increased commitment and job satisfaction.” Also, P3 shared, “There was a time that there was this disappointment...But work is work. Work goes on.”

Theme 10. Achievements and Competency as Facets to Promotion

According to Michelson (2022), successes and achievements must always be included in one’s career reviews in his or her professional development journey. In the promotion process, the hiring committee is very much interested in the background of teacher applicants, specifically achievements, to know the teacher’s contributions to their respective schools and organizations. P2 emphasized, “... the teacher should be competent, capable, and should have a lot of achievements and accomplishments in line with this work.” And P1 shared, “... include maybe the teacher’s achievement, awards, recognitions, their leadership roles, and contributions to educational innovation.”

Theme 11. Contentment in Being a Classroom Teacher

According to Rorrer & Yongmei (2018), it was determined that teachers remain as teachers mainly because they want to make a difference in the lives of their students. P3 mentioned, “I see myself as still a teacher in the classroom whose passion is always teaching the kids...my calling is really to teach. So, I will not divert to any promotion other than teaching, my heart is only for teaching...” As added by P2, “I see myself in the future as a satisfied teacher, who had undergone a lot of changes when it comes to curriculum teaching...”

As mentioned in the study of Choing, Menzies & Parameshwaran (2017), teachers will always have the passion to teach the young in their academic and personal lives.

Theme 12. Fair Process and Opportunities for the Application Process

Some teachers who have been through the promotion process of the Department of Education have experienced alleged unfair treatment during the promotion process. As recommended by P2, “...when it comes to the application process, there should be transparency, equal opportunity should be

given to all the applicants... they should follow the ranking process”.

To avoid this kind of hindrance to the teachers' motivation and growth in teaching, DepEd implemented D.O. no. 007, series of 2023, known as the Guidelines on Recruitment, Selection, and Appointment in the Department of Education, for fair assessment.

Theme 13. Professional Growth as Factors in Application for Promotion

According to Parsons (2022), professional growth is important because it opens a lot of opportunities to pursue advancements in the teaching career. P1 mentioned, “I would consider maybe professional development. So, this involves lessons learned from previous applications, changes in professional circumstances, or focus on the areas for further development...”

Moreover, as mentioned by Parsons (2022) applicants who have the initiative to pursue learning and development can impress and get the attention of the DepEd, in a way that the applicants show openness and enthusiasm for new experiences and learnings.

Theme 14. Open and Proper Communication on Promotion-Related Matters for Teachers

Communication between the school administrators and the teaching faculty is a critical factor because there is a lot of information and announcements that need to be disseminated. In terms of informing teachers regarding promotion matters, open and effective communication must be used so that interested teacher applicants are guided by the provided guidelines by the DepEd and other school matters. As stated by P1, “...creating open communication channels, and involve teachers and decision-making process related to promotions.” P3 shared, “...there must be proper communication on what the teacher needs to do.”

Theme 15. Engaging in Training and Seminars to Prepare for Promotions

Training provides continuous education that can enhance teachers' credentials and skills that they can utilize in their continuing professional development. P1 stated, “...I will attend more seminars and trainings.” As integral for promotion preparation.

According to the D.O. 007 s. 2023, teachers' involvement in training and seminars is one of the most important components to consider in the process of promotion.

Conclusion

The study emphasizes the importance of continuous career progression, professional development, and skill enhancement among teachers. The role of fair

and competitive salaries in motivating teachers to seek advancement with promotions provides a sense of being compensated for all the loads of work. Moreover, school administrators and colleagues are highlighted as crucial sources of support and encouragement for teachers considering promotion. Teachers' experiences in seeking promotions impact their dedication and job satisfaction wherein their achievements play a significant role in the promotion process. Hence, this provides a foundation for proposing improvements to the recruitment and selection services provided by the personnel unit of DepEd.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

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