

## **Filipino Teachers' Aspiration on their Personal and Professional Development**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explored the personal and professional aspirations of selected Filipino public school teachers and how they plan to attain them. The teachers' responses were used to craft a Learning Action Cell (LAC) Program to help school heads help their teachers with their personal and professional development. The study used a qualitative method through a focus group discussion with six public school teachers in the Philippines. They agreed that pursuing a higher degree is necessary for one to be promoted to a higher rank at work and to gain financial improvement. They aim to further improve their teaching practices to ameliorate their students' academic performance and boost their school performance in terms of planning and implementation of their programs which they see as a great way to develop their relationship with their stakeholders. The researchers developed a Learning Action Cell (LAC) Plan which consists of three phases, namely: pre-implementation, implementation, and post implementation wherein they discuss and help school heads help their teachers with their aspirations mentioned in the study.

Keywords: Filipino Teachers; Aspirations; Personal and Professional Development; Learning Action Plan

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching is a profession that creates another profession. It is also an important contributor to the success of everyone's life. The teacher has the capacity to inspire and mold the youth for nation-building. It is imperative that we give all the necessary support for all the teachers. One way of giving support is through empowerment. To empower our teachers, we need to look first for their welfare, beliefs, longings, perspective and more importantly their aspirations and dreams for their professional and personal life. As reiterated in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, job satisfaction is based on needs fulfillment both material and non-material. Maslow argued that motivation is a function of the five basic needs, namely 1) physiological 2) security 3) social (affiliation) 4) esteem and 5) self-actualization (Mukhtar et. al., 2017). We need to look for their aspirations for their personal and professional lives in order to know if they are satisfied with what they have now and so that we can help them achieve their aspirations.

Teachers being the important human resource in schools must be given enough importance and support. They must have the authority to optimize their performance so that they can achieve their maximal production from the moment they are hired (Omebe, 2014). Moreover, there are

instances when teachers retire from their position without being promoted or recognized. Promotion is imperative to any individual because it gives a sense of fulfillment as it is accompanied with an increase in compensation or salary. Although promotion gives teachers more responsibilities, it also makes them more empowered and valued. According to Imran et al. (2014), the recognition of employees is a powerful motivational strategy that enhances employees' efforts toward the achievement of company goals and objectives and has a significant positive link with the performance of the employees (Amoatema and Kyeremeh, 2016; Rahim & Daud, 2013). Rewards and recognition be intrinsic or extrinsic rewards will boost confidence to teachers. It will give them a sense of accomplishment and pride that makes them work more efficiently and effectively as a teacher. Hence this study would like to find out the teachers personal and professional aspirations and what programs can be developed to help the teachers achieve their goals.

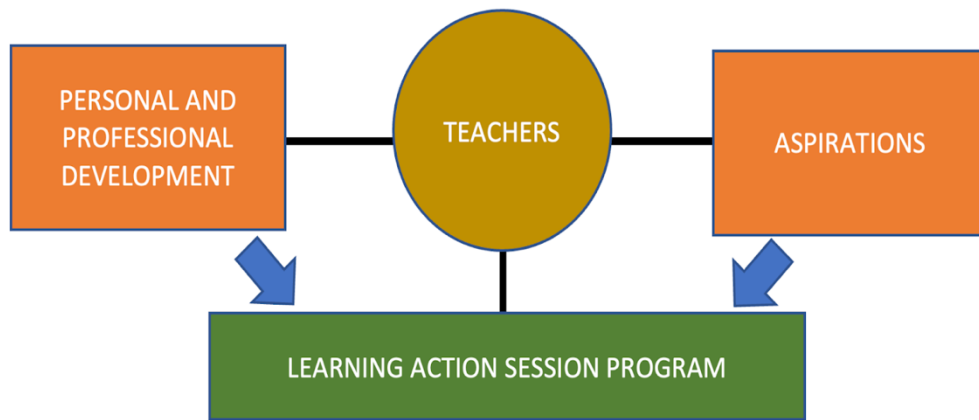


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The interdependence between the following factors is presented in the conceptual framework, which reflects the research's major purpose that will be the basis of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) Session Program based on the deep discussion of the participants. Personal and professional development and aspirations of the teachers are the key indicators of this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Professional Development of Teachers

The teachers' professional development does not only rely on their attitude and their satisfaction, but it is about the process of how student learning will increase. In addition, administrators or principals have to become more sophisticated in evaluating their teachers as they are accountable for making decisions on the whole instructional learning in school (Desimone, 2011). In a study conducted by Desimone & Garet (2015) they found that one of the five key features among the best practices in teachers' Professional Development was leadership as it motivates their teachers to execute all the strategies and methods they learned. Moreover, an optimistic school climate was a factor in the professional development of teachers (Postholm, M. B., 2012). The school organization

and their fellow teachers show an impact on teachers' learning to become effective and efficient in their respective schools. It means that teachers can perform well if they have a good relationship with their colleagues and school heads in a harmonious school environment.

Moreover, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) presented the seven features of effective professional development. One of the seven features is focused on coaching and expert support from school heads that help teachers to boost their confidence in teaching. It can be noted that their relationship provides a harmonious relationship in their workplace. A typical issue on this promotion is bias or favoritism of school heads that have an impact on the working environment of the teachers or even in their staff that aggregates the school's productivity. The preference of both teachers and principals perceives the impacts on the teachers' behavior. The biased decisions of principals result in the misallocation of human capital resources and demoralizing their employees (Li, 2019). This is why the education vision in 2023 labeled that the principals' support the professional development of their teachers by creating innovative programs, monitoring the teachers, seeking advice from the experts, and providing research tasks and that principals of male teachers were more supportive than their counterparts (Karacabey, 2020).

Moreover, reflective practice is a tool to endorse the professional development of teachers as it will help teachers to assess themselves and to reflect on, in, and for action to become reflective practitioners with knowledgeable supervision from colleagues and school heads and a positive climate that encourages collaborative and collegial practices (Diasti, & Kuswando, 2020). In line with this, Kong (2018) attested that teacher community practices help to uplift their professional development by providing activities that improve not only their teaching and research writing skills but also in creating a positive environment with their co-teachers as this strengthens the interaction and exchange of ideas among the group.

One could also say that principals have a significant influence on the development of their teachers. The professional development of teachers was a responsibility and an integral part of both parties, the principals and the teachers. In addition, principals have a significant role in the teachers' development but the teachers themselves are primarily responsible for their professional growth (DiPaola & Hoy, 2013). The primary role of the principals in professional development are creating leadership capacity among the teaching and non-teaching personnel in their school, building a harmonious learning environment, and nurturing the teachers. To add, the professional development of teachers in an institution is an unceasing process that will broaden the existing knowledge, upskill the competencies and abilities, and establish good attitudes and values (Mukan et al., 2019) and the school principal can support and provide an advantageous innovation in subject panels and network for teachers to improve themselves in school settings that will sustain and solve the challenges encountered by the teachers in their practices (Mumhure, Jita, & Chimbi, 2020).

Also, Language Assessment Literacy (ASL) has an impact on the professional development of the teachers, particularly the language teachers because this will help them become more prominent in delivering education programs (Giraldo, 2021) and it will contribute not only the knowledge of the teachers but also in their skills and principles. Moreover, the study shows that administrators' leadership affects the professional development of teachers in accordance with the factors namely; creativity, integration, and advanced technology (Cockpim, & Somprach, 2019).

Hence, both administrators' leadership and management and teachers' behavior are completely related to the personal and professional development of teachers.

On the whole, school heads play a very important role in teachers' empowerment. With her authority and power, teachers may feel valued and appreciated and can ignite or dim their drive towards their roles and boost their confidence to aspire for more career advancements. Zamir (2018) stated that many only see teaching as a lifelong career in its declarative sense and that promotion is one's all work-related experiences and school administrator and staff are a major factor to the promotion and that interpersonal conflicts impede their desire to move forward. It was mentioned that relationships with and appreciation by the school head and support from fellow teachers, as well as trust and goodwill, empower them toward mobility. Hence, school heads should see this as a propeller towards their teachers' motivation.

Teaching necessitates a level of expertise that develops with time and professional development involves the acquisition of skills and information for personal and professional advancement which is essential in the process of learning in the classroom setting since the students must deal with an ever-changing world (Ahuja, 2015). Teachers need to continue their professional and personal development which was important within itself (Živković, 2013). In the professionalization and modernization of teaching practice, teachers are more likely to take charge of their own professional development rather than have it governed by extrinsic factors.

### **Personal Development of Teachers**

Personal development relates to the self-directed procedures by which an individual converts their intellectual capacities into learning qualifications. Self-regulation is viewed as certainly be useful wherein everyone participates to assist themselves in learning, like using a method, instead of a passive response, including receiving information from an educator (Zimmerman, & Labuhn, 2012). Additionally, self-regulation research scholars are not limited to customized types of learning like inquiry-based learning, self-education by reading, or laptop-based instruction in their concept of self-regulation. Rather, it contains interpersonal learning activities like soliciting assistance from colleagues, mentors, and instructors which will help them to develop their personal attributes that they can use in their everyday living.

The majority of people rarely achieve their objectives because they never articulate or genuinely think them attainable. The winner will be able to tell you where they are going, what they want to do anywhere on a long trip, and who they will be traveling with (Traverse, 2013). This is a motivation for the people who aspire to develop not only their personal attributes but also their professional development to continue to do actions to attain their goals and become successful in the future. They must believe in themselves along the initiatives of doing actions to achieve their dreams.

Teachers manage a number of ideologies at the same time. They have views about various information, their learners' capabilities and attitudes, and their self-perceptions (Levin, 2014). Teachers must not just focus on their mastery of content, teaching approaches, and challenges affecting their profession but also on their personal gains like their self-efficacy, self-assurance, and self-gains. In addition, one of the studies about engaging reflection is important for teachers' personal and professional development, as well as for generating a responsive learning atmosphere that guides

them to have self-dialogue that assesses themselves towards creating positive decisions in the context of the learning process (Núñez & Téllez, 2015).

### Research Questions:

This study intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the aspirations of select Filipino teachers for their personal and professional development?
2. What Learning Action Cell (LAC) Program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

### METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design and Silverman (2020) illustrated that qualitative research was focusing on the experiences of the people to grasp and understand what is best for the people. The participants were purposely chosen to help researchers better understand the various experiences of the teachers focusing on their personal and professional development as well as their aspirations which determine the challenges they go through to be promoted. Likewise, purposive sampling is usually employed in qualitative research envisioned to attain complexity of understanding (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016) and increase the study's integrity and outcomes' reliability (Campbell et al., 2020).

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Respondents	Age	Sex	Years In Service	Highest Educational Attainment
T1	51-above	F	15-19	MA graduate
T2	31-40	F	Less than 10	MA graduate
T3	41-50	F	15-19	BS graduate
T4	20-30	F	Less than 10	MA graduate
T5	31-40	M	10-14	BS graduate
T6	41-50	M	15-19	BS graduate

In addition, they have been teaching for more than seven years in the Philippine public school system and all of them have been promoted to a higher position at least once. The researchers sent them an informed consent to inform them about the purpose of the study. The researchers gathered them through a Zoom Meet focus group discussion. Hennink (2013) defined focus group discussion as an interactive discussion with at least six respondents to deepen and widen the understanding of a particular situation or issue to achieve the purpose of the study. The gathered data from the respondents were transcribed and recorded.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. What are the aspirations of select Filipino teachers for their personal and professional development?

Three themes emerged from responses during the focus group discussions, namely; professional development, school-stakeholder relationships, and better students' academic achievement.

### **Professional Development**

Teachers have various aspirations particularly in their professional development. In the responses of the teachers, most of them want to finish their master's degree, become promoted to a higher rank, and be financially stable. They emphasized that they aspire to improve professional development by pursuing, at least a master's degree, as this is a basic requirement for teachers to be considered for promotion to a higher position in the public schools in the Philippines for a teacher to get a better pay position and better financial status. Likewise, it is tough and quite challenging to emphasize the value of teacher professional development. Professional development in the teaching profession is widely acknowledged by theorists, policy-makers, and even practitioners as an important aspect in this setting (Blandford, 2012).

In addition, three of these respondents are currently taking their master's degree and hope that they will be able to write their own research. Teacher 5 said that he aims to be able to finish writing his thesis and publish, and later, present a study at a national conference. On the other hand, Teacher 1 hopes to improve the academic performance of her learners. And with the advent of fast-changing educational technology, she plans to keep improving her technological skills to be able to connect well with her students. Teacher 3 nodded that continuous professional development can help teachers become more confident in their teaching despite the drastic changes during their times and Teacher 6 strongly agreed with this so he stated that progressive teachers should be able to recognize opportunities so they can take advantage of them.

### **Better Students' Academic Achievement**

Consequently, after talking about their personal and professional development, the teachers enunciated that with all of these will result in better academic performance of their students through the provision of programs to invigorate students' participation. The importance of quality teaching in predicting student achievement has been highlighted (Sakineh & Ali, 2020). Moreover, academic achievement becomes a performance result that shows how much a person has achieved in relation to particular objectives that have been the center of engagement in instructional settings. Academic performance is dependent on the criteria employed to quantify it, as academic achievement is extremely broad and involves a variety of educational learning outcomes (Steinmayr et al., 2014). Student achievement is related to teachers' readiness in delivering instructions and being capable enough to share their knowledge and skills with their students (Bayar, 2014).

In line with this, Teacher 1 mentioned that they work hard to maintain their schools' School-Based Management's (SBM) level of practice for them to continually improve their planning and implementation of programs while Teacher aspires to maintain their schools' child-friendliness. And as Teacher 5 mentioned, if they become these, there will be no doubt that they will become the best

school they hope to be. School-Based Management strives to strengthen the school system, improve the quality of teaching for greater student accomplishment, empower school authorities and equip them to be good leaders, promote accountability, and guarantee the safety and well-being of all school community members (Valdez, 2022).

In addition, there is a substantial link between total quality management as well as the academic performance of students. It showed that there is efficient leadership and communication in the schools, and the school heads and personnel must be trained on new approaches to school-based management to have better learning outcomes for the students. Schools must establish a minimal and uniform standard of accomplishment and have to continuously organize training initiatives on new techniques for school-based management for their teachers and other personnel (Oduwaiye et al., 2012). The results of this training program can benefit all stakeholders particularly the teachers and students. In part of the teachers, their personal and professional attributes were developed while the students acquired all the shared learnings from their competent teachers.

Furthermore, every teacher needs to be intellectually and professionally trained because they are the foundation of any educational institution. The academic achievement of the learners is significantly impacted by the qualifications of the teachers. Some academics agreed that teachers' inadequate pedagogical content knowledge contributed to students' subpar academic achievement (Kola & Sunday, 2015). The academic achievement of students was influenced by the teacher's credentials, skills, and knowledge. It has been seen that learners' academic success is influenced by teachers who are effective. In addition, teachers constitute the most crucial component of students' learning. Conceiving teacher knowledge is indeed a challenging task that necessitates understanding important underlying phenomena like the method of instruction and learning, the notion of understanding and expertise, and how teachers' knowledge is applied in the school setting. Teachers are anticipated to process and explore potential knowledge with regard to their subject matter (Jacob et al., 2020).

Based on the discussion from the respondents and related literature, it is very evident that the personal and professional development of the teachers contributed to the better academic performance of the students.

### **School-Stakeholders Relationship**

It was evident that the respondents are willing to improve their relationships with their schools' stakeholders. During the focus group discussion, they mentioned that strengthening their relationships with other stakeholders can positively benefit their school and learners as they aspire for their schools' opportunity to be recognized in their own divisions. As mentioned by Kusumaningrum et. al (2017) and Sharma (2008) cited in Aryeh-Adjei (2021), communities can give resources including volunteer assistance, free work, and financial assistance to schools. Community involvement tends to improve student results and increase school accountability. And as such, it is vital to create a solid relationship with school stakeholders again for the convenience of the entire school community, learners in particular.

Teacher 3, 4, and 5 prioritizes the quality of education they provide for their students. As quoted by Teacher 6, "I want my school to be the best". Their responses show that they upgrade their skills not only for personal reasons but for them to be able to provide better quality of service

to their students and they want to involve the communities' support for them to attain that. Professional Development is regarded as an essential component for both enhancing teaching and enhancing student learning outcomes. Hence, professional development is seen as a crucial aspect of the quality and professional development of teachers (Al Asmari, 2016; Canaran & Mirici, 2020). Consequently, it has been recognized how teachers' professional development improves the quality of schools and students' achievement, along with the education system as a whole (Dayoub & Bashirudin, 2012 quoted in Yucedag and Sevik, 2021)

Furthermore, Teacher 2 stated that maintaining a positive outlook towards their profession is the key to make them realize their aspirations that begin from their collegial relationships with their coworkers and school heads. Positive emotions may motivate instructors to establish positive emotional relationships with children, parents, and/or teaching staff, resulting in positive thinking and problem-solving that enables teachers to effectively manage some of the most common classroom problems (Isen, 2009 cited in Pelaez-Fernandez et. al 2021). Teacher 5 stated that whenever his school head gives him a pat on the back, he feels energized and more confident to accomplish his tasks. And with this, it can be concluded that school heads should be empathetic so that they can better support their teachers to become more confident in their duties as they all aspire for excellence and recognition. Choi (2006) cited in Jiang and Sulan (2020) empathetic acts may facilitate the development of trust within the leaders and followers, the formation of emotional relationships with leaders, and the strengthening of followers' identity with respective leaders. Once followers' requirements for affiliation are satisfied through such channels, leaders and followers can form personal and emotional bonds that foster a cooperative work environment.

Teacher 6 admitted that her school head encouraged her to apply for rank promotion hence their roles and responsibilities can never be underestimated when it comes to their teachers' personal and professional development. Vlachou et al. (2015) discussed that teachers regarded their roles as multifaceted, but they were more interested in the proactive aspects of them. The significance of the results of the study is for enhancing teachers' professional development and encouraging inclusive practices in secondary education schools.

2. What Learning Action Cell (LAC) Program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Teachers to be competent and relevant need to upgrade themselves to the recent trends in education. It can be done by attending graduate studies, reading professional books and magazines, and attending seminars and conferences. It can also be in the form of focus group discussions and learning action cells. In the Philippines, the Department of Education issued a memorandum No. 35 s. 2016 entitled The Learning Action Cell as K to 12 Basic Education Program School-Based Continuing Professional Development Strategy for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning. Learning Action Cell is of great help to teachers in improving their craft because the plan and topic to be discussed is based on the teachers' needs in the particular school implementing it. As shown in Table 2, it was anchored on the needs of the teacher-respondents and if implemented well, it will create a great impact on the teachers and students and the school in general since the teachers have the sense of ownership of the topic that to be discussed during the LAC (learning action cell) session.



Table 2. Learning Action Cell (LAC) Program

Phase	Activity	Objectives	Person Involved	Resources Needed	Time Frame	Expected Output
<b>Pre-Implementation</b>	<p>Preparation (SLAC )- DAY 1 Planning</p> <p>- Issue school memo, review the DepEd Order No. 35 s. 2016 and organized SLAC Team in School with terms of reference for each composition of SLAC Team.</p> <p>Discuss the ff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Time and Date of meeting</li> <li>● Topics to be discussed</li> <li>● House Rules</li> <li>● Expected Output including SLAC forms to be accomplished.</li> <li>● Assign of technical working group (TWG) (Documenter, Facilitator)</li> </ul>	<p>Organize school learning action cell team</p> <p>Craft activities for SLAC sessions</p>	<p>School Head, Key Teachers per Subject, per Learning Area.</p>	<p>Typewriting Ballpen Laptop, internet connection Projector</p>	<p>June 1, 2022 (9:00 am - 12:00 noon) (1:00 - 3:00 pm)</p>	<p>SLAC Team were organized</p> <p>SLAC activities were planned with School Memo</p> <p>SLAC Composition with term of reference</p> <p>SLAC Plan</p> <p>TWG</p> <p>LAC Facilitator Information Sheet.</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>B. Conduct SLAC on Department Order No. 66 s. 2007 otherwise known as Revised Guidelines on the Appointment and Promotion of Other Teaching, Related Teaching and Non- Teaching Positions</p> <p>Slac on Guidelines for reclassification of Teachers,</p>	<p>Day 1 .To be able to understand the different guiding principles on the appointment and promotion of other teaching, related teaching and non-teaching positions and prepare the document needed for the positions</p>	<p>Teachers and Non-teaching Staff</p> <p>LAC Team</p> <p>Resource Speaker</p>	<p>Projector Laptop Ppt</p>	<p>June 7, 2022 4:00 - 5:00 pm</p>	<p>The participants were able to understand the different guiding principles and the documentary requirements for promotion</p> <p>The teachers were able to understand</p>

	Head Teachers, Master Teachers and Principal  Portfolio Preparation	<p>DAY 2</p> <p>To be able to understand the guidelines for the reclassification of Teachers Head Teachers Master Teachers And Principal Position</p> <p>DAY 3</p> <p>Conduct workshop on the preparation of Teacher's Portfolio and Documentary Requirement for Promotion</p>	<p>Teachers and Non-teaching Staff LAC Team Resource Speaker</p> <p>Teachers and Non-teaching Staff LAC Team Resource Speaker</p>	<p>Projector Laptop Ppt</p> <p>Projector Laptop ppt Portfolio</p>	<p>June 8, 2022 4:00-5:00</p> <p>June 9, 2022</p>	<p>the guidelines for reclassification of teachers, Head, teachers, Master teachers and Principal</p> <p>Teachers Portfolio</p>
<b>Post Implementation</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation of SLAC Conducted	Conduct progress Monitoring (M & E)	School M and E Coordinator Teachers	M and E Tool Google Forms Internet	June 10, 2022	M and E Report

The results helped the researchers create a Learning Action Cell (LAC) Program. The program consists of three phases, namely: pre-implementation, implementation, and post implementation. The first phase aims to organize school action cell teams and craft activities for their School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions. The second phase aims to make the members understand the different guiding principles and guidelines on appointments and promotions and prepare the documents needed for the different positions and later, conduct the workshop on the preparation of Teacher's Portfolio and Documentary Requirement for Promotion. Lastly, phase three includes monitoring and evaluation of the SLAC conducted.

## CONCLUSIONS

It was evident from the teacher respondents' responses that their goals are fully aligned with the strands stated in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the organizational goals of their agency-the Department of Education. Aside from their personal aspirations to further their professional development to attain a more stable financial status, they consistently talked about their desire to improve their relationship with stakeholders in their community, and ameliorate their students' academic achievement. Their generosity towards their school community is highly evident in their responses despite the hardship and challenges they have to endure while on duty. They are conscious that with the continued technology advancement and the changes in our educational system landscape, they aspire to better themselves to serve their communities and students. The LAC Program will serve as a guide for the school heads in the professional and personal development of their teachers.

Based on the results, the following recommendations are hereby endorsed by the researchers; use the proposed LAC Program for teachers, help teachers to achieve their aspirations for themselves and for the school, and always be guided by the policies, memorandum orders, and announcements given by the DepEd.

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