



# Aspirations of Public Secondary School Teachers on Their Professional Growth

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## Abstract

The aspirations on professional growth of public Secondary School Teachers, Lupi District, Division of Camarines Sur, School Year 2024-2025 was determined using descriptive-correlational method of research. Findings revealed that the aspirations of teachers along education, economic, and social were interpreted as very highly aspired. Aside from that, teachers were moderately engaged in the activities on their professional growth. Furthermore, the relationship between advance studies and economic aspirations was significant; while continuing professional development and all aspects of aspirations were not significant. Finally, Project D.A.P.A.T.(Developing Activities Proactive to All Teachers) can effectively support teachers' growth and career advancement.

*Keywords: Aspirations, Professional Growth*

## Introduction

In the 21st century, teachers are not just educators but also mentors, guides, and champions of lifelong learning. With many roles expected to perform by teachers, their roles extend beyond the classroom. They perform as the second parents of the students influencing their personal and professional development. As education continues to evolve, teachers also play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of innovators, problem solvers, and global citizens. Their dedication and adaptability are essential in preparing students for the opportunities and challenges of the modern world. In the grand narrative of human progress, teachers remain the unsung heroes, lighting the path to a brighter future through education. As much as teachers want to address the needs of the students, the former also have their aspirations too.

In addition, teachers are also contributors to the success of everyone's life. The teachers have the capacity to inspire and mold the youth for nation building. It is imperative that teachers are given the necessary support for

them to excel. One way of giving support is through empowerment. To empower the teachers, their welfare, beliefs, longings, perspective and more importantly their aspirations and dreams for their professional and personal life are considered. Professional growth is important because it has the potential to open opportunities for career advancement, such as promotions. It can assist in honing existing skills and in learning new ones. Professional growth is gaining new skills through continuing education, and career training after entering the workforce.

Aside from providing quality education, Filipino teachers have other aspirations which keep them from doing their best. For instance, the study conducted by Yeh (2025), findings reveal that personal growth aspirations and economic incentives drive these teachers, with Taiwan's higher salaries and better career opportunities serving as strong pull factors, while limited job prospects and financial challenges in the Philippines act as push factors.

In addition, Quitoga and Templa (2024) examined the influence of gender, years of study, and work experience on aspirations related to promotion, specialization, and development. Findings reveal that male and female display very high aspirations across all categories, with notable distinctions: male show a stronger inclination toward promotion. In contrast, female express higher aspirations for specialization. In terms of years of study, 2-3-year range exhibit the highest aspirations for Promotion and Specialization, likely due to mid program confidence and goal alignment. The study also identifies a peak in aspirations among educators with 4-6 years of work experience, with a strong focus on specialization and professional development, as they seek to refine their expertise during mid-career.

Furthermore, teachers play a central role in the education system by ensuring high quality instruction so that all children attain desirable learning outcomes. In this sense, it is critical that teachers are well-equipped with appropriate subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge and are deployed in areas where they are needed most. In the Philippines, teacher candidates must earn a four-year degree diploma and pass the Board Licensure Exam for Professional Teachers (BELPT) to be eligible to teach in public schools. However, pre-service teacher preparation alone does not necessarily equip teachers with sufficient knowledge and skills to teach in the classroom. To fill the weakness of pre service training, the reskilling and upskilling of teachers are a key component of Sulong Edukalidad, which is a nationwide initiative formulated in 2019 to improve the quality of education. While teachers do not have an organized professional development program, the Department of Education (DepEd) works with the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) to strengthen continuing professional development for teachers (UNICEF, 2019)

Continuous professional development is essential for Filipino teachers to stay abreast of the latest teaching methodologies and technologies. While opportunities for training and upskilling exist, accessibility remains a challenge, particularly for educators in remote areas. Additionally, adequate support from school administrators and policymakers is crucial to create an enabling environment for teacher growth and development. Despite these challenges, Filipino teachers demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness in their pursuit of excellence. Many

educators participate in peer learning networks, attend seminars, and engage in self-directed learning to enhance their teaching practice (Tech4ediorion, 2024)

Teachers in Lupi District have aspirations in relation to education, economic, and social. However, opportunities for professional growth were limited which affected their aspirations in terms of education, economic, and social. The researcher was determined to look into the aspirations of public secondary school teachers, and what activities were they engaged that promoted their professional growth. The result of the study would be used as a basis in designing functional development program to address the abovementioned issues.

### **Aspirations of Teachers**

Teachers, though they already had the permanent position either in public or private institutions, they still had aspirations in terms of education, economic and social. The following studies and literature were found to be relevant to the aspirations of teachers as one of the variables of study.

In the study conducted by Macapagal & Ricafort (2023) on the profile of the teachers and their level of aspirations toward career advancement, they 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.

Also, Sharma et al. (2023) conducted a study focusing on the intricate network of factors that influence teacher engagement within the classroom, educational aspirations stand as potential critical predictors. They are more likely to invest time and effort in devising innovative teaching strategies, engaging in continuous learning, and fostering an environment that is conducive to achieving these aspirations. Furthermore, educational aspirations often encapsulate the ideals of inclusive and equitable education. Teachers working towards these aspirations are likely to be more engaged, as they strive to create classrooms where every student is given an opportunity to thrive.

With that, Aquino et al. (2023) conducted a study that 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 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.

Moreover, Solheim (2019) revealed in a study that teachers' aspirations were explained by a desire to improve for students' sake. Self-growth as a professional and the desire for increased knowledge in different domains of classroom interaction were among the factors influencing teachers' possible educational processes. Recognizing teachers' professional values, expectations and emotions may inform teacher education pedagogies and contexts for teacher learning.

In connection with the abovementioned, Kang et al. (2020) emphasized that while science teachers play a pivotal role in schools in fostering students' scientific literacy, interest, and aspirations, many countries face a lack of motivated pre-service teachers (PSTs) for science education. The results indicated a positive relationship between the PSTs' motivation to work with children and career development aspiration, while those who stated having more time for family as the key motivation to choose the teaching profession presented a negative association. Also, this study revealed the critical role of previous learning experiences and perceived teaching ability in increasing the science PST's planned effort and persistence in the teaching profession.

Aside from those aspirations in terms of education, teachers also had aspirations relevant to their economic status. For instance, Casingal (2022) conducted a study that focused on the financial literacy status of teachers. There are two major concerns that public school teachers face about their current financial status and challenges. First, they are not satisfied with their current financial income and most of them are struggling financially. They are looking forward for a higher salary increase. Second, there is too much on their plate with regards to their financial responsibilities and this basically implies that there are many expenses. Most of the teachers are heads or breadwinners of the family and a huge challenge exists especially on the allocation of budget.

Aside from that, Tagapulot & Macalisang (2024) conducted a study which revealed that public school teachers face financial challenges due to their family needs, education for their children, stagnant salaries, rising healthcare expenses, and the necessity of personally funding classroom supplies. The prevailing issue of teachers' loans has become increasingly over the years due to their commitment to provide for the needs of their family, personal, and even work. Their financial literacy practices could better determine how they manage their finances. Thus, authorities should discuss the salary wages of public school teachers, giving incentives and other funds to support any contingency that might occur to alleviate the financial constraints they experience.

Finally, Nalasa-Costuna & Tantiado (2023) conducted a study that revealed the level of Financial Literacy of teachers in terms of Spending is Very Highly Observed, in terms of Budgeting, Saving, Investing, and Spending were Highly Observed. A Moderate Positive Correlation in terms of Financial Literacy on Spending. It can be concluded that the teachers of North 1 District are Financially Literate and Capable. It can be recommended that having a family structure and a spouse having a career or work, teachers will have better financial capability.

### **Professional Growth 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.

According to Teves and Ubayubay (2024), teachers' pursuit of a master's degree is influenced by many factors, which can considerably affect their quality of life. The study found that self-motivation significantly impacts the quality of life of teachers, resulting in increased job security, financial stability, and job dedication. A master's degree empowers educators to become leaders, and mentors, thus influencing education. Empowerment strategies include professional development, praise, recognition, and collaborative decision-making.

In addition, Syariifah et al. (2019), emphasized that Professional teachers are expected to be able to participate in national development. The results indicated that the CPD program actually is good and intend to be useful. The participants were facilitated by the tutor to evaluate and give feedback. They also got modules to improve their competence in teaching. However, some teachers think that what they got from the CPD is not appropriate to be implemented in the classroom.

To emphasize, Siregar et al. (2025) CPD focused on the program mandated by the government becomes a means to improve teachers' as well as students' quality. The results indicated that the teachers had undertaken self-development and scientific publication activities. They had good perception of CPD and perceived it as activities to make them become more effective teachers. However, tight teaching schedules, family constraints, limited funds, and limited opportunities to participate in CPD activities become the challenges that the teachers had to face.

Along with, Muir et al (2021), to facilitate the professional learning of teachers and bring about changes in pedagogical practices, it is necessary to understand the process by which teachers grow professionally. The findings highlight how shared responsibility and purposeful use of student data can lead to positive professional growth for teachers and improved learning outcomes for students.

Apart from this, Derakhshan (2020) investigated a study and results revealed that teacher success was related significantly and positively to both teachers' views of research and CPD needs as well as all their sub-components. These findings were also confirmed by full Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results; both teachers' views of research and perceived CPD needs were positive significant predictors of Iranian teachers' high perceptions of professional success.

In the study conducted by Tulo and Lee (2022), found out that among teacher education faculty members is still low; though there may be law mandates for all professionals to avail themselves of CPD units, the faculty remained unresponsive in their CPD engagement; more participation is expected from teacher education faculty members with higher academic ranks; teacher education faculty members believe that CPD will help improve their academic status, knowledge, and financial stability; and finally, personal issues hamper the CPD of a faculty.

Also, Abakah (2023) revealed three pathways to teachers' learning as part of their professional development: (1) formal participation in continuing education, (2) non-formal CPD forms, particularly the workshops and in-service training, and (3) teachers' self-initiated informal learning activities. The findings further reveal that learning from these CPD activities was not automatic but a mediating process through teachers' critical reflection, agency, and social interaction. This process of learning from CPD follows a circuitous path of five stages, influenced by teachers' context of practice, depicted in a CPD learning cycle. The study recommends that CPD activities provide realistic learning experiences, enabling teachers to contextualize and implement new knowledge in real classroom situations.

In addition, Indrawati & Octoria (2016) conducting a study with the aim of contributing insights to teachers on continuous professional development as an effort to improve their competencies. The continuous professional development carried out is in compliance with the need, in stages, and sustainably so as to improve professionalism.

Its elements include self-developments, scientific publications, and innovative works. The scientific idea is focused on the second element, namely: scientific publications of the results of researches by teachers. The result of this scientific idea concludes that the teachers must be active in the continuous professional development particularly the second element, namely: scientific publications of the results of researches by the teachers in the form of scholarly papers. With the attempt, the teachers will be able to improve their competencies.

Moreover, Saludo & Baguio (2021) conducted a study and revealed that there was a high level of perception among teachers on continuing professional development and an effective level of teachers' relational effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between continuing professional development and teachers' relational effectiveness.

Finally, Olufunmilayo (2017) conducted a study and findings revealed that the level of teacher preparation for the universal basic education was relatively low. It was also established that teachers were not adequately prepared for the universal basic education scheme. It was concluded that Bayelsa State, has not been fully prepared for the sustenance of universal basic education.

### Methodology

This study used descriptive- correlational method of research. The study involved 50 teacher-respondents from Lupi District, Division of Camarines Sur for the school year 2024-2025. The data were gathered through a survey questionnaire and they were treated using statistical tools such as Weighted Mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation of Coefficient.

### Results and Discussion

In determining the aspirations of teachers, education and economic had the highest average weighted mean, and both of them were interpreted as very highly aspired. On the other hand, social had the lowest average weighted mean, but it was also interpreted as very highly aspired.

Based on the data presented in Table 2d, it could be analyzed that education, and economic were the major concerns of the teachers. They aspired to improve themselves in education so that they could provide the best education their students need. They also wanted to receive higher scores in the evaluation as this would affect the over-all performance of the school. Furthermore, they also wanted to become more stable financially. Teachers could concentrate in teaching, if they did not have issues in their finances. They could also provide the needs of the classroom, making it more conducive to learning. Furthermore, it could also be inferred that social was the least priority of the teachers. Teachers were respected not only in school, but also in the community. With that, some elders or even barangay officials in the community consulted teachers in case they needed to make big decisions involving the majority. Teachers acted as consultants providing the cons and pros before arriving into solutions to issues.

**Table 2d****Summary of the Aspirations of Teachers**

| Aspects                       | AWM  | Interpretation      | Rank |
|-------------------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| Education                     | 4.76 | VHA                 | 1.5  |
| Economic                      | 4.76 | VHA                 | 1.5  |
| Social                        | 3.80 | VHA                 | 3    |
| Overall Average Weighted Mean | 4.44 | Very Highly Aspired |      |

The result could be linked to the study of Galope (2024) that explored the experiences of Filipino ESL teachers who have worked as online teachers for at least two years. Five themes emerged: a) The Lived Experiences of Online ESL Teachers in Building a Successful Online Teaching Career, b) The Perks of Working as an Online ESL Teacher in a Digital Workplace, c) Personal and Professional Growth Aspirations for Career Advancement and Professional Development Opportunities, d) Recommendations to Prospective Applicants and Considerations on Becoming ESL Teachers.

Between the aspects shown on Table 3c, professional development had the highest rank, and was interpreted as moderately engaged; while advanced studies were on the lowest rank, and was also interpreted as moderately engaged.

The data implies that teachers recognize the importance of continuous learning but may encounter barriers that limit their pursuit of advanced academic qualifications. The strong engagement in professional development suggests that schools and institutions are investing in training initiatives that provide immediate benefits to educators. However, the relatively lower engagement in advanced studies may indicate a need for additional incentives, funding support, or flexible study programs to encourage further academic progression. To foster a more comprehensive approach to teacher growth, educational institutions could consider developing policies that integrate formal advanced studies into existing professional development frameworks, ensuring a balance between short-term skill enhancement and long-term academic achievement. Strengthening support systems and promoting the benefits of advanced education can enhance teachers' professional status and ultimately contribute to improved teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

**Table 3c****Summary of the Professional Growth of Teachers**

| Aspects                       | AWM  | Interpretation     | Rank |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Professional Development      | 3.35 | ME                 | 1    |
| Advanced Studies              | 2.97 | ME                 | 2    |
| Overall Average Weighted Mean | 3.16 | Moderately Engaged |      |

These findings can be related to the study by Aquino et al. (2023) who explored the personal and professional aspirations of selected Filipino public-school teachers and how they plan to attain them. 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.

Table 4a shows that the relationship between advance studies and economic aspirations was significant.

**Table 4a**  
**Relationship between the Aspirations and the Professional Growth in terms of Advance Studies**

| Variable                                       | r-value | p-value | Interpretation  |
|--|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Advance studies versus Educational Aspirations | 0.4528  | .444741 | not significant |
| Advance Studies versus economic Aspirations    | -0.9168 | .028854 | significant     |
| Advance Studies versus social Aspirations      | 0.6396  | .245783 | not significant |

These findings could be analyzed that teachers' educational aspirations had no significant relationship with advanced studies. This meant that teachers could improve their classroom evaluation, and they could acquire mastery of the suitable pedagogies even though they did not enroll themselves in master's or doctorate degrees. With their length of service, they were able to try various strategies, and found out which worked, and which did not. They were able to combine various strategies making sure that in every learning experience, the needs of the students were addressed. Quality of teaching could be improved with the technical assistance coming from the immediate supervisor or colleagues. Aside from that, they could be skillful in utilizing technology. In addition,

teachers were resourceful, in case they encountered difficulties, they found solutions by themselves. They took advantage of free online courses for them to be knowledgeable on areas which they felt needed improvement. Furthermore, it could also be inferred that even having master's or doctorate degree was significantly related with economic aspirations. Promotion to a higher position required earning units or degrees in post-graduate studies. Teachers clearly understood that investing in education never went to waste. Aside from that, enrolling in post-graduate studies allowed more connections with teachers from other institutions, which could be beneficial especially if they had businesses that could augment family's income.

The result could be linked to the study of Nalasa-Costuna and Tantiado (2023). Results revealed that the level of Financial Literacy in terms of Spending was very highly observed, in terms of Budgeting, Saving, Investing, and Spending were highly observed. Moreover, the teachers' Financial Literacy and Capability level in terms of Budgeting, Saving, and Investing show a strong positive correlation. A moderate positive correlation in terms of Financial Literacy on Spending. It can be concluded that the teachers of North 1 District are Financially Literate and Capable. It can be recommended that having a family structure and a spouse having a career or work, teachers will have better financial capability.

Table 4b shows that the relationship between aspirations and professional growth in terms of professional development was not significant.

Based on the data, it could be analyzed that continuing professional development had no significant relationship with educational aspirations. Even though teachers did not enroll in a formal class, they could still participate in activities that promoted continuing professional development.

In school, Learning Action

Cell (LAC) sessions were conducted regularly, and teachers could improve their quality of teaching by simply listening to the experiences of their colleagues, particularly about their best teaching practices. Aside from that, In-Service Training was also conducted bi-annually. With this, teachers could take advantage of free seminars with competent and qualified speakers.

Table 4b

Relationship between the Aspirations and Professional Growth in terms of Continuing Professional Development

| Variable   | r-value | p-value | Interpretation         |
|--|---------|---------|------------------------|
| Continuing Professional Development versus Educational Aspirations | 0.7743  | .124508 | <i>not significant</i> |
| Continuing Professional Development versus economic Aspirations    | -0.7809 | .119699 | <i>not significant</i> |
| Continuing Professional Development versus social Aspirations      | 0.349   | .564832 | <i>not significant</i> |

Moreover, it could also be inferred that continuing professional development had no significant relationship with economic aspirations. Teachers were known to be resourceful, and industrious. With the salary they got every month which was not enough to provide the needs of the growing family, they were able to find other means of income like working as a part-time instructor in other institution. However, if it was not possible, they also ventured into small-scale business which they could manage after school hours. Finally, even without continuing professional development, teachers could also mentor or be a consultant in the community.

The result could be linked to the study of Bartleton (2018) who emphasized that continuing professional development (CPD) is a broad term that describes the activities, learning and support those teachers undertake throughout their professional career. The key findings focused on the overall benefits of CPD and the impact this has on current practice. The analysis concludes that teachers cite CPD has significant benefits in terms of updating subject knowledge, sharing of good practice and the opportunities it provides for collaboration, reflection and future progression. However, the potential it has for raising standards of achievement remains largely unrealized.

With this, the researcher crafted a functional development program which aimed to improve the professional status of the teachers based from the findings of this study. The conduct of District Level Support Initiatives through Learning Action Cell under the Project D.A.P.A.T. (Developing Activities Proactive to All Teachers) which could be done quarterly as regular school-based teachers' activity. This program will identify the problems being encountered by the teachers and would try to solve those issues based on the legal basis, the guidance of the administrators, and with the full cooperation of teachers.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that the aspirations of the teachers along education, economic, and social were interpreted as very highly aspired. Aside from that, teachers were moderately engaged in the activities on their professional growth. Moreover, the relationship between advance studies and economic aspirations was significant, while between continuing professional development and all aspects of aspirations were not significant; and Project D.A.P.A.T. (Developing Activities Proactive to All Teachers) can effectively support teachers' growth and career advancement.

### **Recommendations**

School heads should conduct technical assistance to struggling teachers. In addition, Public School District Supervisor could also appoint a professional development committee to look into national and local opportunities for meaningful training to help identify the catalysts that ignite teachers' aspiration and professional development. District-level professional development committees could investigate preventative measures for the low rate of advanced studies and professional development of teachers.

Moreover, Department of Education officials should modify the program or memorandum concerning the study leave benefits which can be availed by qualified teachers. The provision should be reviewed in a manner that it does not sound discouraging or impractical to avail. Aside from that, there should be a seminar or a fora for

teachers to be informed about the benefits they can get concerning advanced studies. Moreover, international trainings should be made affordable so that teachers will be motivated to attend. Furthermore, A systematic CPD plan for all teachers be developed based on their actual aspirations as enshrined in their Individual Commitment Performance Review or based on Teachers- Strengths – Needs Analysis. Furthermore, Department of Education can also work in partnership with colleges and universities, as well as Local Government Unit for the teachers to be given more scholarships. Finally, Human Resource Department of DepEd can also modify the existing guidelines on promotion so that teachers, regardless of the year level they are teaching, can be easily promoted as soon as they earned the required units or degree.

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