

Barriers Facing Teachers in Department of Education Reclassification Under Expanded Career Progression: A Case Study

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Abstract— Behind every promotion opportunity lies a challenging journey, shaped by the barriers teachers face in meeting the reclassification requirements. This study explored the barriers teachers encountered in meeting the reclassification requirements under the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) System in one of the divisions of the Department of Education (DepEd) during the SY 2025-2026. Using a qualitative case study design conducted in selected schools in the Misamis Occidental Division, Philippines, the study involved 10 teachers, 5 school heads, and 5 co-teachers, with data gathered through semi-structured interviews. It was analyzed using Yin's (2018) five-phase case study approach, ensuring ethical compliance and data integrity throughout. The findings generated three major themes: (1) Navigating Overwhelming Demands and Institutional Challenges, (2) Struggling Through Career Advancement Barriers While Developing Professional Resilience, and (3) Persistent Systemic and Implementation Gaps in the Reclassification Process. These themes highlighted the procedural, emotional, professional, and institutional dimensions of teachers' experiences in complying with reclassification requirements under the ECP system. While the ECP system aims to promote professional advancement, its demanding, compliance-driven processes create significant burdens for teachers. Despite these challenges, teachers remained resilient and committed to professional growth. Department of Education regional and division offices streamline and digitize teacher reclassification requirements while strengthening policy dissemination, mentorship, and professional development support to ensure a more consistent, accessible implementation process across schools.

Keywords— career advancement, expanded career progression, institutional challenges, reclassification barriers, teacher resilience.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher career progression in the Philippine education system has historically followed a hierarchical and vacancy-based promotion structure (Capistrano & Tamayo, 2025; Santidad et al., 2025). Advancement has largely depended on position availability, length of service, and performance ratings, often resulting in prolonged stagnation for many competent classroom teachers who remain in lower ranks despite years of satisfactory or exemplary service. In response to these longstanding concerns, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced reforms to make career advancement more equitable, transparent, and merit-based through the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) Program (Duyag et al., 2024; Nicer, 2025), which was institutionalized under Republic Act No. 12288. The ECP Program establishes clearer career pathways for teachers and school leaders and allows progression

based on demonstrated competencies rather than solely on the availability of vacant positions.

The reclassification program shifts the focus of promotion from a purely vacancy-driven system to a competency- and performance-based framework. Under the ECP, teachers are required to demonstrate professional growth, instructional competence, and impact on student learning through documented evidence aligned with national standards (Duyag et al., 2025; Raquim et al., 2025). Central to this framework is the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which outlines indicators of teacher quality across domains such as content knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, and professional engagement (Herrera, 2024; Maloloy-on & Arnado, 2023; Roallos, 2022). Through this alignment, DepEd aims to ensure that career advancement reflects measurable professional

standards, instructional effectiveness, and sustained professional development among teachers.

To operationalize the program, the Department of Education issued policy guidelines and memoranda detailing eligibility criteria, required documentation, evaluation procedures, and reclassification timelines (Department of Education, 2025). These policies emphasize the submission of performance appraisal results, portfolios of instructional materials, certificates of professional development, and other verifiable outputs demonstrating mastery of PPST indicators. While the reform institutionalizes merit-based promotion nationwide, it also introduces rigorous compliance requirements that significantly affect classroom teachers' daily professional responsibilities. As a result, teachers are expected to meet both instructional and administrative demands while ensuring that all required documentation is prepared and submitted.

Meeting reclassification standards has emerged as a demanding professional undertaking for many classroom teachers. Classroom teachers must balance full teaching loads, lesson preparation, student assessment, and co-curricular assignments while compiling extensive documentation aligned with competency indicators (Department of Education, 2025; DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2025; DepEd Order No. 034, s. 2025). The preparation of portfolios, organization of evidentiary artifacts, and monitoring of performance ratings require substantial time, technical skills, and administrative familiarity. For many teachers, especially those in resource-constrained schools, limited access to mentoring, clerical assistance, and professional development opportunities further complicates compliance (Manegdeg & Paglinawan, 2024).

Teachers in geographically isolated and under-resourced schools may face additional barriers, including limited internet connectivity, limited access to professional development opportunities, and insufficient administrative support in preparing portfolios and documentary evidence (Fabrigas & Paglinawan, 2025). These institutional limitations weaken teachers' ability to comply effectively with

reclassification standards and create inequities in career advancement opportunities. In many cases, teachers are forced to rely on personal resources and self-directed efforts to fulfill documentary requirements and maintain professional standards. These conditions substantiate the growing concern that reclassification, while reform-oriented in principle, may intensify workload pressures and professional burdens at the classroom level.

Studies revealed that teachers experience workload intensification due to extensive documentation preparation, portfolio organization, and difficulty in presenting valid Means of Verification (MOVs) aligned with competency standards (Raquim et al., 2025). Research further showed that teachers often perceive reclassification compliance as an additional professional burden due to the voluminous paperwork and procedural requirements associated with promotion and career progression. Tarraya (2023) explained that heavy workloads contribute to emotional stress, fatigue, and reduced instructional efficiency among public school teachers. Similarly, studies on ECP implementation found that teachers struggle to balance classroom teaching, administrative assignments, and compliance demands, leading to exhaustion and increased professional pressure (Navalta et al., 2024; Raquim et al., 2025).

Reports and emerging discussions in the Philippine context highlight several barriers that classroom teachers encounter in meeting reclassification requirements, including workload intensification, limited access to mentoring, and difficulties in complying with documentation and performance standards (Department of Education, 2025; Manegdeg & Paglinawan, 2024; Philstar, 2025). Among the most frequently cited challenges are workload intensification, time constraints, ambiguity in documentation standards, evolving evaluation criteria, and inconsistencies in institutional support. Teachers in geographically isolated or under-resourced schools may face additional obstacles, including limited internet connectivity, fewer training opportunities, and insufficient guidance on portfolio preparation (Fabrigas & Paglinawan, 2025). These barriers not only affect teachers' ability to complete requirements

but may also contribute to stress, fatigue, and diminished professional morale.

The process of reclassification can be both professionally demanding and emotionally taxing for classroom teachers, as they must manage competing instructional responsibilities, administrative duties, and heavy documentation requirements, which contribute to stress and diminished well-being (Gudelos & Mabitad, 2025). Studies have shown that prolonged workload intensification and administrative demands negatively affect teachers' emotional well-being and professional motivation (Tarraya, 2023). Emerging reports also indicate that compliance-driven systems may increase pressure and reduce teachers' work satisfaction when institutional support mechanisms are insufficient (Philstar, 2025; Philippine Information Agency [PIA], 2026). These findings suggest that the challenges associated with reclassification extend beyond procedural compliance and significantly influence teachers' professional experiences and emotional resilience.

Another challenge teachers face is the lack of clear orientation, mentoring, and institutional support regarding reclassification procedures. Research revealed that many teachers experience confusion and misconceptions regarding qualification standards, evaluation criteria, and documentary requirements due to insufficient dissemination of information and inconsistent discussions by school administrators and evaluators (Raquim et al., 2025). Similarly, Agpuldo (2025) found that public school teachers expressed the need for additional information sessions and orientation programs to strengthen awareness and preparedness regarding the Expanded Career Progression System. Teachers also identified mentoring support and technical guidance as important mechanisms for improving compliance and reducing procedural confusion.

Research further suggests that responsive institutional support systems, mentoring programs, and workload management strategies are essential in helping teachers navigate the Expanded Career Progression System more effectively (Navalta et al., 2024). Strengthening administrative assistance, clarifying

procedural guidelines, and improving communication channels may help reduce teachers' compliance burden and improve professional well-being. Supportive institutional environments also contribute to greater teacher confidence and professional engagement during the reclassification process. These mechanisms may help ensure that the objectives of the Expanded Career Progression Program are implemented more effectively and equitably across educational contexts.

There remains a significant empirical and practical knowledge gap regarding how teaching workload, documentation demands, performance evaluation systems, and institutional constraints collectively shape teachers' professional experiences, motivation, well-being, and career progression under the Expanded Career Progression Program. Existing studies largely focus on policy structures, administrative guidelines, and implementation procedures, with limited investigation of classroom teachers' lived experiences, particularly in resource-constrained and geographically challenging school contexts (Philstar, 2025; Manegdeg & Paglinawan, 2024; Fabrigas & Paglinawan, 2025). Furthermore, there is limited evidence explaining how these barriers interact and influence teachers' ability to comply with competency-based reclassification requirements in real educational settings. Addressing these gaps through systematic inquiry is essential to determine whether the Expanded Career Progression Program genuinely promotes equitable, merit-based, and sustainable professional advancement or inadvertently intensifies teachers' professional burdens.

This study examined the barriers classroom teachers encountered in meeting the Department of Education's reclassification requirements under the Expanded Career Progression Program. Specifically, it sought to identify professional, institutional, and procedural factors that hinder compliance with competency-based standards and to analyze how these barriers influence teachers' performance, motivation, and professional well-being. By systematically investigating these challenges, the study aimed to generate evidence-based insights into the realities of reclassification at the classroom level. Furthermore, the study aimed to

deepen understanding of how policy implementation affects teachers' professional experiences and career advancement opportunities.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to refining policy and strengthening institutional support mechanisms. The findings may assist teachers in better understanding and navigating reclassification requirements, while informing DepEd policymakers and school administrators about areas that require clearer guidelines, capacity-building programs, mentoring systems, and resource allocation. Moreover, the study adds to the growing body of literature on teacher career progression in the Philippine context by providing empirical evidence on the structural and practical barriers embedded in reform implementation. Ultimately, substantiating these barriers can guide the development of more responsive, equitable, and sustainable reclassification policies that genuinely support teacher growth rather than inadvertently intensifying professional burdens.

This case study investigated the barriers teachers face in meeting the reclassification requirements under DepEd's expanded career progression system during SY 2025-2026. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

- What major barriers do teachers encounter in fulfilling reclassification requirements?
- How do these barriers influence their career progression and professional development?
- Why do these barriers persist despite existing institutional policies and support mechanisms?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design. This study employed a case study research design to explore the experiences of Head Teachers in meeting DepEd reclassification requirements under the Expanded Career Progression System. Case study research, as described by Creswell and Poth (2018), focused on an in-depth, contextualized examination of a bounded system, particularly the professional experiences of Head Teachers within their schools, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of complex issues in real-life settings. This design was appropriate for the research because it examined how Head Teachers navigated challenges such as

competency documentation, performance assessments, instructional leadership demands, and administrative responsibilities. It also provided an opportunity to capture school leaders' perspectives on the institutional, professional, and personal factors that influenced their ability to comply with reclassification standards. By focusing on Head Teachers' experiences, this approach enabled a detailed exploration of the human and professional dimensions of educational leadership. It offered insights that informed policies, support mechanisms, and practices for improving compliance with DepEd reclassification requirements.

Setting. The study was conducted in selected schools within the Misamis Occidental Division, Philippines. This setting provided a relevant and authentic context for exploring the lived experiences of Head Teachers as they navigated the requirements of DepEd reclassification under the Expanded Career Progression System. The schools' administrative structures, teaching environments, and institutional support systems offered meaningful contexts for examining how school leaders managed documentation, instructional supervision, and leadership responsibilities while meeting competency and performance standards. Through in-depth interviews and document analysis, the study explored not only the challenges encountered by Head Teachers but also the strategies and coping mechanisms they employed to fulfill reclassification requirements. This context enabled a comprehensive understanding of how individual efforts, collegial support, and school-based resources intersected to shape Head Teachers' experiences and professional effectiveness.

Participants. This study included three types of participants from selected schools in the Misamis Occidental Division, Philippines: 10 Teachers, 5 school heads, and 5 co-teachers. The 10 Teachers were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) currently teaching in the Department of Education; (2) aged 30 years or older; (3) having at least one year of firsthand experience navigating DepEd reclassification requirements; and (4) willing to share personal experiences, reflections, and strategies through in-depth interviews. The school head was

included if they met the following criteria: (1) currently serving as the head of a selected school; (2) having direct oversight of Head Teachers and familiarity with their roles and responsibilities in the Expanded Career Progression System; and (3) willing to provide insights on institutional practices, policies, and support mechanisms affecting compliance with reclassification requirements. The co-teacher was included if they met the following criteria: (1) currently teaching in the same school as one of the Head Teachers; (2) having at least six months of professional interaction with the Head Teacher; and (3) willing to share observations and reflections on instructional leadership and collaborative practices. This participant selection ensured that the study captured comprehensive, multifaceted perspectives on the professional, administrative, and personal dimensions that shape Head Teachers' lived experiences in fulfilling DepEd reclassification standards.

Instruments. Three semi-structured interview guides were used in this study, each specifically designed for the three participant types: Head Teachers, the school head, and a co-teacher. The Head Teachers' interview guide began with basic demographic questions such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, and length of service. The main section explored their lived experiences of meeting DepEd reclassification requirements, focusing on challenges with competency documentation and performance assessments. Questions also examined their emotional and professional responses, coping strategies, and perceptions of institutional support. The school head's interview guide included demographic questions such as age, years in leadership, and oversight responsibilities. The core questions focused on institutional policies, support mechanisms, and the school head's observations regarding Head Teachers' compliance with reclassification requirements, leadership practices, and professional development needs. The co-teacher's interview guide began with demographic questions, including age, teaching experience, and length of collaboration with the Head Teacher. The main portion explored the co-teacher's perspectives on instructional leadership, collaboration, peer support, and the Head Teacher's observed

professional and administrative practices in navigating reclassification standards. These three qualitative instruments were designed to elicit rich, in-depth narratives that provided a multifaceted understanding of the professional and personal dimensions of Head Teachers' experiences, while also capturing institutional and peer perspectives that influenced their compliance with DepEd reclassification requirements.

Data-Gathering Procedure. Before conducting the study, the researcher sought permission from the Dean of the Graduate School of Misamis University to undertake the research. Upon approval, a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was forwarded to the Schools Division Office and the appropriate administrative authorities of the selected schools in the Division of Misamis Occidental. These offices and school authorities were provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, scope, participants, and research procedures to ensure transparency and compliance with institutional policies and research protocols.

After securing approval, the researcher identified participants through purposive sampling based on the study's inclusion criteria. The primary participants were Head Teachers who had firsthand experience in complying with the Department of Education's reclassification requirements under the Expanded Career Progression System. The participants were informed about the objectives of the study, the nature of their participation, and the procedures for conducting the in-depth interviews. The researcher also explained that participation was entirely voluntary and that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences or penalties.

Before data collection, informed consent was secured from all participants to ensure that they fully understood their rights, responsibilities, and the ethical safeguards provided throughout the study. The research proposal was likewise submitted to the appropriate ethics review committee for evaluation and approval, ensuring adherence to ethical standards for human participants. Participants were assured that all information gathered during the study would

remain confidential and would only be used for academic and research purposes.

The researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews to gather detailed information on participants' experiences and perceived barriers to meeting the reclassification requirements. With participants' permission, interviews were documented through note-taking and audio recording to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the collected data. The gathered data were transcribed, organized, and prepared for analysis in accordance with Yin's case study data analysis procedures.

All interview transcripts, recordings, and related documents were securely stored and handled in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Personal identifiers were removed to protect participants' anonymity and privacy. The researcher ensured that all data were protected from unauthorized access, disclosure, or misuse throughout the study. Ethical considerations were strictly observed to safeguard the rights, dignity, privacy, and well-being of all participants throughout the entire research process.

Ethical Considerations. In recognition of the critical role of ethics in research, this study implemented stringent measures to protect the dignity, privacy, and well-being of all participants. Before data collection, the research proposal was reviewed and approved by the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee to ensure compliance with established ethical standards. All participating teachers, head teachers, and co-teachers were provided with an Informed Consent Form that clearly outlined the study's purpose, procedures, and the voluntary nature of participation, as well as their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Participants were also assured that their identities would remain confidential and that the data gathered would be used solely for research purposes.

To respect participants' schedules, interviews were conducted at times convenient for each participant. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before the interviews. Participants also received a token of appreciation to acknowledge their time, effort, and valuable contributions to the study.

Completed interview transcripts and other data were securely stored, and all personal identifiers were kept confidential to uphold privacy. Ethical conduct was strictly observed throughout the research process to foster a respectful and open environment in which participants could share their experiences freely and without fear of judgment. Special care was taken to ensure participants' comfort, particularly when discussing professional challenges and coping strategies in meeting reclassification requirements.

Confidentiality of all data was rigorously maintained. The researcher complied with all ethical documentation requirements and procedural standards to uphold the highest ethical principles. In accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), all personal and sensitive information collected during the study was securely stored and protected from unauthorized access. These ethical safeguards ensured the rights, privacy, and welfare of all participants while recognizing their contributions and respecting their time and professional responsibilities.

Data Analysis. In this study, Yin's (2018) case study data analysis approach was employed to examine classroom teachers' experiences in fulfilling DepEd reclassification requirements under the Expanded Career Progression System. Rather than seeking the essence of lived experience through phenomenological reduction, the researcher analyzed the case through systematic procedures appropriate for case study research. Interview transcripts and relevant documents were examined using Yin's analytic strategies, which included (1) compiling, (2) disassembling, (3) reassembling, (4) interpreting, and (5) concluding. This approach enabled the researcher to develop an in-depth, contextualized understanding of how classroom teachers navigated the professional, instructional, and administrative demands associated with reclassification.

Compiling. In the compiling phase, all interview transcripts, field notes, and relevant supporting documents were organized into a comprehensive case database. The researcher ensured that classroom teachers' data were systematically organized to

maintain accuracy and traceability. This phase provided a structured foundation for analysis and enabled the researcher to become thoroughly familiar with the breadth of teachers' experiences regarding documentation requirements, instructional responsibilities, and compliance processes.

Disassembling: During disassembling, the researcher carefully reviewed the compiled data and broke them down into smaller, meaningful units. Codes were assigned to significant statements and patterns related to barriers, workload, documentation demands, time constraints, institutional support, and professional growth. This step enabled the researcher to identify recurring issues that affect classroom teachers' ability to meet reclassification standards while remaining grounded in the raw data.

Reassembling. In the reassembling phase, the coded data were grouped into broader categories and themes. Related codes were clustered to form thematic patterns, including workload intensification, limited institutional resources, emotional responses to compliance demands, and adaptive coping strategies. By reorganizing the data into coherent themes, the researcher constructed an explanatory framework that described how classroom teachers experienced and responded to reclassification requirements within their school contexts.

Interpreting. The interpreting phase involved examining the reassembled themes to determine their meaning in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework. The researcher analyzed how job demands, institutional expectations, and available resources influenced teachers' experiences and professional development. Patterns were compared across participants to identify similarities and variations within the case, ensuring that data supported interpretations.

Concluding. In the concluding phase, the researcher synthesized the findings to draw overall conclusions about the case. This included identifying key insights into the barriers classroom teachers encountered, their impact on career progression, and the contextual factors that contributed to persistent challenges. The final analysis provided a comprehensive

understanding of how classroom teachers navigated reclassification requirements in real school settings, highlighting the interplay among personal effort, institutional conditions, and policy expectations under the Expanded Career Progression System.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study involved 20 participants composed of 10 teachers, 5 school heads, and 5 co-teachers who were directly involved in the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) reclassification process in public schools. Guided by Yin's case study framework, the analysis generated three major themes: (1) Navigating Overwhelming Demands and Institutional Challenges, (2) Struggling Through Career Advancement Barriers While Developing Professional Resilience, and (3) Persistent Systemic and Implementation Gaps in the Reclassification Process.

Navigating Overwhelming Demands and Institutional Challenges

The data revealed that teachers encounter multifaceted barriers in fulfilling reclassification requirements under the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system. The findings highlighted how procedural, professional, emotional, and institutional barriers collectively shaped teachers' experiences during the reclassification process. Teachers experienced reclassification as a stressful and demanding process marked by excessive documentation, strict performance standards, limited time, insufficient support systems, and emotional pressure while balancing instructional responsibilities and career advancement requirements.

Participants described documentation and MOV preparation as one of the most difficult aspects of reclassification because it requires extensive retrieval, organization, and validation of records across several school years. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"Preparing the documentation and other paper works are burdens." (TP3)

“Paperwork burdens the teacher specially in gathering the means of verification (MOV) for the COI and NCOI.” (TP4)

“The most difficult to comply is answering the NCOI during annotation and interview, and gathering MOVs of each indicator in different school years.” (TP6)

“The production of MOVs for the Classroom Observable Indicator (COI) and the Non-classroom Observable Indicator (NCOI) need be aligned.” (TP7)

“Means of Verification (MOV) for each indicator for both Classroom Observable Indicators (COI) and Non-classroom Observable Indicators (NCOI) cannot be presented easily.” (TP8)

“The most difficult part is the gathering of the MOVs for the NCOI or the Non-classroom Observable Indicators.” (TP10)

“Preparation of documents, especially the MOVs for both Classroom observable and Non classroom observable indicators, as they require a lot of time.” (CT3)

Teachers also emphasized that time limitations and workload pressures interfere with their instructional responsibilities and increase stress in complying with reclassification requirements. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Limited time, workload and lack of support contribute to these difficulties.” (TP1)

“I was stressed in preparing my demonstration teaching due to the limited time given.” (TP2)

“Time limitation, workload and lack of mentorship are factors contributing these difficulties.” (TP7)

“Managing my workload while ensuring the quality of my work remain high.” (TP9)

“Factors like time contribute to these difficulties, lack of time due to some other concerns.” (TP10)

“My involvement in the implementation of the ECP is an additional load for me working as school head.” (SH1)

“The entire process gets in the way with actual classroom teaching and other pre-scheduled activities.” (CT5)

Participants further expressed that strict evaluation standards and performance requirements created pressure, uncertainty, and fear of disqualification. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“I was hesitant because of the pressure and fear of not meeting the expectations.” (TP1)

“I felt pressure since there are so many applicants and limited positions.” (TP2)

“My performance rating is one the most difficult requirements to accomplish.” (TP7)

“Five satisfactory ratings in the identified indicators either COI or NCOI would disqualify you from reclassification.” (TP8)

“There were moments of uncertainty, I work to meet the criteria to prove my readiness in reclassification.” (TP9)

“Satisfactory rating needs to be justified and five indicators with satisfactory rating would disqualify the teacher to apply for reclassification.” (SH1)

“Demonstration teaching and interview.” (SH2)

“Some teachers felt reluctant to reclassification because they fear not to meet the standards of reclassification.” (CT1)

The findings also revealed that insufficient institutional support, limited mentoring, and inadequate orientation further intensified teachers’ difficulties in meeting reclassification requirements. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Lack of moral support, heavy workload and time limitation contribute to these difficulties.” (TP2)

“Lack of institutional support and mentorship.” (TP4)

“Time limitation, workload, financial constraints, and lack of mentorship are factors contributing these difficulties.” (TP7)

“There were no proper orientation for us head teachers on what should be the proper reclassification that we should go.” (TP9)

“Lack of institutional support.” (TP9)

“Lack of mentoring and lack of institutional support.” (TP8)

“Limited time, lack of funding, and insufficient institutional support make it difficult to teachers to focus on meeting reclassification requirements.” (SH5)

“Time, heavy workload, limited resources, and lack of continuous support are the major factors contributing to these difficulties.” (CT2)

Financial and resource limitations likewise emerged as barriers that affect teachers’ participation in professional development and compliance with reclassification requirements. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Document preparations and financial matters were the challenges that I have experienced.” (TP8)

“Financial constraints and lack of resources make it harder for teachers to comply.” (SH2)

“Advance studies, research outputs and extensive trainings are the most difficult due to time constraints, financial limitation and limited access to opportunities.” (SH5)

“Financial constraints may also affect their ability to secure necessary documents or attend relevant trainings.” (CT2)

“Financial constraints also hinder the processing of personal documents such as the TOR from colleges or universities.” (CT3)

The findings indicate that excessive documentation, workload pressures, strict evaluation standards, limited institutional support, and financial constraints significantly affect teachers’ compliance with reclassification requirements. These findings align with studies emphasizing that extensive

documentation systems, workload pressures, and limited institutional resources intensify stress and role strain among teachers (Navarro & Cruz, 2024; De Guzman & Alinsunurin, 2023; Francisco et al., 2024; Angana & Abellana, 2025; Sanders, 2025). Guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model, the findings imply that balancing workload demands with adequate institutional support, mentoring, streamlined procedures, and accessible resources is essential to reduce stress and improve teachers’ professional well-being and compliance efficiency.

Struggling Through Career Advancement Barriers While Developing Professional Resilience

This theme highlights that reclassification is experienced not only as a procedural requirement for promotion but also as a complex professional journey marked by delays, uncertainty, and emotional strain. Teachers reported diminished confidence, heightened pressure, and apprehension due to the demanding nature of compliance requirements, including documentation, performance evaluation, and strict qualification standards. Despite these difficulties, teachers continued to pursue professional growth, demonstrating resilience, adaptability, and commitment to career advancement amid structural and procedural barriers.

Participants shared that reclassification barriers delayed promotion opportunities and affected their confidence and motivation toward career advancement. These are evident in the responses of the teachers:

“These challenges delayed my promotion and made me doubt myself.” (TP1)

“These challenges slow my career progression because I cannot meet all the criteria simultaneously.” (TP3)

“These challenges have significantly affected my career advancement as they delayed my eligibility for promotion.” (TP4)

“I felt discourage with these challenges because it slows down or delayed my career advancement or promotion opportunities.” (TP7)

“These challenges make my promotion to become slow and its not easy.” (TP9)

“Promotion may slow down causing them to wait for another chance.” (SH1)

“Some teachers experience delays in promotion while others feel discouraged for applying due to the complexity of the process.” (SH5)

“These challenges sometimes delay their application for reclassification and affect their chances of promotion.” (CT2)

The findings further revealed that the reclassification process created emotional strain, discouragement, and reduced confidence among teachers because of stress, uncertainty, and fear of not meeting requirements. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“They somehow lowered my motivation at times due to stress and fear of being judged by colleagues.” (TP1)

“The challenges I encountered make me felt reluctant and doubt to myself.” (TP2)

“It leads to frustration and sense of stagnation.” (TP3)

“There were moments of self-doubt due to challenges and delays in meeting requirements.” (TP4)

“Difficult to attend and that demoralized me.” (TP5)

“Most teachers felt reluctant because of uncertainties in the barriers and its strict implementation.” (SH1)

“Their confidence and professional growth are sometimes affected as they felt pressured and uncertain.” (SH2)

“Some teachers lost confidence when they unable to meet requirements.” (SH5)

“The numerous requirements have affected teachers’ confidence, making them feel less assured in the reclassification process.” (CT3)

Despite these challenges, teachers remained motivated to pursue professional development and career

advancement opportunities. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“It encouraged me to become more resilient and proactive in seeking alternative ways to grow professionally.” (TP4)

“These barriers made me to be more motivated to engage professional development because of higher salary grade.” (TP6)

“I need to pursue in order to be promoted soon and comply the ECP so I can’t be behind by others.” (TP7)

“These barriers influence my motivation to be encourage to strive more for compliance purposes.” (TP8)

“Through these reclassification makes me more willing to advance myself professionally.” (TP9)

“It also motivates me to pursue career progression to develop professionally.” (TP10)

“Teachers are forced to engage in professional development just to comply and be reclassified.” (SH1)

“Many pursue their master’s studies to improve their chances for better reclassification.” (CT3)

“The experience that I had in the ECP made me motivated to pursue my professional development to doctorate degree.” (CT4)

Teachers also emphasized that the challenges encountered in the reclassification process strengthened their resilience and professional adaptability. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“It strengthens my resilience and adaptability.” (TP3)

“It builds inner strength and ability to handle complex teaching situations.” (TP3)

“These experiences have contributed significantly to my growth as a teacher by strengthening my resilience.” (TP4)

“These experiences challenge me to grow in my chosen career.” (TP8)

“These experiences have boosted my confidence as a teacher by improving my strength and weaknesses as well.” (TP10)

“The challenges they encountered did not break the teachers; they did not see barriers but rather opportunities to showcase their potential with grace under pressure.” (CT5)

“My co-teachers remained positive and motivated despite some setbacks.” (CT5)

The findings further revealed policy gaps, misorientation, and lack of transparency in the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“There can be communication gap and lack of transparency.” (TP3)

“Teachers may not be fully informed about updates, criteria, or available support.” (TP3)

“Misorientations of the ECP make teachers stress and reluctant to reclassification and therefor delayed their promotion.” (CT1)

“Misorientation about the ECP has caused stress and reluctance among teachers to undergo reclassification.” (CT3)

“These challenges continue because the policy is incomplete and there is incomplete orientation on how the ECP is properly implemented.” (CT4)

The findings revealed that reclassification barriers create both constraining and transformative effects among teachers. While the process contributes to stress, delayed promotion, and reduced confidence, it also strengthens resilience, adaptability, and motivation toward professional growth. These findings align with studies emphasizing that demanding professional systems can create emotional strain while simultaneously encouraging resilience and continuous professional development (Francisco

et al., 2024; Navarro & Cruz, 2024; Cariño et al., 2025; Kirk, 2025; Angana & Abellana, 2025; Sanders, 2025). Guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model, the findings imply that strengthening institutional support, reducing procedural complexity, and improving policy clarity are essential in sustaining teachers’ motivation and promoting equitable career advancement opportunities.

Persistent Systemic and Implementation Gaps in the Reclassification Process

The analysis of participants’ narratives revealed that barriers in the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system persist due to gaps in implementation, unclear communication, limited support structures, and the inherently demanding nature of the reclassification framework itself. Despite existing institutional policies and support mechanisms, teachers continue to experience stress, confusion, and procedural difficulties. However, participants also acknowledged that support systems offer only partial assistance and that improvements could make the process more manageable and equitable.

Participants emphasized that unclear guidance, incomplete orientation, and weak communication systems contributed to confusion and stress in meeting reclassification requirements. These are evident in the responses of the teachers:

“I still feel stressed and unsure at times due to lack of clear guidance.” (TP1)

“There is still scarcity, I still feel unsure and stressed due to lack of guidance.” (TP2)

“There can be communication gap and lack of transparency.” (TP3)

“Teachers may not be fully informed about updates, criteria, or available support.” (TP3)

“The persistence of these challenges is due to the absence policies and how they are communicated with teachers.” (TP4)

“There is no proper support and orientations.” (TP9)

“Providing more orientations to attain classroom-based indicators.” (TP10)

“Policies and support systems are not always fully implemented or clearly communicated at the school level.” (CT2)

“The policy is incomplete and there is incomplete orientation on how the ECP is properly implemented.” (CT4)

Participants also described the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) framework as highly complex, rigid, and compliance-driven. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Make the reclassification process simple.” (TP1)

“ECP is academically pressuring, and financially challenging.” (TP2)

“The goal must shift from a system of compliance driven to one that is support-driven.” (TP3)

“The reclassification is not just a professional requirement, it becomes a personal journey.” (TP4)

“ECP must be made as a simple system not complicated.” (TP5)

“ECP must be designed as a framework that is easy to comply.” (TP7)

“The current support mechanism maybe effective in helping teachers to meet the reclassification requirements but needs to be improved making ECP simple, systematized and efficient.” (SH1)

“Strict requirements are part of the system even if support is provided.” (SH2)

“Teachers should not be pushed to fabricate MOVs in order to meet the requirements.” (CT4)

The findings further revealed that institutional support mechanisms remain limited, inconsistent, and insufficient in addressing teachers’ actual needs during reclassification. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“The current support mechanism are somewhat helpful, but they are limited.” (TP1)

“Current support mechanisms are improving teacher reclassification, but they are not yet fully efficient or equitable.” (TP3)

“ECP is partly effective but not fully sufficient.” (TP4)

“The current support mechanism is more likely effective but the flow of reclassification is slow.” (TP5)

“Current support mechanism are somewhat helpful, they are not always enough.” (SH3)

“There are gaps in implementation, limited resources, lack of consistent support or monitoring at different levels.” (SH5)

“Existing support mechanisms provide some assistance, they are not always sufficient or sustained.” (CT2)

Participants also highlighted that slow implementation and delayed dissemination of information continue to affect the effectiveness of the reclassification process. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“The flow of reclassification is slow.” (TP5)

“The current support mechanisms are effective but slow in the flow of implementation.” (TP6)

“ECP is not so effective because there is slow implementation.” (TP7)

“The ECP is effective but with a slow implementation.” (TP8)

“Delay in information dissemination in the national level, would greatly influence matters in the school-level.” (CT5)

Participants emphasized the need for simplification, stronger mentoring, and practical teacher support to improve the implementation of the Expanded Career Progression system. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"I suggest a clearer guidance and more mentoring support." (TP1)

"Eliminate the unnecessary workload of teachers." (TP2)

"Teachers are not just required to meet standards but are actively helped to achieve them." (TP3)

"Improvements need to focus less on adding new policies." (TP4)

"I suggest to enhance and make ECP simpler with faster implementation." (TP6)

"There should be more mentoring and orientation for proper guidance." (TP8)

"Providing more trainings and technical assistance, reducing workloads, giving guidance and continuous support." (SH2)

"Simplifying requirements, providing more accessible training opportunities, giving financial support and reducing administrative workload will make ECP better." (SH5)

"Regular orientations and clear, step-by-step guidelines can help make the reclassification process easier and more manageable." (CT3)

"One day a week collegial discussion would better address these barriers." (CT5)

Despite the challenges encountered, teachers remained committed and dedicated to their profession and professional growth. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"I felt unsure but still tried my best." (TP2)

"Teachers remain committed to their profession and continue striving for growth and advancement." (CT2)

"Despite the stress, teachers remain committed and dedicated to learning and preparing for future promotions." (CT3)

"Although teachers are somewhat stressed in reclassification, they remained committed and dedicated to learn ready for the next set of promotion." (CT1)

"Overall, the reclassification process remains challenging but continues to encourage teachers to grow professionally despite the difficulties." (CT3)

The findings indicate that systemic and implementation gaps continue to affect the effectiveness, accessibility, and sustainability of the reclassification process. Weak communication systems, procedural complexity, limited institutional support, and slow implementation contribute to teachers' stress and difficulty in complying with requirements. These findings align with studies emphasizing that effective policy implementation requires clear communication, consistent support mechanisms, streamlined procedures, and accessible mentoring systems (Francisco et al., 2024; Navarro & Cruz, 2024; Angana & Abellana, 2025; Sanders, 2025; Cariño et al., 2025; Kirk, 2025). Guided by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and Role Strain Theory, the findings imply that strengthening institutional support systems, simplifying procedures, improving communication mechanisms, and reducing unnecessary workload are essential in creating a more sustainable and equitable reclassification process for teachers.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the teacher reclassification process creates significant institutional and workload pressures that hinder teachers' ability to comply efficiently with the required documents and procedures. Despite these challenges, teachers continue to demonstrate resilience and commitment to career advancement, enabling them to pursue professional growth even amid barriers and constraints. However, the findings further reveal that structural inefficiencies and weak implementation mechanisms remain evident within the system, contributing to difficulties in compliance and affecting the overall effectiveness of the reclassification process.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that Department of Education policymakers, school administrators, and regional and division offices streamline and digitize reclassification processes, strengthen mentorship and professional development support, and improve policy clarity and implementation consistency to make the system more accessible and efficient for teachers. Future researchers may further examine the effectiveness of the Expanded Career Progression (ECP) system across different school contexts and regions.

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