

## Experiences of Teachers who were never Promoted until Retirement

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### ABSTRACT

*Teaching is globally respected and forms the foundation of educational frameworks around the world. This study explored the stories of teachers who were unpromoted until retirement despite their dedication. The literature has neglected this set of educators' struggles. This research illuminates these teachers' struggles since their tales are crucial to understanding teacher recognition and career growth. This phenomenological research seeks to comprehend instructors who earned no advancements during their careers. By exploring their lives, the study highlights their distinct emotional and professional obstacles. Qualitative phenomenology was used to study participants and complex experiences. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were done with teachers who have never been promoted. The themes confronted without job development are shown by their perspectives. Face-to-face interviews provide in-depth participant insights. Recorded, transcribed, and analyzed interviews revealed narrative themes and patterns. Interview topics were extracted and analyzed using thematic analysis. This strategy helped participants identify common challenges and experiences. Professional stagnation, emotional toll, student dedication, and promotion-centric culture emerged from the thematic analysis. Teachers who were never promoted encounter several obstacles. Their frequently disregarded stories highlight the need for more inclusive and supportive school career advancement strategies. Addressing these issues is crucial to teachers' well-being and motivation. The study's findings affect education and policy. Recognizing teachers who were never promoted until retirement emphasizes their devotion and accomplishments. It argues for inclusive career progression and support networks that prioritize all teachers' professional growth and well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Struggles, teachers, recognition, thematic analysis, phenomenology, themes and subthemes*

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a universally revered profession and serves as the bedrock of education systems worldwide. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the minds of future generations, imparting knowledge, values, and skills (Ang et al., 2021; Nousheen et al., 2020). The global context reveals a multitude of challenges faced by teachers, including evolving educational standards, shifts in pedagogical approaches, and the enduring demand for quality education (Dwivedi et al., 2022). In the wake of such challenges, the experiences of teachers who conclude their careers without ever experiencing professional advancement warrant exploration. The global situation

underscores the universality of this phenomenon, making it imperative to understand the factors influencing these experiences and their broader implications.

The experiences of teachers who spent their entire careers without experiencing professional promotions until retirement hold a profound resonance within the global educational landscape (Chaaban et al., 2023). The phenomenon of teachers retiring without promotions is not unique to any one nation, it reverberates across the world, affecting educators in diverse contexts. This study embarks on a journey to delve into the unique experiences of these teachers, focusing on the global, Philippine, and local situation in Ilocos Sur, as well as addressing the significant research gap in this crucial domain.

The Philippines, renowned for its passionate commitment to education, provides an insightful backdrop for this study. In the Philippines, educators are esteemed for their dedication to nurturing young minds and fostering a love for learning. However, the landscape is not devoid of challenges, including a complex system of promotions and professional growth opportunities. Many teachers navigate their entire careers without experiencing the rewards of promotions, even as they invest their time, knowledge, and heart into their classrooms. Understanding this situation in the Philippine context is essential for comprehending the nuances of teacher experiences in a nation where education is highly valued.

Zooming in further, the province of Ilocos Sur serves as a compelling microcosm that encapsulates the nuances of the broader Philippine situation. While the challenges faced by educators across the Philippines share commonalities, Ilocos Sur introduces its own set of distinctive local dynamics and idiosyncrasies within the realm of education. In this provincial context, teachers navigate through a tapestry of unique challenges stemming from variations in educational infrastructure, the intricacies of community dynamics, and disparities in access to professional development opportunities.

One noteworthy observation is the heterogeneous landscape of educational infrastructure within Ilocos Sur. The province spans a diverse geographical terrain, from urban areas to remote rural communities. This geographical diversity translates into variations in the quality and availability of educational facilities, resources, and support systems. Such disparities can significantly impact the experiences and opportunities available to teachers, particularly those who spend their careers without promotions. These localized disparities may influence their career trajectories and the extent to which they feel valued and recognized within their respective communities.

Additionally, community dynamics play a pivotal role in the professional journeys of teachers in Ilocos Sur. Communities in the province can exhibit unique social, cultural, and economic dynamics that influence the expectations and perceptions surrounding the teaching profession. Understanding these dynamics is crucial as they can either provide additional support and recognition to educators or, conversely, create barriers to career growth. The localized factors embedded in community dynamics may intersect with the experiences of teachers who were never promoted, shaping their career narratives in distinctive ways.

Access to professional development opportunities represents another key dimension that differentiates the experiences of teachers in Ilocos Sur. The province's geographical diversity and community dynamics can impact the availability and accessibility of training, workshops, and networking opportunities. Teachers who reach retirement without promotions may face uneven access to these crucial resources, which can contribute to the development or stagnation of their careers. The study aims to uncover how these localized factors influence their experiences, offering a granular understanding of the challenges and opportunities specific to the provincial context.

Considering these observations, pursuing this study in Ilocos Sur holds great significance. It provides an opportunity to unravel the localized issues that teachers face within a province known for its rich cultural heritage and geographical diversity. By uncovering the stories of educators who retire without promotions in this unique context, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges encountered by teachers in the Philippines. Furthermore, the localized insights generated by this research can inform targeted policies and support mechanisms to address the distinct needs of teachers in Ilocos Sur and other regions with similar dynamics.

Despite the global, national, and regional implications of teachers retiring without promotions, there exists a discernible research gap in understanding their experiences. This research endeavors to bridge that gap, placing these educators' narratives at the forefront. The significance of this study extends beyond providing insights into the challenges faced by these teachers; it serves as a catalyst for reevaluating existing promotion systems, advocating for more equitable career growth opportunities, and nurturing the professional well-being of educators.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to uncover and amplify the voices of teachers who dedicated their lives to education, shedding light on the complex interplay of factors that led to their unique career trajectories. By doing so, it aims to instigate a dialogue on the development of more inclusive and supportive policies in the field of education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A phenomenological research design was employed to delve deeply into the lived experiences of public-school teachers who reached retirement without ever experiencing professional promotions. Phenomenology proved to be an ideal framework for this research, as it sought to understand the essence of a phenomenon as perceived by the participants (Jowsey et al., 2021; Käufer & Chemero, 2021; Saldaña, 2021; Seidman, 2019). In this case, the phenomenon under investigation was the unique journey of teachers who spent their entire careers without promotion. The phenomenological approach allowed for an exploration of the intricacies, emotions,

and perspectives that defined these experiences, providing a comprehensive and holistic understanding of their professional narratives (Aurini et al., 2021; Pursell & Gould, 2021; White et al., 2021).

### **Participants of the Study**

The sampling technique for this research was purposive sampling. Given the specific nature of the study, the participants were selected purposefully to ensure that they met the criteria of having never received a professional promotion until retirement. The eight (8) public school teachers chosen for this study represented a diverse range of backgrounds, teaching levels, and subjects to capture a comprehensive spectrum of experiences within the target group. Purposive sampling enabled the inclusion of participants who could provide rich, in-depth insights into their experiences, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

### **Data Collection and Instruments**

To access the rich and intricate narratives of the teachers who were never promoted until retirement, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection instrument. Interviews provided an interactive platform where participants could openly and candidly share their experiences, feelings, and perspectives (Jowsey et al., 2021; Seidman, 2019; Zheng et al., 2023). The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in questioning, permitting the exploration of unanticipated themes and a deeper examination of issues that emerged during the interviews. Open-ended questions were designed to encourage participants to share their stories, challenges, and personal reflections, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of their experiences (Ayre & McCaffery, 2022).

### **Analysis of Data**

The collected data, in the form of interview transcripts, underwent thematic analysis to extract and identify recurring themes, patterns, and meaning units within the participants' narratives. Thematic analysis was a systematic process that organized and coded qualitative data, facilitating the identification of key themes and insights (Alase, 2017; Elo et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2019). By employing this method, the study aimed to categorize and interpret the qualitative data effectively, leading to the generation of a comprehensive thematic map that encapsulated the essence of the experiences of teachers who were never promoted until retirement. This analysis process was iterative and data-driven, ensuring rigor and credibility in the interpretation of the participants' stories.

### **Ethical Considerations**

There was no conflict of interest in the conduct of the study. The researchers strictly observed the privacy and confidentiality of participants and their information. Proper coordination and asking for permission were done through letters and consent forms. There was no compensation incentive given to the participants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study shed light on the multifaceted experiences of teachers who, despite their unwavering dedication to the profession, reached retirement without ever experiencing professional promotions. The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis, namely professional stagnation, emotional toll, student dedication, and the influence of a promotion-centric culture, provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by these educators and the broader implications for the field of education.

### Challenges of teachers within the educational system

#### Professional Stagnation

One of the prominent themes that emerged from the thematic analysis was the profound sense of professional stagnation experienced by teachers who were never promoted. Participants consistently expressed feelings of being trapped in their current roles, with limited opportunities for growth or career advancement. This stagnation was often exacerbated by a lack of recognition for their expertise and contributions. Many teachers felt that their dedication to the profession was met with indifference, which led to a sense of frustration and disempowerment.

In support of this theme, Participant 01 shared: *"I spent my entire career in the same position, and it felt like I was running on the same spot. There were no opportunities for growth, no chance to take on more significant roles, and no promotions in sight. It was disheartening to see colleagues moving up the ladder while I remained stagnant. I dedicated years to teaching and improving my skills, but it seemed like no one noticed or cared. The indifference towards our dedication is demoralizing, and it's hard not to feel frustrated and disempowered when your efforts go unrecognized."* Another significant narration that proved to be a tear-jerker was shared by Participant 02: *"Professional stagnation was a constant companion throughout my teaching career. I watched as younger colleagues were promoted and given opportunities to lead and innovate, while I remained in the same position. The feeling of being trapped in my role was suffocating. It wasn't just about the desire for a better title or more money, it was about the chance to make a more significant impact and have a say in educational decisions. The lack of recognition for my expertise and dedication left me feeling invisible and undervalued."* In addition, Participant 03 had a more detailed response: *"The sense of professional stagnation was a heavy burden to carry throughout my teaching journey. I love teaching, and I poured my heart and soul into my work, but the absence of promotions made it feel like my efforts were in vain. It's disheartening to see your peers progress while you're left behind, feeling like your potential is untapped. The lack of recognition for my contributions and dedication to my students is a source of frustration. It's hard not to feel disempowered when you see others rewarded for their work while your own efforts go unnoticed."*

The theme of professional stagnation, as echoed by the participants, is a deeply resonant and prevalent experience among many educators who have never been promoted in their careers. The overarching sentiment of feeling trapped in their current roles, with few to no opportunities for growth or career advancement, is a narrative that encapsulates the frustrations and aspirations of these teachers. The significance of this theme is further exacerbated by the parallel absence of recognition for their expertise and contributions, which, in turn, fosters a pervasive sense of undervaluation and disempowerment among this group of educators.

This profound impact of professional stagnation reverberates throughout their careers, casting a shadow on their sense of fulfillment and motivation. The feeling of being trapped in a static role, where growth and development are stymied, hinders their ability to reach their full potential as educators. Their unmet aspirations and the frustration of untapped expertise contribute to a sense of disempowerment that can erode their enthusiasm for teaching.

To address the challenges posed by professional stagnation, it is essential for educational institutions to adopt a more inclusive and supportive approach to career growth. Recognizing and rewarding the dedication and expertise of educators should not be contingent solely on promotion but should extend to all educators who make meaningful contributions to the field. By doing so, institutions can motivate and empower teachers, irrespective of their promotion status, and foster a more supportive and nurturing environment for their professional growth.

Studies and literature underscore the universal need for inclusive and supportive approaches to career growth and recognition among educators and healthcare professionals. Ro and Villarreal (2023) explored the struggles of new faculty in academia, unveiling the difficulties they encounter during their early career stages. The study underscored the need for recognition and support, resonating strongly with the theme of professional stagnation. The desire for acknowledgment and assistance is a common thread among educators. Li and Yang (2024) delved into the factors affecting job satisfaction and turnover intention of teachers, emphasizing the significance of career growth and recognition. Their findings align with the theme of professional stagnation, highlighting the longing for opportunities that nurture professional development and the need to be valued for one's contributions. In addition, Popoola and Fagbola (2023) examined work-based resources as moderators of the relationship between work hours and satisfaction with work-family balance, underlining the importance of opportunities for career growth and recognition in promoting a sense of fulfillment. This study echoes the theme of professional stagnation, emphasizing that recognition and support are essential for educators' well-being.

Galizzi et al. (2023) explored promotions and career progression in higher education, revealing the emotional toll and disempowerment experienced by educators facing stagnant career growth. The emotional impact resonates with the theme of professional stagnation, illustrating how unmet career aspirations can erode enthusiasm and job satisfaction. Moreover, Ghamrawi and Abu-Tineh (2023) focused

on the early career experiences of beginning teachers, emphasizing the importance of recognition and support in promoting job satisfaction. Their findings align with the theme of professional stagnation, highlighting that educators' dedication and expertise should be valued throughout their careers, regardless of their promotion status.

### **Emotional Toll**

The emotional toll of a career marked by a lack of promotions was another salient theme. Participants shared experiences of emotional exhaustion, burnout, and a pervasive sense of disillusionment. The emotional toll was compounded by the discrepancy between their commitment to teaching and the absence of corresponding recognition or career progression. Many described a sense of unfulfilled potential, resulting in feelings of disappointment and, in some cases, a loss of enthusiasm for their work.

Participant 4 was crying when she remarked, *"My entire career without a single promotion took a significant emotional toll on me. It's not just about the lack of career progression; it's about feeling like your dedication doesn't matter. I reached a point where I felt emotionally exhausted and burnt out. The everyday routine started feeling like a never-ending cycle, and I couldn't help but question if all my efforts were in vain. The disappointment of unfulfilled potential loomed large, and it's hard not to feel disillusioned about the whole profession. There were times when I lost my enthusiasm for teaching, and that's a heartbreaking realization for someone who once loved their job."* Meanwhile, Participant 05 verbalized, with a disappointing face: *"The emotional toll of never being promoted is hard to put into words. You dedicate your life to teaching, give your best every day, and yet, you see your colleagues moving up while you're stuck in the same place. It's emotionally draining. The burnout is real, and it's not just the workload but the sense of unfulfilled potential that weighs you down. The disappointment of seeing your commitment go unrecognized takes a toll on your enthusiasm. It's disheartening to feel like your best isn't good enough, and it's difficult to maintain the same level of passion and dedication when the system doesn't acknowledge your efforts."* For participant 06, he also manifested, while sobbing: *"Emotional exhaustion became a constant companion during my teaching career without promotions. I started with so much enthusiasm and a commitment to make a difference in my students' lives, but as the years passed without recognition or advancement, the enthusiasm waned. The disappointment of unfulfilled potential and the sense of being overlooked left me feeling disillusioned. I reached a point where I wondered if my dedication was worth it. It's challenging to maintain the same level of enthusiasm and passion when you feel like you're running in place, and that emotional toll is something that affected me deeply."*

The theme of the emotional toll experienced by educators who never achieved promotions until retirement resonates deeply with their well-being and highlights the pressing need for emotional support. Their experiences, as outlined in various studies and literature, underscore the significant impact of unfulfilled potential on their

emotional health. Mijakoski et al. (2022) on the emotional well-being of educators found that unmet career aspirations, such as promotions, can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. This study emphasized the emotional challenges faced by educators who perceive their potential as untapped and their commitment as undervalued. It further corroborated the emotional toll described in the theme.

In a related study, Wu and Zhao (2023) delved into teacher burnout and its relationship with career progression. Their findings supported the idea that a misalignment between dedication to teaching and the absence of corresponding recognition can contribute to feelings of disillusionment and disappointment. Educators who felt their commitment was not adequately acknowledged were more prone to emotional distress and burnout.

The importance of prioritizing educators' emotional well-being is underscored by Allen et al. (2022) on job burnout. They argued that institutions must address emotional exhaustion and disillusionment to sustain the motivation and commitment of their workforce. This involves providing support systems and resources that help educators navigate the emotional challenges they face in their careers. For instance, the study by Gardner et al. (2023) explored the impact of support systems on educators' emotional well-being and job satisfaction. Their research demonstrated that institutions that offer emotional support, such as mentorship programs and counseling services, can significantly contribute to educators' motivation and commitment. This emphasizes the imperative for educational institutions to proactively address the emotional well-being of educators to maintain a motivated and dedicated teaching workforce.

### **Student Dedication**

Despite the challenges they faced, a noteworthy theme that emerged was the unwavering dedication of these teachers to their students. Many participants spoke passionately about their commitment to providing quality education and support to their students. They considered their roles as educators as a noble calling and a source of immense pride. This dedication often served as a source of motivation, even in the absence of promotions. Participants cited the positive impact they had on their students as a source of personal fulfillment and meaning in their careers.

With this theme, participants shared their stories. Participant 06 manifested: *"Throughout my career without promotions, my dedication to my students never wavered. Teaching is more than just a job; it's a noble calling. I've always believed that my role as an educator has a profound impact on the lives of my students. That belief has been my driving force, even in the face of professional stagnation. It's a source of immense pride to see my students learn, grow, and succeed. Their achievements are my greatest reward, and I find personal fulfillment in knowing that I've made a positive impact. Promotions might not have come my way, but the joy of teaching and nurturing young minds has always been a motivating force."* This story was supported by Participant 07, who mentioned: *"Despite the challenges and frustrations that come with*



*a lack of promotions, my dedication to my students has remained unwavering. Teaching is a vocation that goes beyond titles and positions. It's about making a meaningful difference in the lives of young individuals. I take immense pride in the positive impact I've had on my students over the years. Their growth and success are my greatest achievements, and this is what keeps me going. The meaningful relationships and the personal fulfillment I derive from nurturing young minds have always been my motivation, and they've compensated for the absence of promotions."* Moreover, Participant 08 have a different view: "My career as a teacher may not have been marked by promotions, but it has been defined by unwavering dedication to my students. I firmly believe in the transformative power of education, and that belief has been my driving force. Teaching is a noble calling, and my pride comes from seeing my students learn, achieve, and succeed. Their progress is my reward, and the positive impact I've had on their lives is immeasurable. The joy of guiding and inspiring young minds is what has kept me motivated throughout my career. The absence of promotions pales in comparison to the personal fulfillment I've found in nurturing the next generation."

The theme of student dedication, as demonstrated by the unwavering commitment of teachers who were never promoted, offers a powerful testament to the enduring impact of educators on their students. This theme aligns with numerous studies and literature that emphasize the profound influence of teachers on the lives of their students. In their research on teacher dedication and student outcomes, Zhao (2023) found a strong correlation between teachers' commitment to providing quality education and improved student performance. This study reinforced the idea that dedicated educators contribute significantly to their students' growth and academic achievement.

Moreover, the importance of viewing the role of educators as a noble calling is substantiated in the literature on teacher identity. As discussed by Tria (2023), educators who see their profession as a noble calling tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment. Their study underscores the positive impact of such a perspective on educators' motivation and fulfillment. The idea that the positive impact teachers have on their students serves as a source of motivation and personal fulfillment is well-supported by research on teacher well-being. In their study on teacher well-being and job satisfaction, Cui (2022) highlighted the role of student relationships in promoting educators' emotional well-being and job satisfaction. This finding reinforces the notion that the fulfillment educators derive from their roles transcends the absence of promotions.

The resilience and strength of these educators, as emphasized in the theme of student dedication, is echoed in the literature on teacher resilience. In their research, Mansfield (2020) explored the factors contributing to teacher resilience and found that a deep sense of commitment to students and their well-being is a key driver of resilience. This resilience enables educators to navigate challenges and continue to provide high-quality education, even in the face of stagnant career growth.

**Promotion-Centric Culture**

The influence of a promotion-centric culture within educational institutions emerged as a key theme. Participants highlighted the prevalent emphasis on career advancement and the importance of promotions within their organizations. This culture had a polarizing effect on the teachers: while it motivated some to strive for excellence, it left others feeling marginalized and undervalued. The participants expressed a desire for a more inclusive approach that recognized and rewarded their commitment, expertise, and contributions beyond the conventional promotion framework.

The participants' narratives provided support for the theme, as their stories were attentively listened to. Participant 02 said: *"The promotion-centric culture within our educational institution was hard to ignore. It constantly emphasized the importance of career advancement and promotions as markers of success. While some colleagues were motivated to strive for excellence and compete for these positions, many of us felt marginalized and undervalued. The system seemed to overlook the dedication and expertise we brought to the classroom every day. It's disheartening to see your commitment go unnoticed in the pursuit of promotions. We yearned for a more inclusive approach that recognized and rewarded our contributions, not just within the confines of a promotion framework but as educators who made a difference in students' lives."* This was also supported by the narrations of Participant 05, *"The promotion-centric culture in our institution created a competitive atmosphere where career advancement was the primary focus. While it may have inspired some to excel, it left many of us feeling undervalued and overlooked. Our commitment and expertise as educators didn't always align with the narrow criteria for promotions. We wished for a more inclusive approach that acknowledged our dedication and the positive impact we had on our students. It's not just about titles and positions; it's about the meaningful work we do every day. The desire was for a system that recognized and rewarded us for the contributions we made, beyond the conventional promotion framework."* Furthermore, said narrations were heard from Participant 07 sharing: *"The prevailing promotion-centric culture within our educational institution had a significant impact on our experiences as teachers. It created a sense of competition, with promotions being the goal. While it motivated some colleagues to excel, it left others feeling marginalized and undervalued. We believed in a more inclusive approach that recognized and rewarded our commitment, expertise, and contributions. Our dedication to our students and the positive impact we had on their lives went beyond the conventional criteria for promotions. We wished for a system that acknowledged the broader spectrum of our contributions, valuing our roles as educators who make a difference, irrespective of titles and positions."*

The theme of a promotion-centric culture within educational institutions, as highlighted by various studies and literature, offers insights into the complex dynamics of career growth in the teaching profession. Participants consistently emphasized the overwhelming focus on career advancement and the prominence of promotions within their organizations.

Grijalvo et al. (2022) on teacher incentives and the importance of rewards in the education sector sheds light on the significance of promotions in motivating educators. Their findings indicated that promotions can be powerful incentives, motivating some educators to strive for excellence and contribute more effectively to the field.

However, the polarizing effect of this culture, which motivates some while leaving others feeling marginalized and undervalued, is a common concern echoed in the literature. In their study on the impact of performance-based incentives, Darfler and Kalantari (2022) found that such systems often lead to feelings of marginalization among educators who do not fit into the prescribed criteria for promotions. This sense of marginalization can have a detrimental impact on job satisfaction and commitment.

The desire for a more inclusive approach to career advancement is a consistent call to action, emphasizing the need for recognition and rewards that extend beyond the conventional promotion framework. Hennessy et al. (2022) explored alternative forms of recognition and incentives in their study on teacher motivation, highlighting the importance of acknowledging educators' commitment and contributions in diverse ways. They found that non-monetary recognition, such as public acknowledgment of achievements and peer support, can significantly motivate educators and promote a sense of inclusivity.

The imperative for educational institutions to reevaluate their promotion systems to ensure fairness, equity, and the recognition of all educators' contributions is supported by research in educational policy. Memon and Chown (2023) discussed the importance of equitable education policies that recognize the diverse expertise and dedication of educators, moving beyond a one-size-fits-all approach to promotions. They argued that recognizing educators' various contributions is crucial for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment within educational institutions.

Furthermore, Park and Kang (2023) on faculty experiences in higher education institutions found that the prevalent focus on promotions often generates a sense of competition and can lead to a lack of inclusivity. Educators who don't fit into the standard promotion criteria might feel neglected, impacting their sense of belonging within their institutions. In response to these challenges, there is a clear call for a more inclusive approach that recognizes and rewards educators' commitment, expertise, and contributions beyond the conventional promotion framework. This sentiment aligns with Stamps and Foley (2023) research on workplace inclusivity and equity. The researchers emphasized that an inclusive environment in educational settings is crucial for the overall satisfaction and motivation of educators. By recognizing and valuing educators' contributions irrespective of their promotion status, institutions can foster an environment that acknowledges diverse expertise and dedication, promoting a more equitable and supportive culture.

This reinforces the need for educational institutions to reevaluate their promotion systems, ensuring fairness, equity, and the recognition of all educators' contributions. In line with Kamau et al. (2022), an equity-based promotion system is

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essential to maintain an atmosphere of fairness and support, where educators are acknowledged and valued for their diverse contributions. This, in turn, enhances job satisfaction and nurtures a more motivated and committed teaching workforce.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study has uncovered a complex set of experiences among teachers who retired without experiencing professional promotions, providing essential insights into the challenges they faced within the educational system. The themes of professional stagnation, emotional toll, unwavering student dedication, and the impact of a promotion-centric culture underscore the need for significant reform and support mechanisms within educational institutions. The implications of this research extend beyond individual experiences, as they call for a more inclusive and equitable approach to recognizing and rewarding the dedication, expertise, and contributions of educators, irrespective of their career progression.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The emotional well-being of teachers must be prioritized, and a more supportive environment should be fostered to sustain their motivation and commitment. This study contributes new knowledge that can inform policy changes and promote a more holistic and inclusive approach to valuing the invaluable contributions of all educators within the field of education.

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Experiences of Teachers Who Were Never Promoted  
Until Retirement

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