

Original Article

Sustaining Purpose and Passion: Perspectives of Accomplished Teachers

Alice Gambong ¹, Josephine Baguio ^{1,*}

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explored how accomplished public elementary school teachers sustained purpose and passion despite demanding professional conditions. The inquiry was conducted in Manay North District, Division of Davao Oriental, Philippines, with ten public elementary school teachers selected through purposive sampling. Participants had at least 15 continuous years of classroom teaching and had demonstrated sustained excellence through recognition, leadership, mentoring, or community engagement. Data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, field notes, and supporting documents, then analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. The first research aim identified three challenge themes: overloaded teaching role, weak support system, and learner and parent demands. These challenges appeared through paperwork pressure, time shortage, physical exhaustion, limited resources, unclear leadership, lack of appreciation, behavior problems, parent pressure, and slow learner progress. The second research aim identified three coping themes: personal self-regulation, support from others, and meaning in learner progress. Teachers sustained commitment by setting limits, organizing tasks, reflecting on emotions, drawing support from colleagues, family members, and parents, and finding renewed purpose in small learner gains, trust, and former learners' appreciation. The third research aim generated a professional growth enhancement program focused on workload management, teacher well-being, instructional resourcefulness, supportive leadership, peer mentoring, behavior management, parent partnership,

¹ Graduate School,
Rizal Memorial
Colleges, Inc., Davao,
Philippines
* josephinebbaguio@
outlook.com

progress monitoring, remediation, and recognition. The findings indicate that teacher passion is sustained not by personal dedication alone but by the interaction of meaning, relational support, manageable work conditions, and school systems that recognize teachers as whole persons and professionals.

Keywords: coping, passion, phenomenology, purpose, workload

1. Introduction

Teaching in public elementary schools requires far more than the delivery of lessons. Teachers carry instructional, emotional, administrative, and community-facing responsibilities that affect their capacity to remain engaged in the profession. International evidence continues to frame teacher quality, well-being, and retention as central to the future of basic education. The UNESCO and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2024) stress that education systems must recruit, support, and retain motivated teachers if countries are to move closer to inclusive and equitable quality education. The concern is not abstract. In classrooms, teacher motivation takes shape through daily decisions to prepare lessons, respond to learners, manage behavior, communicate with families, and persist even when institutional conditions remain difficult.

Teacher purpose and passion are therefore not peripheral traits. They are part of the motivational architecture that allows teachers to act with commitment across time. From the lens of self-determination theory, motivation is strengthened when individuals experience competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In teaching, those psychological needs are visible when teachers feel able to influence learners, exercise professional judgment, and belong to a supportive school community. The profession also carries a sense of calling for many educators. Work as calling theory explains that individuals who perceive work as deeply meaningful may sustain effort, persistence, and identity investment even under pressure (Duffy et al., 2019). However, calling can become fragile when systems depend on teachers' moral commitment while failing to provide adequate support (Alipio, 2020).

The international literature shows that teachers often remain satisfied with the meaning of their work while also reporting high stress. The OECD (2020) found that administrative work, stress, collaboration, professional autonomy, and perceived social value all affect teachers' experience of the profession. Viac and Fraser (2020) similarly argue that teacher well-being must be understood through both individual and system-level dimensions, including working conditions, quality of professional relationships, and perceived support. In this sense, teacher passion is not simply a personal resource. It is a dynamic state influenced by workload, leadership,

community expectations, and the degree to which schools protect or erode teachers' professional energy.

Recent reviews reinforce this view. Hascher and Waber (2021) describe teacher well-being as a multi-dimensional construct that includes emotional, cognitive, social, and professional elements. Hascher et al. (2021) further connect well-being with resilience, arguing that teachers need personal resources and favorable contextual conditions to adapt well over time. Dreer (2023) found that teacher well-being is linked with outcomes such as job satisfaction, professional functioning, and retention-related intentions. These findings matter because teachers who sustain meaning and well-being are more likely to remain engaged, while chronic stress can weaken professional confidence and commitment.

Workload is a core issue in this debate. Administrative documentation, ancillary assignments, instructional preparation, assessment, learner support, and communication with parents can combine into a role that extends beyond classroom teaching. At the Philippine policy level, Department of Education Order No. 005, s. 2024 recognizes the need to rationalize public school teachers' workload and clarify the distinction between classroom teaching, teaching-related ancillary tasks, and non-teaching assignments (Department of Education, 2024). This policy context validates the concern raised by teachers who experience role overload. It also positions workload management as a matter of educational quality, not only teacher convenience.

Leadership and professional community also shape teachers' capacity to sustain purpose. Effective school leadership creates conditions where teachers can focus on learning, feel supported, and participate in decisions that affect their work. Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasize that school leadership influences improvement through direction-setting, capacity-building, and the design of supportive organizational conditions. Professional learning communities also matter. Antinluoma et al. (2021) describe professional learning communities as practices that allow teachers to learn with colleagues through shared responsibility, reflection, and collaboration. Akinyemi et al. (2020) show that trust and positive working relationships can support professional development and reduce isolation. For teachers who face heavy demands, collegial support can become a stabilizing resource.

Another important dimension is the relationship between teachers, learners, and parents. Teachers in elementary classrooms often provide academic instruction while also attending to behavior, emotions, attendance, family communication, and learner confidence. Collie and Martin (2023) show that teachers' sense of relatedness with students is closely associated with teacher well-being over a school term. Parent and family engagement can also support learner development when relationships are collaborative rather than adversarial. Kelty and Wakabayashi (2020) argue that family engagement depends on shared responsibility, mutual respect, and genuine partnership among parents, educators, and communities. Where parents blame teachers or remain absent until problems occur, the teacher's emotional burden increases. Where parents collaborate, responsibility becomes more manageable.

In the Philippines, these issues unfold within a public education system that seeks to improve learning outcomes, strengthen teacher development, and sustain the quality of basic education. The Basic Education Development Plan 2030 identifies teacher quality, governance, learning resources, and support systems as part of the long-term agenda for educational improvement (Department of Education, 2022). Yet localized qualitative accounts remain essential because policy directions do not fully capture how teachers experience purpose, pressure, and resilience in specific school contexts. Manay North District in the Division of Davao Oriental provides a meaningful site for such inquiry because teachers serve learners across varied school conditions while they continue to uphold classroom, community, and institutional responsibilities.

Although many studies examine teacher stress, burnout, retention, and workload, fewer studies foreground the voices of accomplished public elementary school teachers who continue to serve with passion despite difficult circumstances. A purely deficit-oriented account may show what drains teachers, but it may miss the inner and relational sources that allow them to remain committed. This study addressed that gap by exploring the lived experiences of accomplished teachers, particularly the challenges they encountered, the coping mechanisms they used, and the professional growth enhancement program that may be developed from their narratives. By centering teachers' voices, the study contributes to a fuller understanding of how purpose and passion can be sustained through both personal meaning and institutional care.

2. Methodology

This study used a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of accomplished public elementary school teachers who sustained purpose and passion in the teaching profession. Phenomenology was appropriate because the inquiry sought to describe the essence of a shared professional experience rather than measure variables or test hypotheses. The study was guided by a constructivist orientation in which meaning was treated as something formed through personal reflection, social interaction, and school context (Pregoner, 2024).

Ten public elementary school teachers from Manay North District, Division of Davao Oriental, Philippines participated in the study. Purposive sampling was used because the study required information-rich participants whose professional histories matched the phenomenon under inquiry. To qualify, teachers had to be currently employed in a public elementary school, have at least 15 continuous years of classroom teaching, and demonstrate sustained excellence through recognized distinctions, leadership roles, mentoring initiatives, consistent effective practice, or community engagement. Teachers who had moved to purely administrative roles or were no longer active in classroom teaching were excluded so that the accounts would remain anchored in current classroom realities. The number of participants allowed for depth, variation, and close attention to each teacher's narrative while remaining manageable for phenomenological analysis.

Data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews supported by field notes and documentary evidence. The interview guide contained open-ended questions on participants' teaching journeys, values, motivations, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights on professional growth. Probing questions were used to clarify meaning, elicit concrete examples, and deepen descriptions of the phenomenon.

Before data collection, the researcher secured institutional approval and ethical clearance from the relevant research ethics committee, then requested permission from the Department of Education division office and coordinated with school heads. Each prospective participant received an informed consent form that described the study purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, possible risks and benefits, confidentiality safeguards, and the right to withdraw without penalty. Interviews were held in private and mutually convenient school-based locations such as faculty rooms, vacant classrooms, or administrative offices.

With consent, interviews were audio-recorded. Field notes captured non-verbal cues, contextual details, and immediate analytic reflections. Recordings and transcripts were stored in password-protected files, and participant identities were anonymized through participant codes. Supporting documents such as recognition records, professional development certificates, lesson exemplars, and reflective teaching materials were examined when available to contextualize and corroborate interview narratives.

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis. The researcher first became familiar with the data through repeated reading of transcripts and review of audio recordings, then generated initial codes from meaningful statements across the data set. Codes were clustered into candidate themes that represented shared patterns in teachers' experiences, while still preserving distinctive accounts. Themes were reviewed against coded extracts and the full data set to ensure coherence, relevance, and fit with the research questions. Theme names were refined to capture the central meaning of each pattern, and exemplar quotations were selected to represent participants' voices. The analysis was supported by an audit trail that documented coding decisions, theme revisions, reflexive notes, and alignment between findings and raw data. Trustworthiness was addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was strengthened through member checking, prolonged engagement with transcripts, use of field notes, and triangulation across interviews, documents, and reflective memos. Transferability was supported through thick description of participants, selection criteria, and school context so readers could judge relevance to other settings. Dependability was enhanced through a clear documentation trail, adviser review, and systematic application of analytic procedures. Confirmability was supported through bracketing, reflexive journaling, and direct use of participant quotations to show the link between interpretation and evidence. These procedures align with established qualitative quality criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017) and with recent guidance on conceptual and design clarity in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Ethical care was maintained throughout the study by respecting autonomy, privacy, beneficence, and fairness. Participants were not coerced, their identities were protected, and interview encounters were conducted with sensitivity to their professional schedules and emotional well-being.

3. Results

3.1 Challenges encountered by teachers

Theme 1: Overloaded Teaching Role

Participants described teaching as a role crowded by paperwork, time pressure, and physical fatigue. They continued to teach with commitment, but non-instructional tasks and daily classroom demands reduced the time and energy available for lesson preparation, learner support, and recovery.

"There are days when I enter the classroom with a tired mind because before I even face my learners, I already think of reports, forms, deadlines, class records, modules, parent concerns, and school activities." (P1)

"There are lessons I want to make more creative, but lack of time stops me." (P1)

"The full-day classroom routine is physically exhausting. Standing, speaking, checking, assisting, and managing children require much energy." (P9)

Theme 2: Weak Support System

Participants reported that limited materials, unclear directions, and inadequate appreciation made it harder to sustain passion. They often compensated through personal effort, but the absence of sufficient resources and supportive leadership created discouragement and emotional strain.

"Teachers often use personal money for classroom materials, decorations, prizes, printed activities, and even learner needs." (P5)

"If leadership is only about orders and deadlines, teachers follow, but the heart becomes tired." (P1)

"When only mistakes are noticed, passion becomes weak." (P4)

Theme 3: Learner and Parent Demands

Participants identified learner behavior, parent pressure, and slow academic progress as persistent sources of stress. These demands required emotional control,

constant communication, and individualized support, especially when teachers felt that responsibility for learner improvement rested heavily on them.

"Some learners talk back, refuse to follow instructions, hurt classmates, or show no interest in the lesson." (P6)

"The child had hurt a classmate, but the parent blamed me for being strict. That made me feel helpless." (P6)

"It is hard when teachers are pressured to improve scores without enough support. Children are not the same." (P10)

3.2 Coping mechanisms used by teachers

Theme 1: Personal Self-Regulation

Participants used self-regulation to protect their capacity to teach. They set limits, organized daily tasks, and paused before they responded to emotionally charged situations.

"I learned that if I do not take care of myself, I cannot take care of my learners well." (P1)

"I organize tasks by priority. I separate urgent tasks from tasks that can wait." (P8)

"I learned not to answer messages when I am emotional. I pause first, then respond with respect." (P7)

Theme 2: Support from Others

Participants drew emotional and practical help from co-teachers, family members, mentors, and cooperative parents. These relationships reduced isolation, helped them solve classroom problems, and provided reassurance during stressful periods.

"My co-teacher sat with me and helped me plan remediation." (P1)

"My family reminds me to rest and not carry all school problems at home." (P1)

"A parent once worked with me closely to help her child improve behavior." (P6)

Theme 3: Meaning in Learner Progress

Participants sustained passion by noticing small gains, learner trust, and moments of appreciation from current and former learners. These experiences renewed their

belief that teaching remained meaningful despite workload, limited support, and emotional demands.

"If one learner reads better, behaves better, or gains confidence, I take that as a reason to continue." (P1)

"Their trust, their stories, and their progress give me strength." (P1)

"One experience was when a former learner visited me and said I was the reason he liked school." (P2)

3.3 Proposed enhancement program

The proposed program was organized around the challenge and coping themes that emerged from the participants' narratives. It covered workload and time management, teacher well-being, instructional support, supportive school leadership, collegial mentoring, learner behavior management, parent partnership, progress monitoring, remediation, and recognition.

Table 1. Proposed professional growth enhancement program.

Key area for enhancement	Basis from findings	Program objective	Proposed activities	Expected outcomes
Workload and Time Management	Teachers experienced paperwork pressure, time shortage, and physical exhaustion.	Help teachers manage tasks, set priorities, and reduce work-related stress.	Conduct a workshop on task prioritization, daily lesson planning, report scheduling, and simplified templates for routine documentation. Include guided weekly task planning exercises.	Teachers become more organized, less overwhelmed, and better able to protect time for lesson preparation and rest.
Teacher Well-Being and Self-Regulation	Teachers coped by setting limits, reflecting on emotions, and protecting time for rest, family, and prayer.	Strengthen emotional regulation, self-care, and boundary-setting practices.	Hold wellness sessions with guided reflection, stress management techniques, breathing exercises, journaling, and discussion of healthy boundaries to prevent burnout.	Teachers develop healthier coping practices and sustain patience, energy, and motivation in teaching.
Instructional Support and Resourcefulness	Teachers struggled with limited resources and lack of materials for quality instruction.	Improve ability to prepare low-cost, practical, and learner-centered instructional materials.	Organize collaborative workshops on improvised materials, resource-sharing, peer demonstration of teaching strategies, and LAC sessions for instructional planning and material development.	Teachers gain practical materials and strategies that reduce personal burden and improve classroom instruction.
Supportive School Leadership	Teachers felt discouraged by unclear instructions, sudden tasks, and leadership	Promote clearer communication, supportive supervision, and considerate task delegation.	Conduct leadership dialogue between teachers and school heads on workload concerns, task clarity, feedback, and support systems, with	Teachers experience better guidance, clearer expectations, and stronger administrative support.

	focused mainly on compliance.		follow-up LAC discussions.	
Collegial Mentoring and Peer Support	Teachers relied on co-teachers and mentors for advice, materials, and emotional support.	Strengthen collaboration, mentoring, and shared problem-solving among teachers.	Establish regular LAC sessions, peer mentoring groups, and monthly collaborative meetings where teachers share classroom challenges, solutions, and best practices.	Teachers feel less isolated and more supported by colleagues in classroom and professional concerns.
Learner Behavior Management	Teachers were challenged by learners who refused instructions, hurt classmates, or showed low interest.	Improve skills in positive discipline, behavior documentation, and learner support.	Conduct training on positive discipline, classroom management strategies, conflict resolution, and behavior documentation and referral procedures, reinforced through LAC discussions on actual classroom cases.	Teachers become more confident in handling behavior problems and maintaining a safe classroom environment.
Parent Communication and Partnership	Teachers experienced parent pressure, blame, and limited home support for learners.	Strengthen teacher-parent communication and shared responsibility for learner progress.	Provide training on respectful conferencing, difficult conversations, home-school agreements, and parent engagement strategies, with sharing of experiences during LAC sessions.	Teachers build better relationships with parents and gain stronger support for learner behavior and academic needs.
Learner Progress Monitoring and Remediation	Teachers felt frustrated by slow learner progress and wide learning gaps.	Help teachers track small progress and provide realistic remediation support.	Conduct training on simple assessment tools, progress tracking, remediation planning, and documentation of learner improvement, with LAC-based sharing of remediation practices.	Teachers better track learner growth and provide appropriate remediation strategies.
Recognition and Renewal of Purpose	Teachers felt discouraged when only mistakes were noticed, but they found meaning in learner trust and progress.	Strengthen teacher motivation, appreciation, and sense of professional purpose.	Implement teacher recognition activities, success story sharing, reflective journaling, and structured LAC sessions for reflection and sharing of meaningful classroom experiences.	Teachers feel valued, appreciated, and more connected to their purpose in teaching.

4. Discussion

The findings show that accomplished teachers sustain purpose and passion within a tension between meaningful work and demanding systems. Their narratives did not portray passion as an unchanging personal trait. Rather, passion appeared as a renewable but vulnerable professional resource shaped by workload, leadership, learner needs, parent relationships, and moments of learner growth. This interpretation aligns with self-determination theory, which views motivation as stronger when autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Teachers in this study persisted because they felt competent when learners improved, related

when colleagues and families supported them, and purposeful when their work produced visible change. At the same time, they felt depleted when institutional conditions weakened those same needs.

The theme of overloaded teaching role reflects a long-standing concern in teacher well-being literature: teachers may enter the profession for instruction and learner development, but their work often expands into documentation, compliance, communication, and extra-role responsibilities. The OECD (2020) identifies administrative work as a major source of teacher stress across education systems, while Viac and Fraser (2020) place working conditions at the center of teacher well-being frameworks. The local finding that paperwork pressure, time shortage, and physical exhaustion weakened passion therefore mirrors broader evidence. It also gives empirical texture to Department of Education Order No. 005, s. 2024, which rationalizes public school teachers' workload and affirms the need to distinguish teaching from ancillary and non-teaching tasks (Department of Education, 2024). In this study, workload was not only a management issue. It affected teachers' sense of professional identity because time spent on reports displaced time for lesson creativity, remediation, and direct learner care.

The weak support system theme suggests that teacher passion cannot substitute for institutional responsibility. Participants remained resourceful, but resourcefulness had a cost when teachers used personal money, improvised materials after hours, or followed unclear directives without explanation. Hascher and Waber (2021) caution that teacher well-being is shaped by both personal and organizational dimensions, and Hascher et al. (2021) emphasize that resilience depends on supportive contexts, not merely individual strength. The present findings add that teachers can continue to comply with institutional expectations while emotionally disengaging when appreciation is absent. This is consistent with Dreer's (2023) review, which links teacher well-being with satisfaction and retention-related outcomes. Recognition, clear communication, and resource support are therefore not ceremonial add-ons. They are part of the ecology that allows professional commitment to endure.

School leadership is a central lever in this ecology. Participants' accounts of sudden tasks, unexplained directives, and compliance-centered leadership show how leadership practices can either protect or erode purpose. Leithwood et al. (2020) argue that leadership contributes to school improvement by setting direction, developing people, and creating productive organizational conditions. Mincu (2022) also stresses that leadership is essential to education transformation because it shapes both structural and cultural conditions for quality. In the present study, teachers did not ask for leadership that removes all demands. They described a need for clarity, timing, empathy, and feedback. These elements make directives more intelligible and help teachers experience themselves as professionals rather than simply receivers of tasks.

Learner and parent demands were also central to teachers' emotional burden. In elementary schools, teachers address behavior, academic gaps, attendance concerns, parent communication, and classroom climate at the same time. The finding that behavior problems and slow progress caused frustration is consistent with evidence

that classroom management interventions can improve academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and motivational outcomes, even when effect sizes are modest (Korpershoek et al., 2025). The implication is that teachers need practical training and responsive referral systems, not blame for difficulties that require shared intervention. Likewise, the parent pressure subtheme suggests that home-school relationships can be either a resource or a stressor. Kelty and Wakabayashi (2020) describe family engagement as a relational process built on communication, trust, and shared responsibility. In this study, parent partnership became helpful when parents worked with teachers on learner behavior and materials, but it became damaging when parents appeared only in conflict or blamed teachers for complex learner needs.

The coping theme of personal self-regulation shows how teachers used boundaries, task organization, and emotional reflection to preserve functioning. These practices are protective because they convert diffuse stress into manageable routines. However, it would be misleading to interpret self-regulation as a private solution to systemic problems. Self-regulation helped participants survive heavy demands, but it did not remove the causes of those demands. Viac and Fraser (2020) argue that teacher well-being must be supported by data-informed policy and organizational conditions, while Hascher et al. (2021) place resilience within an interaction between individual and context. The study therefore supports a balanced view: teachers need skills for emotional regulation and time management, but schools must also reduce avoidable overload and create conditions that make healthy boundaries possible.

Support from others emerged as a major source of resilience. Collegial help, family reassurance, and parent cooperation gave teachers emotional relief and practical solutions. This theme resonates with research on professional learning communities and collegial trust. Akinyemi et al. (2020) found that trust and positive working relationships support teachers' professional development, while Antinluoma et al. (2021) show that professional learning communities rely on shared inquiry, collaboration, and collective responsibility. De Jong et al. (2022) likewise describe school-based collaboration as an important learning context for teachers. In this study, support from colleagues had immediate practical value because co-teachers shared materials, divided tasks, and helped plan remediation. It also had emotional value because teachers felt that they belonged to a team rather than an isolated role.

The theme of meaning in learner progress is perhaps the strongest evidence that purpose and passion are sustained through relational impact. Participants found renewed commitment in small academic gains, improved behavior, learner trust, and gratitude from former learners. Collie and Martin (2023) show that teacher-student relatedness is associated with teacher well-being across a school term, and the present findings explain how that relation may feel in practice. A learner who reads better, behaves better, or expresses trust becomes a concrete sign that the teacher's work matters. These small markers of growth may counterbalance fatigue because they restore a sense of competence and meaning. Work as calling theory helps explain why such moments carry motivational force: teachers who view teaching as meaningful connect daily effort to a broader purpose (Duffy et al., 2019).

The proposed enhancement program is therefore justified because the findings show both risk factors and protective factors. Its workload and time management component responds to role overload, while its well-being component strengthens the self-regulation practices teachers already use. Its resourcefulness and instructional support component recognizes that teachers often improvise, but seeks to make that creativity collective rather than privately burdensome. Its leadership dialogue component addresses unclear direction and weak appreciation. Its peer mentoring component aligns with the Department of Education's Learning Action Cell policy, which institutionalizes school-based continuing professional development through teacher collaboration (Department of Education, 2016). By using existing LAC structures, the program can become a realistic school-based intervention rather than an additional bureaucratic requirement.

The study also has implications for educational policy and school improvement. The Basic Education Development Plan 2030 emphasizes quality, teacher development, learning resources, and governance as long-term priorities for Philippine basic education (Department of Education, 2022). The voices in this study show how these priorities meet classroom reality. Teachers need policy to reach the level of daily work through clearer task allocation, accessible materials, better feedback cycles, parent communication protocols, and recognition practices that value invisible labor. UNESCO and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2024) argue that resilient education systems require teachers who are qualified, motivated, and well supported. The present findings affirm that support must include both professional development and humane working conditions.

Methodologically, the study contributes by centering accomplished teachers rather than only beginning teachers, distressed teachers, or attrition cases. This matters because accomplished teachers can reveal both the pressures that threaten sustainability and the practices that allow commitment to endure. The phenomenological approach allowed participants to describe how they interpreted fatigue, appreciation, learner difficulty, and professional meaning from within their own experience. Braun and Clarke (2022) note that thematic analysis requires conceptual clarity and careful theme development; the themes in this study offer a coherent account of challenge, coping, and program response. However, the findings remain context-bound. They should not be treated as statistical generalizations for all teachers in the Philippines. Their value lies in analytic transferability: school leaders and policymakers can examine whether the same patterns appear in comparable public elementary contexts.

Overall, the findings call for a shift from a heroic view of teaching to a sustainable view of teaching. A heroic view praises teachers for sacrifice while leaving workload, resources, leadership, and recognition unchanged. A sustainable view honors teachers' dedication but refuses to depend on sacrifice as the main support system. The accomplished teachers in this study stayed committed because they found meaning in learners and drew strength from relationships. Yet their narratives also make clear that purpose and passion are more likely to last when schools manage

workload, provide resources, communicate clearly, build collegial communities, partner with parents, and recognize teachers' professional and emotional labor.

5. Conclusion

This study explored how accomplished public elementary school teachers sustained purpose and passion in the profession. The findings showed that teachers faced three major forms of challenge: overloaded teaching role, weak support system, and learner and parent demands. These challenges appeared in paperwork pressure, time shortage, physical exhaustion, limited resources, unclear leadership, lack of appreciation, behavior problems, parent pressure, and slow learner progress. Despite these demands, teachers remained committed through personal self-regulation, support from others, and meaning in learner progress.

The study concludes that purpose and passion are sustained through an interaction of inner meaning and external support. Teachers drew strength from their vocation, faith, self-discipline, colleagues, family members, cooperative parents, and learner growth. However, personal resilience alone was not enough. Teachers also needed manageable workloads, adequate resources, clear leadership, constructive parent partnerships, responsive learner support, and recognition of their contributions.

The proposed professional growth enhancement program offers a practical response to the findings. It centers on workload and time management, teacher well-being, instructional resourcefulness, supportive leadership, collegial mentoring, learner behavior management, parent communication, learner progress monitoring, remediation, and renewal of purpose. School leaders and education authorities may use these components to design school-based support that protects teacher well-being while strengthening instructional quality.

Future research may extend this inquiry across districts, compare contexts with different resource levels, or examine how the proposed enhancement program affects teacher well-being, commitment, and learner support over time. Sustaining teachers' purpose and passion requires more than admiration for their dedication. It requires systems that allow dedication to remain healthy, recognized, and professionally sustainable.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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