

Lived Experiences of Teachers During the Transitioning from RPMS to PMES

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers during the transition from the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) to the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES) at Washington National High School. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with five public secondary school teachers across various career stages (Teacher I to Master Teacher II) selected via purposive sampling. The study examined how teachers experienced changes in evaluation, workload, professional growth, and career progression within the PMES framework. The research was anchored on DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 (Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers) and guided by Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Career Development Theory. Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method for data analysis revealed five major themes: clarity in career progression, increased administrative workload, evolving professional accountability, mentoring and peer support, and implementation challenges. Findings indicated that while PMES provides clearer professional standards and career trajectory, teachers face substantial burdens related to documentation demands, workload pressure, and inconsistent guideline implementation. The study concludes that PMES effectively supports teacher accountability and growth, but its systemic success relies on sustained mentoring, streamlined communication, and institutional support.

Keywords: RPMS, PMES, teacher evaluation, phenomenology, professional accountability, educational reform

INTRODUCTION

Educational reforms continue to influence teacher development, accountability, and professional growth in the Philippine basic education system. In response to the increasing demand for quality education, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced policies that strengthen instructional competence, professional standards, and career progression among teachers. One major reform was the institutionalization of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) through DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017. The PPST serves as the national framework for teacher quality by defining professional competencies, standards, and career stages for public school teachers. Through this reform, teacher evaluation became more aligned with competency-based development and career advancement.

To support the implementation of PPST, teacher evaluation systems also evolved. The Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) was introduced to strengthen accountability and align teacher performance with school and national educational goals.

Under RPMS, teachers were evaluated through classroom observations, portfolios, Means of Verification (MOVs), and Individual Performance Commitment and Review Forms (IPCRFs). However, recent reforms under DepEd Memorandum No. 017, s. 2025 replaced RPMS with the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES). structuring aimed to provide clearer career pathways and strengthen professional growth among teachers.

In the Philippines, reforms intensified after the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum and the adoption of competency-based teacher standards. Studies show that performance management systems improve instructional monitoring and professional accountability among teachers. Pollescas and Aguilar (2025) explained that teachers generally recognize the value of performance evaluation in improving instructional practices and professional discipline.

Educational policy transitions often create implementation challenges among stakeholders. Fullan (2007) emphasized that reforms become difficult when stakeholders lack preparation, orientation, and institutional support. Similarly, Lingatong et al. (2023) explained that teachers commonly experience uncertainty when policies introduce new standards, evaluation indicators, and reporting systems. International studies also show that accountability-based reforms influence teacher morale, workplace experiences, and organizational culture (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). While competency-based systems strengthen accountability, they may also increase pressure among teachers when implementation lacks adequate support mechanisms.

Teacher evaluation systems also influence professional identity, motivation, and career development. Professional identity refers to how teachers view their professional competence, responsibilities, and value within the educational system. Du Plessis et al. (2015) noted that policy transitions often reshape teachers' confidence, expectations, and workplace roles. At the same time, competency-based standards create opportunities for career advancement and professional improvement. Darling-Hammond (2017) explained that professional teaching standards become more effective when schools provide mentoring, collaboration, and developmental support systems for teachers.

Teachers continue to adapt to changes in teacher evaluation and career progression systems in Region VIII particularly in the Division of Northern Samar. Many educators experience challenges in interpreting indicators, preparing required documents, and aligning classroom practices with revised standards. While some teachers view PMES as an opportunity for clearer promotion pathways and professional recognition, others express concerns regarding increased workload and implementation difficulties. Schools continue to conduct orientations, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, and technical assistance programs to support teachers during the transition process.

At Washington National High School, teachers directly experience the implementation of PMES while balancing instructional duties, administrative responsibilities, and co-curricular assignments. These experiences provide insight into how educational reforms influence teachers at the school level. Despite the growing number of studies on teacher performance systems, limited qualitative research explores the lived experiences of teachers during the transition from RPMS to PMES, particularly in public secondary schools in rural areas such as Northern Samar. Most existing studies focus on policy implementation, competency ratings, and performance outcomes rather than teachers' actual experiences, perceptions, and adjustment processes.

Existing literature highlights the significant role of teacher performance evaluation systems in improving instructional quality, accountability, and professional development. Educational reforms across different countries increasingly emphasize competency-based standards to strengthen teacher effectiveness and learner outcomes. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), professional teaching standards become more effective when schools provide continuous mentoring, collaboration, and developmental support systems for teachers. Similarly, Caldwell and Spinks (2013) emphasized that educational reforms are more sustainable when schools establish supportive organizational structures and professional learning environments.

In the Philippine context, teacher evaluation reforms intensified following the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum and the institutionalization of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). Pollescas and Aguilar (2025) noted that teachers generally recognize the importance of performance evaluation systems in improving instructional practices and maintaining professional discipline. However, teachers also encounter concerns related to workload demands, documentation requirements, and unclear implementation guidelines.

Studies on educational reform implementation likewise emphasize the importance of institutional support during periods of transition. Fullan (2007) argued that educational reforms become difficult when stakeholders

lack adequate preparation, orientation, and technical assistance. Lingatong et al. (2023) also explained that teachers frequently experience uncertainty when reforms introduce revised standards, competency indicators, and reporting systems.

Despite the growing body of literature on teacher evaluation systems, limited qualitative studies explore teachers' lived experiences during the transition from RPMS to PMES, particularly in rural public secondary schools in the Philippines. Most studies focus on policy implementation, competency ratings, and performance outcomes rather than teachers' actual experiences, perceptions, and adjustment processes. This gap in the literature highlights the need to examine how teachers experience the transition to PMES in terms of workload, accountability, professional growth, and career progression.

This study was anchored on Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Career Development Theory. It explains that individuals become motivated when they believe that effort leads to improved performance and desirable outcomes. In the context of teacher evaluation, teachers are more likely to improve their instructional practices and professional competencies when they clearly understand that strong performance may result in promotion, recognition, and career advancement.

This study was also guided by Career Development Theory by Donald Super which explains how teachers adapted to PMES and pursued professional advancement under the new evaluation system Career Development Theory, which emphasizes that professional growth occurs through continuous learning, competency development, and adaptation across different career stages.

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers during the transition from RPMS to PMES at Washington National High School. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges do teachers encounter in adapting to the revised performance evaluation system?
2. What opportunities and professional advantages do teachers perceive under PMES?
3. How does PMES affect teachers' workload, professional identity, motivation, and career progression?

METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of teachers during the transition from the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) to the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES) under DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017. A phenomenological approach was appropriate because the study aimed to understand teachers' lived experiences during the transition from RPMS to PMES, interpreted, and responded to changes in the performance evaluation system within their professional practice. The design allowed an in-depth examination of teachers' perceptions, challenges, and professional experiences during the policy transition.

Research Setting

The study was conducted at Washington National High School in Catarman II District, Division of Northern Samar, Philippines. The school was selected because it actively implements teacher performance evaluation systems aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The setting provided access to teachers from different career stages who directly experienced the transition from RPMS to PMES.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

The participants included five public secondary school teachers representing different professional ranks: Teacher I, Teacher II, Teacher III, Master Teacher I, and Master Teacher II. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with direct involvement in teacher performance evaluation processes and sufficient experience with both RPMS and PMES implementation. This sampling method ensured that participants could provide rich and relevant information regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

Data saturation was achieved when no new themes, insights, or significant information emerged from the participants' responses during the interviews. After interviewing five participants representing different teaching ranks, recurring patterns and thematic consistency were observed, indicating sufficient depth and completeness of the data.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were gathered through semi-structured face-to-face interviews using an interview guide composed of open-ended questions. The interview questions focused on teachers' experiences, challenges, opportunities, workload changes, professional accountability, motivation, and career progression under the revised performance management system. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify responses and deepen the discussion based on participants' answers. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and completeness of the collected data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed *Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method*. The researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts to gain familiarity with the participants' responses and extract significant statements related to their lived experiences. Meanings were then formulated from the extracted statements and grouped into clustered themes. Similar meanings and patterns were organized into emergent themes that described the common experiences of participants during the transition from RPMS to PMES.

The themes were further synthesized into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon. To ensure credibility and consistency, the final themes were validated by comparing them with the original transcripts to confirm that the interpretations accurately reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher observed the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants, careful transcription of interview responses, and validation of themes against the original data. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a clear and systematic documentation of the research process, including data collection and analysis procedures. Confirmability was observed through the use of participant responses and transcript verification to minimize researcher bias. Transferability was supported by providing detailed descriptions of the research setting, participants, and procedures to allow readers to determine the applicability of the findings in similar contexts.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all participants before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of participant codes instead of real names. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. All collected data were used solely for academic purposes and securely stored to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Code	Position	Years in Service	Educational Attainment
T1	Teacher I	5	Master's Degree
T2	Teacher II	10	Master's Degree
T3	Teacher III	20	Master's Degree
MT1	Master Teacher I	22	PhD units
MT2	Master Teacher II	24	Master's Degree

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants included in the study. The participants consisted of five teachers representing different career stages. Their years of service ranged from 5 to 24 years, reflecting a combination of early-career, mid-career, and experienced educators. This variation provided broader insights into how teachers across different professional levels experienced the transition from RPMS to PMES. Most participants had completed a master’s degree, while one participant had completed doctoral units. Their academic preparation and professional experience contributed valuable perspectives regarding the implementation of teacher performance management policies and competency-based evaluation systems

Table 2. Clustered themes and emergent themes

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
• Introduction of expanded career stages from RPMS to PMES • Alignment of teacher competencies with PPST domains • Opportunities for promotion based on competency levels • Clearer standards for career advancement	Clarity in Career Progression
• Increased preparation of MOVs and portfolios • Heavy paperwork for classroom observations and evaluation • Time pressure due to multiple submission requirements • Balancing teaching tasks with documentation work • Administrative burden during rating and validation periods	Increased Workload Administrative
• Shift from routine teaching to standards-based practice • Increased sense of professional accountability • Reframing of teacher expectations and responsibilities • Development of stronger professional self-awareness	Evolving Accountability Professional
Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
• Trainings and orientations on PMES implementation • LAC sessions supporting understanding of the new system • Mentoring from school leaders and Master Teachers • Peer collaboration in understanding standards • Technical assistance during the RPMS to PMES transition	Mentoring and Peer Support
• Difficulty understanding new PMES guidelines • Confusion on indicators and performance standards • Lack of clarity during early implementation • Adjustment challenges in interpreting career stages • Stress during classroom observations and evaluation periods	Implementation Challenges

Table 2 summarizes the general themes drawn from the participants’ responses. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed five major themes regarding teachers’ lived experiences during the transition from the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) to the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES). These themes were: (1) clarity in career progression, (2) increased administrative workload, (3) evolving professional accountability, (4) mentoring and peer support, and (5) implementation challenges.

Clarity in Career Progression

Teachers described PMES as a more structured system that provided clearer career pathways and professional expectations. They explained that the expanded career stages helped them better understand promotion opportunities and competency standards aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

One participant shared, “Now I understand what is expected in every stage, so I know what I need to improve.” Another teacher stated, “The new system gives clearer direction for promotion compared to before.”

Participants also noted that the shift from output-based evaluation to competency-based assessment encouraged them to focus more on professional growth and instructional improvement. Some educators viewed the revised framework as an opportunity to strengthen their qualifications and prepare for higher career

stages.

Participants reported that PMES increased their awareness of career development and professional expectations within the educational system within the educational system.

Increased Administrative Workload Participants consistently reported that PMES increased documentation requirements and administrative responsibilities. Participants noted that preparing Means of Verification (MOVs), portfolios, and classroom observation documents required significant time and effort in addition to their teaching duties.

One teacher stated, “The paperwork became heavier because we need to prepare many documents and reports.” Another participant explained, “Sometimes it is difficult to balance teaching, checking papers, and completing PMES requirements.”

Teachers also experienced pressure during submission periods and validation schedules. Several participants shared that deadlines and multiple reporting requirements affected their time management and classroom preparation.

These responses signify that teacher experienced workload strain while adjusting to the revised performance management system.

Evolving Professional Accountability

The transition to PMES also influenced how educators viewed their professional responsibilities and accountability. Participants elaborated that competency-based standards increased their awareness of teaching performance and instructional practices.

One participant shared, “I became more aware of my work because performance is now closely monitored.” Another teacher stated, “The system pushed me to improve my teaching strategies and classroom performance.”

They also described changes in their professional identity as they shifted from routine teaching practices toward standards-based instruction and continuous self-improvement. Some participants viewed the system as challenging, while others saw it as an opportunity to become more reflective and goal-oriented educators.

These results show that PMES reshaped teachers’ understanding of accountability, professional standards, and instructional responsibility.

Mentoring and Peer Support

Participants emphasized the importance of mentoring, collaboration, and technical assistance during the transition from RPMS to PMES. They explained that orientations, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, and guidance from school leaders helped them understand the revised system.

One participant stated, “The orientations and LAC sessions helped us understand the indicators better.” Another teacher shared, “I learned a lot from Master Teachers and colleagues who guided us during the adjustment period.”

Peer collaboration also played an important role in helping teachers interpret standards, prepare documents, and complete evaluation requirements. Participants appreciated the support provided by school heads, mentors, and co-teachers during implementation. These findings highlight the value of professional support systems in helping teachers adapt to educational reforms.

Implementation Challenges

Despite the perceived benefits of PMES, participants experienced several implementation challenges during the transition process. Teachers reported confusion regarding guidelines, indicators, and evaluation standards,

especially during the early stages of implementation.

One participant explained, “Some indicators are difficult to understand, especially during the first implementation.” Another teacher shared, “There were times when instructions were not very clear, so we depended on others for clarification.”

Participants also described stress and anxiety during classroom observations and evaluation periods. Some of them expressed concern about meeting competency indicators and maintaining satisfactory ratings under the revised system.

This study denotes that while PMES promotes professional standards and accountability, teachers continue to experience adjustment difficulties related to policy interpretation and implementation progress.

DISCUSSION CLARITY IN CAREER PROGRESSION

The findings revealed that PMES provided teachers with a clearer understanding of career advancement and professional expectations.

Participants recognized that the expanded career stages and competency-based standards helped them identify the qualifications and competencies needed for promotion. This increased awareness encouraged teachers to focus on professional growth and instructional improvement.

The findings support Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which suggests that individuals become more motivated when they perceive a clear connection between effort, performance, and desired outcomes. Teachers became more goal-oriented because PMES established clearer pathways for career progression and professional recognition. This finding also supports the objectives of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasize competency-based teacher development and career advancement.

Increased Administrative Workload Participants reported that PMES increased their administrative responsibilities through additional documentation, portfolio preparation, and submission of Means of Verification (MOVs). Balancing instructional duties with evaluation requirements created workload pressure and time management challenges.

This finding suggests that while PMES promotes accountability, the extensive documentation requirements may contribute to workload strain among teachers. Similar studies have shown that performance-based evaluation systems often increase administrative demands during periods of policy transition. The findings highlight the need to streamline documentation processes to allow teachers to focus more on instruction and learner engagement.

Evolving Professional Accountability

The transition to PMES strengthened teachers' awareness of professional standards, instructional performance, and accountability. Participants became more reflective in their teaching practices and more conscious of meeting competency expectations.

This finding supports Career Development Theory, which emphasizes continuous learning, competency development, and professional growth throughout one's career. The implementation of PMES encouraged teachers to assess their strengths, improve instructional practices, and align their performance with national teaching standards. The findings further suggest that competency-based evaluation promotes a culture of continuous improvement and professional responsibility.

Mentoring and Peer Support

Participants emphasized that mentoring, collaboration, orientations, and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions were essential in helping them adapt to PMES. Guidance from school leaders, Master Teachers, and colleagues reduced confusion and improved their understanding of evaluation requirements.

The findings support Fullan's view that successful educational reforms require collaboration, professional support, and shared learning among stakeholders. Mentoring and peer support served as valuable mechanisms for helping teachers navigate policy changes and implementation demands. This indicates that schools play a crucial role in fostering supportive professional learning environments during periods of educational reform.

Implementation Challenges

Despite recognizing the benefits of PMES, participants experienced challenges related to unclear guidelines, difficulty interpreting indicators, and uncertainty during the initial stages of implementation. These challenges often resulted in stress and adjustment difficulties.

The findings suggest that policy transitions become more effective when teachers receive adequate orientation, clear communication, and continuous technical assistance. Consistent with previous studies, adjustment difficulties commonly occur when new evaluation systems introduce revised standards and reporting requirements. The results highlight the importance of sustained professional development, accessible guidelines, and responsive leadership to support successful PMES implementation.

Overall, the findings indicate that PMES promotes professional growth, accountability, and career development among teachers. However, effective implementation requires continuous mentoring, clear communication, simplified documentation processes, and sustained institutional support to help teachers adapt successfully to the new performance evaluation system.

CONCLUSION

The transition from RPMS to PMES significantly influenced teachers' professional experiences, accountability, and career development. Although PMES provided clearer competency standards and promotion pathways, teachers also encountered increased administrative workload and adjustment challenges. Mentoring, collaboration, and institutional support were essential in helping teachers adapt to the revised evaluation system. Overall, PMES promotes professional growth; however, its effectiveness depends on clear implementation guidelines, continuous orientation, and manageable documentation processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study suggest the need for clearer and more simplified PMES guidelines to help teachers better understand evaluation indicators, career stages, and documentation requirements. Improved communication mechanisms and implementation support may enhance teachers' understanding of PMES guidelines and evaluation standards and ensure that policy instructions are accessible and easy to interpret during implementation.

Regular orientations, workshops, and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions should also be continuously conducted to improve teachers' understanding of competency-based evaluation standards and PMES processes.

These professional learning activities may reduce confusion and improve readiness during policy transitions.

The study further recommends the streamlining of documentation and reporting requirements to lessen excessive paperwork and administrative burden among teachers. Reducing unnecessary documentation may allow teachers to focus more on classroom instruction, lesson preparation, and learner engagement.

School leaders and Master Teachers should continue providing mentoring, coaching, and technical guidance to teachers, especially during evaluation periods and career progression processes. Timely feedback and collaborative professional learning may facilitate teacher adaptation to the revised system.

Lastly, future researchers may conduct similar studies in other schools or divisions using a larger number of participants to further examine the long-term effects of PMES on teacher performance, motivation, workload, and professional development within the Philippine public education system.

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