

# Legacy Framework: A Guide to Sustain Balance among Retired Teachers

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Retirement is a significant life transition that reshapes an individual's identity, social roles, and daily routines. For teachers, whose profession is often regarded as a lifelong vocation rather than merely an occupation, this transition becomes particularly complex and emotionally demanding. The shift from a structured, socially engaging environment to a less structured post-career life requires substantial psychosocial adjustment, including the redefinition of purpose, identity, and daily engagement (Lanada & Ballaret, 2021). Thus, retirement is increasingly viewed not only as an economic or biological milestone but as a critical developmental phase that necessitates meaning-making, identity reconstruction, and sustained well-being.

Globally, demographic trends highlight the urgency of addressing the well-being of retirees. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020), by 2050, one in six people worldwide will be aged 65 and above. This shift underscores the importance of ensuring quality of life among older adults, including retired professionals such as teachers. This concern aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), which emphasize lifelong health, inclusive development, and continued engagement across all life stages (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2021). Supporting the well-being of retired educators therefore contributes not only to individual fulfillment but also to broader societal sustainability.

Existing literature indicates that retirement often brings challenges such as identity loss, reduced social interaction, and emotional distress, particularly among individuals whose professional roles strongly define their sense of self (Kim & Moen, 2020; Silver et al., 2021; Szinovacz et al., 2020). The quality of retirement adjustment is influenced by multiple factors, including voluntary retirement decisions, psychological preparedness, and access to social support systems (Dingemans & Henkens, 2019; Hershey et al., 2021; Wöhrmann et al., 2020). Moreover, engagement in meaningful activities such as community involvement, lifelong learning, and social participation significantly enhances life satisfaction and overall well-being among retirees (Calvo et al., 2021; Steptoe & Fancourt, 2019). These findings suggest that successful retirement is not passive but requires active adaptation and continuous engagement.

However, retirement experiences vary across contexts. In countries such as the United States, retired teachers report challenges related to identity loss and insufficient institutional support (Kim & Moen, 2020). In contrast, community-based engagement models in countries like Thailand have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting psychosocial well-being among retirees (Pinyopornpanish et al., 2019). Studies further emphasize the importance of meaning reconstruction, resilience, and narrative identity in achieving a fulfilling retirement experience (Bianchi, 2021; Westerlund et al., 2021). These international perspectives highlight that both structural support systems and internal psychological processes are essential in sustaining life balance after retirement.

In the Philippine context, the situation presents distinct challenges. While teachers are widely recognized as key contributors to national development, limited attention has been given to their psychosocial well-being after

retirement (Department of Education [DepEd], 2021). Existing programs largely focus on financial security and healthcare, often overlooking emotional, psychological, and identity-related dimensions of retirement. As a result, many retired Filipino teachers experience loneliness, loss of purpose, and diminished self-worth (Salazar, 2020; Tolondon & Ortizo, 2024). These challenges are further intensified by the lack of structured post-retirement engagement programs and support systems.

These issues are even more pronounced in rural communities such as Cervantes, Ilocos Sur, where access to mental health services, social participation opportunities, and institutional support is limited (De Leon & Cruz, 2022). Cultural factors also play a significant role, as teaching is deeply embedded in community identity, making detachment from the profession more difficult (Maranga et al., 2025; Kelchtermans, 2019). Consequently, retired teachers in these contexts often struggle to redefine their roles and maintain a sense of relevance within their communities.

Despite the growing body of literature on retirement, several gaps remain. Existing studies predominantly focus on financial preparedness, health outcomes, and general well-being among retirees (Henning et al., 2019; Hershey et al., 2021), with limited emphasis on the lived experiences of retired teachers, particularly within the Filipino and rural context (Lanada & Ballaret, 2021). Furthermore, while theoretical frameworks such as continuity theory and the life course perspective provide valuable insights into retirement adjustment (Ekerdt, 2020; Kaufman & Elder, 2020), there is limited application of Erikson's psychosocial theory, specifically the stage of ego integrity versus despair, in understanding how retired educators interpret and reconcile their life experiences.

Moreover, there is a lack of integrative and localized frameworks that translate retirees' experiences into practical models for sustaining life balance. While previous studies emphasize meaning-making, identity reconstruction, and social engagement (Fisher et al., 2022; Topa & Alcover, 2019), these dimensions have not been fully synthesized into a cohesive and context-sensitive framework tailored to retired teachers.

In response to these gaps, this study explores the lived experiences of retired teachers in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur, through the lens of Erikson's psychosocial theory. Specifically, it seeks to understand how retired educators navigate the transition from active service to retirement, how they construct meaning and maintain identity, and how they cope with emotional, social, and practical challenges.

### **Framework of the Study**

This study was anchored on Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Human Development, particularly the final stage of ego integrity versus despair. This theory served as the primary lens for understanding how retired teachers interpreted their lived experiences and navigated the transition from active service to retirement. Erikson's theory posited that individuals in late adulthood reflected on their lives to evaluate fulfillment and coherence, where ego integrity represented acceptance and satisfaction, and despair indicated regret or dissatisfaction (Erikson, 1982). Empirical studies showed that retirees who perceived their careers as meaningful were more likely to achieve ego integrity, while those who faced identity loss or unresolved goals experienced despair (Topa & Alcover, 2019; Fisher et al., 2022; Westerlund et al., 2021). This framework justified the researchability of the study by providing a lens to examine how retired teachers evaluated their professional contributions and coped with emotional and psychological transitions after retirement.

The study also integrated Continuity Theory, which proposed that individuals tended to maintain consistent patterns of behavior, relationships, and identity across the life span (Ekerdt, 2020). Retired teachers often preserved elements of their professional identity through mentoring, community engagement, or participation in educational activities, thereby sustaining a sense of purpose and social connection. Research indicated that retirees who remained socially and cognitively active experienced higher life satisfaction and emotional stability (Calvo et al., 2021; Bonsang & Klein, 2021; Quick & Moen, 2021). Continuity Theory thus provided a framework to analyze how retired teachers-maintained identity, engagement, and meaningful routines, supporting their adaptation to retirement.

Finally, the Life Course Perspective emphasized that retirement was a developmental transition shaped by cumulative life experiences, social roles, and socio-cultural contexts (Kaufman & Elder, 2020). For teachers

whose professional identity was deeply embedded in long-term service, retirement required integration of past experiences with present realities. Prior career experiences, resilience, and preparedness influenced life satisfaction, and professional identity often persisted even after retirement (Hershey et al., 2021; Henning et al., 2019; Kelchtermans, 2019; Forrester, 2025). By situating retirees’ experiences within their broader life trajectories, this perspective allowed the study to contextualize their reflections, coping strategies, and meaning-making processes. Together with Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory and Continuity Theory, it enabled a comprehensive examination of how retired teachers navigated the transition from active service to retirement and informed the development of a Legacy Framework for sustaining life balance among retired educators.

**Importance of the Study**

The findings of this study are valuable to several stakeholders:

**Retired Teachers.** This study could provide a platform for retired educators to express and reflect on their lived experiences. By identifying the challenges and coping mechanisms associated with retirement, the findings could help them better understand their emotional transitions and develop strategies to sustain life balance and overall well-being.

**Department of Education (DepEd).** The study could offer insights into the psychosocial needs of teachers beyond their years of active service. These findings may assist the Department in designing more comprehensive pre-retirement and post-retirement programs that go beyond financial preparation and address emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

**Institutions.** Schools and academic institutions may use the findings of this study as a basis for strengthening alumni relations, developing outreach initiatives, and creating support systems for retired educators. Such efforts could help maintain a sense of connection and continued purpose among former faculty members.

**Current and Future Education Students.** The study could provide prospective educators with a broader perspective on the teaching profession, highlighting not only its immediate demands but also its long-term impact on identity and personal development. This may encourage future teachers to adopt a more holistic approach to career planning, including preparation for retirement.

**Policy Makers and Educational Leaders.** The findings could serve as a foundation for the formulation or enhancement of policies and programs that support the holistic well-being of retired teachers. In particular, the study may emphasize the need for inclusive and context-sensitive interventions, especially for educators in rural and underserved communities.

**The Academic Community.** This study could contribute to the existing body of knowledge on retirement, aging, and teacher identity by providing localized, qualitative insights grounded in the Filipino context. Furthermore, it could support the development of the Legacy Framework for Sustaining Life Balance among Retired Teachers, which may serve as a reference for future research and program development.

**Research Paradigm**

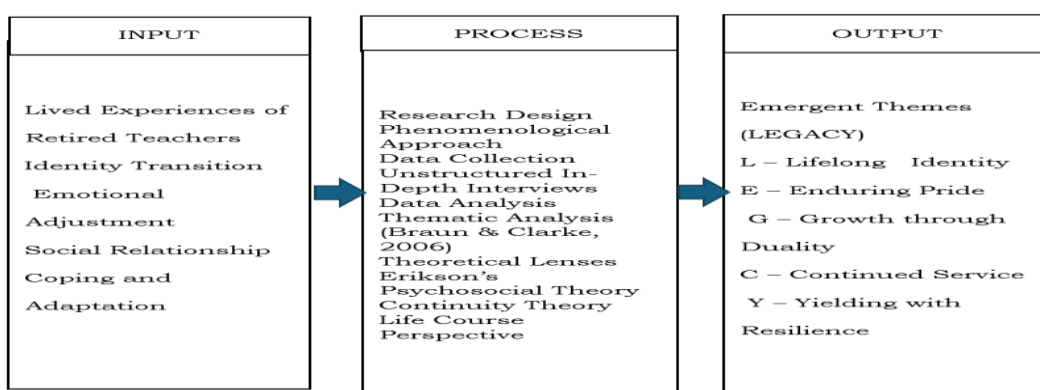


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm

Figure 1 presents the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model of the study. This paradigm served as the conceptual guide in examining the lived experiences of retired teachers and in structuring the flow of the investigation from data sources to final outcomes.

The Input of the study centered on the lived experiences of retired teachers, focusing on four key dimensions: identity transition, emotional adjustment, social relationships, and coping and adaptation. These dimensions represented the essential aspects through which retirement was experienced and interpreted by the participants. Identity transition described how retired teachers redefined themselves beyond their professional roles, reflecting shifts in self-concept after leaving formal service. Emotional adjustment captured the range of feelings experienced during retirement, including both positive and negative responses to change. Social relationships examined the transformation of interpersonal connections, such as reduced interaction with colleagues and increased engagement with family and community. Meanwhile, coping and adaptation highlighted the strategies employed by participants to manage these changes, sustain well-being, and establish new routines and sources of meaning.

These input components provided a comprehensive foundation for understanding the complexity of retirement as a lived experience. They ensured that the study captured not only the observable changes in retirees' lives but also the internal processes through which participants made sense of these transitions.

The Process involved the methodological framework used to explore and interpret these lived experiences. The study employed a phenomenological research design, which enabled an in-depth examination of participants' subjective realities. Through this approach, the researcher was able to capture the essence of how retired teachers experienced and understood their transition into retirement. Data were gathered through unstructured, in-depth interviews, allowing participants to freely articulate their thoughts, emotions, and reflections. This method facilitated the emergence of rich and nuanced narratives that revealed the depth and complexity of their experiences.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). This systematic process involved identifying, organizing, and interpreting recurring patterns within the data, which eventually led to the development of themes. The analysis was further strengthened by anchoring it on three theoretical perspectives: Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, which explains identity development and the achievement of ego integrity; Continuity Theory, which emphasizes the preservation of identity and behavioral patterns across life stages; and the Life Course Perspective, which situates retirement within the broader context of an individual's life trajectory. These theoretical lenses provided a deeper understanding of how participants maintained identity, adapted to change, and constructed meaning in retirement.

The integration of these methods and frameworks ensured that the findings were both systematically derived and theoretically grounded, enhancing the credibility and depth of the analysis.

The Output of the study was the emergence of the overarching themes summarized as LEGACY, which encapsulated the essence of retired teachers' lived experiences. These themes included Lifelong Identity, which highlighted the استمرار (continuity) of teaching as a core aspect of self; Enduring Pride, reflecting sustained fulfillment and professional competence; Growth through Duality, illustrating the coexistence of challenges and rewards; Adjusting to Change, which captured the process of transitioning into retirement; Continued Service, demonstrating ongoing engagement in spiritual and community activities; and Yielding with Resilience, which described adaptive coping with financial and social realities.

Collectively, these themes illustrated that retirement was not merely a withdrawal from professional life, but a dynamic process characterized by continuity, transformation, and meaning-making. The LEGACY framework provided a holistic representation of how retired teachers sustained identity, navigated change, and maintained a sense of purpose beyond their years of active service.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Lived Experiences and Transition to Retirement among Educators

Retirement among educators is not merely the end of work but a complex life transition that involves identity reconstruction, role adjustment, and meaning-making. For teachers, the profession is closely tied to their personal identity, making the transition more meaningful and sometimes challenging. This process requires emotional and social adjustment as individuals redefine their purpose beyond the classroom. It also involves reflecting on past experiences and maintaining a sense of identity even after leaving formal service.

Andoh-Robertson et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative study examining the relationship between retirement preparation and well-being among retirees. Using survey methods, they gathered data on emotional, psychological, and social readiness. The findings revealed that individuals who were well-prepared, particularly in psychological and social aspects, experienced higher levels of emotional stability and life satisfaction. The study concluded that retirement preparation is essential for a smooth transition. It recommended that retirement programs should include not only financial planning but also emotional and social readiness to help individuals adjust effectively.

Tolondon and Ortizo (2024) utilized a descriptive research design to assess retirement readiness among DepEd teachers in the Philippines. Data were collected through structured questionnaires focusing on financial, health, and lifestyle preparedness. The findings showed that teachers who prepared holistically beyond financial concerns experienced higher levels of satisfaction and well-being. The study concluded that retirement readiness must include multiple dimensions of life. It recommended that institutions provide comprehensive retirement preparation programs that address health, lifestyle, and psychosocial needs.

Kelchtermans (2019) employed a qualitative approach to explore teacher identity and professional development. Through interviews and narrative analysis, the study found that teachers maintain a strong attachment to their professional identity even after retirement. The study concluded that teaching is a deeply embedded vocation rather than a temporary occupation. It recommended that support systems should acknowledge and preserve teacher identity even after retirement by creating opportunities for continued engagement.

The reviewed studies indicate that retirement among educators is shaped by preparation, identity continuity, and meaning-making. Retirement is therefore an active process of redefining one's self and purpose. However, there is limited research that explores the lived experiences of retired teachers using a phenomenological approach, particularly in rural Filipino contexts. Most studies focus on readiness rather than on how retirees interpret their experiences.

### Coping with Emotional, Psychological, and Social Dimensions

Coping in retirement involves managing emotional changes, reconstructing identity, and maintaining social relationships. When individuals leave their professional roles, they may experience loneliness, loss of purpose, and identity disruption. Effective coping strategies are important in achieving emotional stability and successful adaptation.

Kiyiapi, Gacohi, and Omondi (2023) conducted a correlational study to examine the relationship between psychological preparedness and retirement adjustment. Using survey instruments, they measured levels of preparedness and well-being among retirees. The findings revealed that individuals who were mentally and emotionally prepared experienced higher life satisfaction and better social integration. The study concluded that psychological readiness is a key factor in successful retirement. It recommended that retirement programs should include emotional and mental preparation strategies.

Bianchi (2021) used a qualitative narrative approach to study how retirees construct meaning through life stories. Data were gathered through interviews and analyzed using narrative analysis. The findings showed that retirees use reflection and storytelling to reinterpret their past experiences and maintain a sense of identity. The study concluded that narrative identity plays a significant role in well-being during retirement. It recommended encouraging reflective practices such as storytelling and journaling to support retirees in meaning-making.

Calvo et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative study using survey data to examine the effects of social participation on well-being. The findings revealed that retirees who actively participated in community and cultural activities

experienced lower levels of loneliness and higher emotional well-being. The study concluded that social engagement is essential for successful retirement adjustment. It recommended promoting community involvement and social participation programs for retirees.

Silver et al. (2021) employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the effects of social isolation on retirees. Their findings showed that loss of social roles and reduced interaction contribute to emotional distress. The study concluded that social disconnection negatively affects mental health. It recommended strengthening social support systems and encouraging continued social interaction among retirees.

The literature shows that successful coping depends on psychological preparedness, identity reconstruction, and social engagement. However, there is limited research focusing specifically on how retired teachers cope within the context of their professional identity, especially in rural settings.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Post-Retirement Adjustment**

Post-retirement life includes both challenges and opportunities. Retirees may face role loss, financial concerns, and social isolation, but they may also experience growth, new interests, and renewed purpose. The ability to balance these experiences is important for overall well-being.

Dingemans and Henkens (2019) conducted a comparative quantitative study examining voluntary and involuntary retirement. Using survey data, they found that individuals who retired voluntarily experienced higher well-being and satisfaction. The study concluded that autonomy plays an important role in retirement adjustment. It recommended that policies should support flexible retirement options to allow individuals more control over their transition.

Bonsang and Klein (2021) used a longitudinal research design to examine cognitive functioning among retirees. Their findings showed that continued mental engagement helps maintain cognitive health and prevents decline. The study concluded that active mental involvement is important for successful aging. It recommended encouraging retirees to participate in learning activities and intellectually stimulating tasks.

Stephoe and Fancourt (2019) conducted a quantitative study on the effects of cultural engagement. The findings revealed that participation in cultural activities reduces loneliness and improves emotional well-being. The study concluded that social and cultural engagement is beneficial for retirees. It recommended creating accessible programs that encourage participation in such activities.

Zhan et al. (2021) used a multidimensional approach to study retirement adjustment. Their findings emphasized the importance of balancing physical, emotional, and social aspects of life. The study concluded that successful retirement requires a holistic approach. It recommended programs that address multiple dimensions of well-being.

The findings show that retirement adjustment is a dynamic process shaped by both challenges and opportunities. However, there is limited research that explores how retired teachers integrate these experiences into a meaningful life narrative.

### **Towards a Simulacrum: Implications for Support Systems**

Support systems play an important role in sustaining retirees' well-being and life balance. These include institutional programs, community engagement, and personal coping strategies.

Redondo (2025) used a qualitative design to explore narrative-based interventions among retirees. The findings showed that life story projects help individuals process experiences and preserve identity. The study concluded that storytelling is an effective intervention. It recommended incorporating narrative-based activities into retirement programs.

Lee et al. (2025) conducted a program evaluation study on retirement education initiatives. Their findings showed that programs addressing emotional, social, and cognitive needs were more effective. The study concluded that retirement support should be holistic. It recommended extending support programs beyond active service.

Kiyiapi et al. (2023) used a descriptive design to examine structured support systems such as seminars and peer groups. Their findings indicated that these systems help individuals adjust more smoothly to retirement. The study concluded that structured support is beneficial. It recommended implementing regular seminars and peer support programs.

Calvo et al. (2021) found that community engagement improves well-being and reduces loneliness among retirees. The study concluded that social participation is essential for maintaining quality of life. It recommended strengthening community-based programs.

The literature shows that effective support systems must be holistic and multidimensional. However, there is still a lack of context-specific frameworks for retired teachers, especially in rural Philippine settings. Existing models do not fully capture their lived experiences or provide practical guidance, which highlights the need for the development of a framework such as the one proposed in this study.

## Research Question

This study aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences of retired teachers in the Cervantes District, Ilocos Sur. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of retired teachers in the Cervantes District as they transition from active service to retirement?
2. What framework for sustaining balance is developed based on the findings of the study?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing a phenomenological approach, to explore and understand the lived experiences of retired teachers in the Cervantes District, Ilocos Sur. Phenomenology was appropriate for this study as it focused on capturing the participants' personal meanings, perspectives, and interpretations of their transition from active teaching to retirement.

This design enabled the researcher to gain in-depth insights into the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of retirement, which directly addressed the first statement of the problem (SOP 1). Furthermore, the rich descriptions gathered from participants served as the foundation for developing a framework or simulacrum for sustaining balance among retired teachers.

### Selection and Study Site / Sources of Data

The study was conducted in the Cervantes District, Ilocos Sur, a locality where retired teachers shared common socio-cultural and institutional experiences. The participants of the study consisted of eleven (11) retired teachers, selected through criterion sampling.

The inclusion criteria required that participants were officially retired from the teaching profession; had rendered a minimum of ten (10) years of teaching service; and were residents of the Cervantes District at the time of the study. These participants served as the primary sources of data, as they provided first-hand accounts of their lived experiences during the transition to retirement. Their narratives were essential in addressing the first research question and in generating insights for the development of a simulacrum or framework for sustaining balance.

## Research Instrument

The primary research instrument in this study was the researcher, who utilized unstructured interviews as the main data collection tool. The researcher served as the key instrument in gathering, interpreting, and analyzing the data, which was consistent with the qualitative and phenomenological nature of the study. Unstructured interviews were employed to allow flexibility and natural dialogue, enabling participants to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences freely. This method aligned with the phenomenological approach, which emphasized the importance of capturing participants' subjective experiences and personal interpretations of their transition to retirement.

To guide the interview process while maintaining openness, the researcher prepared a general set of exploratory prompts. These prompts focused on role transition, identity preservation or loss, emotional well-being, and sources of fulfillment in retirement. Although these prompts served as thematic guides, they did not restrict the flow of conversation. The researcher was able to ask follow-up questions and probe deeper into emerging responses, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences. This flexible approach supported the goal of eliciting rich and meaningful narratives from the participants. It also enabled the researcher to uncover deeper insights related to the participants' psychosocial development, particularly in relation to the concept of ego integrity versus despair.

## Data Collection Procedure

Data collection commenced after the researcher secured ethical approval from the appropriate authority and obtained informed consent from the participants. Potential participants were identified through referrals from local school networks and community contacts within the Cervantes District. The researcher personally approached the participants and explained the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of the study. The procedure was aligned with the study's objectives, particularly in gathering rich narratives to address the lived experiences of retired teachers and to provide a basis for developing a framework for sustaining balance. Participants were assured of confidentiality and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Upon obtaining written consent, interviews were scheduled at a time and place most convenient for each participant, ensuring privacy and comfort throughout the process. In cases where face-to-face interaction was not feasible, alternative modes such as phone or video conferencing were utilized. Each interview lasted approximately forty-five (45) minutes to one (1) hour and was audio-recorded with the permission of the participants to ensure accuracy of data. The researcher also maintained field notes to document non-verbal cues, emotional expressions, and environmental context during the interviews, which were essential in understanding the participants' lived experiences.

The interviews were conducted using either Ilocano or Filipino, depending on the participants' preference, to facilitate better expression and understanding. The recorded interviews were then transcribed verbatim and translated into English for analysis. Member checking was employed when necessary to validate the accuracy of the interpretations and to ensure that the participants' responses were correctly represented. This process ensured the credibility of the data that contributed to the development of themes and the proposed framework for sustaining balance.

Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved, which occurred when no new themes or significant information emerged from the interviews. Throughout the entire process, the researcher maintained a respectful, ethical, and non-intrusive approach, allowing participants to freely share their experiences and reflect at their own pace, thereby ensuring that the data collected were rich, meaningful, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

## Mode of Analysis

The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). This method involved six phases: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts; (2) generation of initial codes from significant statements; (3) searching for patterns and grouping

codes into themes;(4) reviewing and refining themes; (5) defining and naming themes; (6) producing the final report. Thematic analysis was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to systematically identify patterns and meanings within the participants' narratives. This approach enabled the extraction of themes that reflected the lived experiences of retired teachers and served as the basis for developing a framework for sustaining balance (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Ethical Considerations**

To ensure the protection of the participants' rights and well-being. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their voluntary participation was emphasized. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in place of the participants' real names. In this study, participants were labeled as P1, P2, P3, up to P11. All data collected were treated with strict confidentiality and were used solely for academic purposes.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the study did not cause harm, discomfort, or distress to the participants. Respect, honesty, and integrity were maintained throughout the research process.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on the lived experiences of retired teachers in the Cervantes District, Ilocos Sur. The data gathered from the participants were analyzed using thematic analysis, which resulted in the emergence of significant themes that reflect their transition from active service to retirement. These themes are discussed in relation to the participants' narratives and are supported by relevant literature and theoretical frameworks. Through this process, the study provides a deeper understanding of how retired teachers interpret their experiences, sustain their identity, and adapt to changes in retirement.

### **Lived Experiences of Retired Teachers in Cervantes District, Ilocos Sur**

Through a phenomenological approach and thematic analysis, six major themes emerged, collectively forming the acronym **LEGACY**: Lifelong Identity, Enduring Pride, Growth through Duality, Adjusting to Change, Continued Service, and Yielding with Resilience. Each theme is further supported by specific codes that capture the nuances of participants' lived experiences. These themes provide a comprehensive understanding of how retired teachers navigate their transition and serve as the basis for the development of the Legacy Framework for Sustaining Life Balance among Retired Teachers.

#### **L – Lifelong Identity: “Once a Teacher, Always a Teacher”**

**Identity Continuity.** The findings revealed that retirement did not diminish the identity of teachers. Instead, participants continued to perceive themselves as educators even beyond formal service. This suggests strong identity continuity, where teaching remains a core component of self-concept. Rather than experiencing detachment from their professional role, participants demonstrated that teaching had become deeply internalized, shaping not only their past experiences but also their present sense of self.

This continuity indicates that teaching is not merely an occupational role but a lived identity that transcends institutional boundaries. Even after retirement, participants continue to embody the values, attitudes, and perspectives associated with being a teacher. Their narratives suggest that identity is not dependent on formal employment but is sustained through internalized meanings and long-standing social relationships. In this sense, retirement does not signify the end of being a teacher; rather, it reflects a transition in how this identity is expressed and experienced.

No makitak dagiti estudyantek a nagballigi... ket agsubli da nga ibagada dagiti nagun-odda iti biag. (When I see my students succeed and they come back to share their achievements.) P2

Ti kasayaatan a momento iti biag ket no makitak dagiti inadalak idi nga agballigi itan.  
(The happiest moment is seeing my former students succeed.) P3

Ti pinakasayaak ket no dagiti estudyantek ket agbalin nga propesyonal a nagballigi.  
(My greatest happiness is when my students become successful professionals.) P5

These responses indicate that identity is sustained through relational outcomes, particularly student success. The continued emotional investment in students' achievements reflects that teaching is not confined to formal employment but extends into a symbolic and relational space. In this sense, identity continuity is reinforced through ongoing connections with former students, allowing retired teachers to re-experience their roles and reaffirm their sense of purpose.

Moreover, the participants' emphasis on student success suggests that their identity as teachers is anchored in long-term impact rather than immediate outcomes. Their reflections reveal that the effects of teaching are not limited to the classroom but unfold over time through the achievements of their students. This reinforces the idea that teaching identity is future-oriented and enduring, as it continues to generate meaning even after active service has ended. The act of former students returning and sharing their accomplishments further strengthens this identity, as it provides concrete affirmation that their efforts have produced meaningful and lasting contributions.

In addition, these narratives reflect a form of symbolic continuity, where retired teachers remain connected to their professional roles through memory, relationships, and social recognition. The presence of former students in their lives allows them to revisit and relive their teaching experiences, thereby sustaining a sense of relevance and belonging. This ongoing interaction bridges the gap between past and present, enabling them to maintain a coherent sense of self despite the transition to retirement.

This finding aligns with Kelchtermans (2019), who emphasized the persistence of professional identity among teachers even after retirement. Similarly, Fisher et al., (2022) found that perceived career meaning contributes to life satisfaction, suggesting that sustained identity plays a crucial role in achieving well-being in later life.

Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the principles of continuity theory, which propose that individuals maintain patterns of identity and behavior across life stages. By sustaining their identity as educators, participants demonstrate psychological stability and successful adaptation to retirement. This continuity not only supports their sense of purpose but also protects them from identity loss, which is often associated with retirement transitions. As such, maintaining identity continuity serves as a critical factor in achieving ego integrity, where individuals are able to reflect on their lives with acceptance, fulfillment, and a sense of coherence.

**Meaning through Students.** Participants anchored their sense of fulfillment in the achievements of their students, suggesting that meaning in retirement is relational rather than individual. Their reflections consistently shifted from personal narratives to the success stories of others, indicating that their sense of accomplishment is intertwined with the outcomes of their teaching.

This finding highlights that the participants' evaluation of their lives is not centered on personal gain or individual milestones, but rather on the impact they have made on others, particularly their students. Their narratives reveal that teaching extends beyond knowledge transmission and becomes a lifelong investment in the growth and success of learners. In this context, the meaning of retirement is not defined by disengagement but by the continued presence of these outcomes in their lives.

Naragsakak a makita nga nagballigi da nars, doktor, abugado.  
(I am happy seeing them become nurses, doctors, and lawyers.) P10

Dagiti estudyantek ti rason no apay a proudak iti biagko.  
(My students are the reason I feel proud of my life.) P4

Ti panagballigi da ket kasla panagballigi ko met.  
(Their success feels like my own success.) P7

These narratives demonstrate that fulfillment is constructed through generativity, where individuals derive satisfaction from contributing to the success of others. This relational orientation reflects a shift from self-centered evaluation to a broader perspective that values social impact and legacy. The success of students becomes a tangible representation of the teachers' lifelong contributions.

Moreover, the participants' responses suggest that their sense of pride and fulfillment is deeply interconnected with their students' achievements, indicating a form of shared success. Rather than viewing success as an individual accomplishment, participants perceive it as a collective outcome of their efforts and their students' growth. This reinforces the idea that teaching is inherently relational, where the achievements of others serve as extensions of one's own life work.

In addition, the emphasis on professional outcomes such as becoming nurses, doctors, and lawyers reflects the long-term and transformative influence of teaching. These achievements are not immediate findings but are realized over time, suggesting that the impact of teaching continues to unfold even after retirement. This temporal dimension of fulfillment allows retired teachers to continuously revisit and reinterpret their contributions, thereby sustaining their sense of purpose and relevance.

Furthermore, these narratives indicate that participants engage in a process of reflective meaning-making, where they reassess their past experiences in light of present outcomes. By witnessing the success of their students, they are able to affirm that their efforts were meaningful and worthwhile. This process contributes to a positive life evaluation, where individuals perceive their lives as productive, impactful, and complete.

This supports Bianchi (2021), who highlighted narrative identity as central to retirement well-being, and Topa and Alcover (2019), who linked life review to ego integrity, emphasizing the importance of interpreting one's life as meaningful and impactful.

Furthermore, this finding is consistent with Erikson's concept of generativity, where individuals find fulfillment in nurturing and guiding the next generation. Although generativity is often associated with earlier stages of adulthood, the participants' experiences demonstrate that it continues into retirement through symbolic and relational extensions of their teaching roles. This ongoing generativity reinforces their sense of identity and contributes to the achievement of ego integrity, where individuals are able to look back on their lives with satisfaction and acceptance.

### **E – Enduring Pride: Professional Identity and Competence**

**Professional Achievement.** Participants expressed pride in their accomplishments, reinforcing a strong sense of competence. Their narratives revealed that achievements whether formal or informal served as markers of success that contributed to their positive self-evaluation.

This finding indicates that participants view their professional journey as both meaningful and successful, reflecting a strong sense of self-efficacy and confidence in their abilities. Their recollections of accomplishments suggest that teaching provided them with opportunities to experience mastery, growth, and recognition. More importantly, these achievements were not limited to formal awards or distinctions but also included everyday classroom successes that held personal significance.

Kanayonak a kampeon iti cooking contests... nagcoachak iti athletes ket nagbalin kami a kampeon.  
(I was always a champion in contests and coached winning athletes.) P11

Narigat, ngem naragsak gapu ta isu ti husto a pinilik a kurso.  
(It is difficult but fulfilling because I chose the right profession.) P7

No makitak nga ammo da agbasat ken agsurat dagiti estudyantek.  
(Seeing my students learn to read and write.) P1

These accounts highlight that competence is derived not only from awards and recognition but also from everyday teaching successes. Participants demonstrated a strong sense of mastery, indicating that their professional identity is rooted in both achievement and meaningful contribution.

Furthermore, the participants' reflections means that their sense of pride is closely linked to the impact they have made on their students. Achievements such as coaching successful athletes or witnessing students acquire basic literacy skills are perceived not merely as professional tasks but as meaningful milestones that affirm their effectiveness as educators. This indicates that competence is not solely measured through external validation but also through internal recognition of one's ability to make a difference in the lives of others.

In addition, these narratives reflect a process of retrospective evaluation, where participants revisit their past experiences and reinterpret them as sources of accomplishment. Through this reflective process, they are able to construct a positive and coherent narrative of their professional lives, reinforcing their sense of worth and identity. This suggests that retirement provides an opportunity for individuals to reassess their contributions and affirm their value as educators. Fisher et al., (2022) noted that perceived competence leads to higher life satisfaction, while van Solinge (2020) emphasized the role of life review in reinforcing positive self-perception.

Moreover, these findings are consistent with Erikson's concept of ego integrity, where individuals evaluate their past experiences with a sense of fulfillment and acceptance. The participants' ability to reflect on their achievements with pride indicates that they have successfully integrated their professional experiences into a meaningful life narrative, thereby contributing to their overall well-being in retirement.

**Intrinsic Fulfillment.** Fulfillment was derived not only from achievements but also from everyday teaching experiences. Participants described teaching as a meaningful and purpose-driven activity, reflecting deep intrinsic motivation.

This finding shows that participants' satisfaction in their profession is not dependent solely on external rewards but is deeply rooted in the personal meaning they attach to teaching. Their narratives reveal that teaching is perceived as more than a source of income; it is experienced as a calling, a responsibility, and a purposeful engagement that provides emotional and psychological fulfillment.

Ti panangisuro ket saan laeng a trabaho, no di ket misyon.  
(Teaching is not just a job, but a mission.) P6

Nabannog ngem naragsakak latta iti classroom.  
(I get tired but still happy in the classroom.) P8

Adu ti naadalak iti panangisuro kadagiti ubbing.  
(I learned a lot from teaching children.) P2

These responses indicate that fulfillment is rooted in personal meaning rather than external validation. Teaching is viewed as a calling, and the emotional rewards derived from student interaction and personal growth contribute to sustained satisfaction.

Additionally, the participants' accounts highlight the reciprocal nature of teaching, where fulfillment is not only derived from giving knowledge but also from the learning and growth experienced by the teachers themselves. This mutual exchange reinforces the meaningfulness of their role and contributes to a deeper sense of engagement and satisfaction.

Furthermore, the presence of statements emphasizing enjoyment despite fatigue means that intrinsic motivation enables participants to find joy even in challenging situations. This reflects a strong alignment between personal values and professional roles, where teaching becomes a source of purpose rather than merely a set of

responsibilities. As a result, participants are able to sustain positive emotions toward their profession even after retirement.

In a broader sense, these narratives indicate that intrinsic fulfillment serves as a protective factor against negative experiences associated with retirement, such as loss of purpose or identity. By grounding their satisfaction in internal meaning, participants are able to maintain a stable sense of well-being despite the absence of formal professional roles.

Romero Tena et al., (2020) linked intrinsic motivation to retirement satisfaction, highlighting the importance of internal fulfillment in sustaining well-being.

Similarly, these findings align with self-determination perspectives, which emphasize that individuals experience greater well-being when their activities are driven by intrinsic motivation. In the context of retirement, this intrinsic fulfillment allows individuals to carry forward a sense of purpose and satisfaction, contributing to successful adjustment and overall life satisfaction.

### **G – Growth through Duality: Bittersweet Nature of Teaching**

Extending from pride, the third theme, Growth through Duality, reflects how participants interpret their teaching experiences as both challenging and rewarding. This theme generated two codes: Challenges and Sacrifice (CS) and Joy and Fulfillment.

This finding highlights that participants do not perceive their teaching experiences in a one-dimensional manner. Instead, they demonstrate the ability to hold both positive and negative experiences simultaneously, suggesting a mature and reflective understanding of their professional lives. Teaching is viewed not merely as a source of satisfaction or burden, but as a dynamic experience shaped by both struggle and fulfillment. This dual perspective allows participants to construct a more balanced and meaningful interpretation of their careers.

Under Challenges and Sacrifice. Participants acknowledged the difficulties of teaching.

Nalaka ti pait gapu kadagiti rigat ken stres iti panangisuro.  
(It is bitter because of stress and difficulty in teaching.) P3

Rigat iti panagbiyahe a mapan iti pagtrabahuan.  
(Traveling to work was difficult.) P9

Nakapadasak kadagiti nasukir nga estudyante.  
(I experienced very difficult students.) P6

These responses indicate that teaching involved significant physical, emotional, and psychological demands. Participants openly recognized the stress, workload, and challenges inherent in their profession, suggesting that their experiences were not without hardship. The acknowledgment of these difficulties reflects an honest and realistic appraisal of their teaching journey.

Moreover, these challenges highlight the level of resilience required to sustain a career in teaching. Dealing with difficult students, managing stress, and overcoming logistical barriers such as travel all contributed to the complexity of their roles. These experiences, while demanding, also shaped their capacity for patience, adaptability, and perseverance, which are essential qualities in the teaching profession.

In contrast, Joy and Fulfillment captures the positive experiences.

Ti ragsak ken panagkatawa dagiti estudyantek.  
(The joy and laughter of my students.) P4

Ay-ayaten da no idalannaka ida ken ipakitam ti panangasi.  
(They love it when you guide them with care.) P8

Ti pinakasaya a laglagip ket iti graduation.  
(The happiest memory is graduation.) P6

These responses emphasize that despite the challenges, participants found deep emotional satisfaction in their interactions with students. Moments of connection, care, and shared joy served as powerful sources of fulfillment, reinforcing the meaningfulness of their profession. These experiences reflect the relational nature of teaching, where positive interactions and student milestones contribute significantly to a teacher's sense of purpose.

Furthermore, the emphasis on events such as graduation highlights the long-term rewards of teaching, where educators witness the culmination of their efforts through the achievements of their students. These moments serve as affirmations that their work has produced meaningful outcomes, thereby reinforcing their sense of accomplishment and fulfillment.

These findings demonstrate integrative meaning-making, where participants reconcile both hardship and fulfillment. Rather than viewing challenges as negative experiences that diminish their profession, participants integrate these difficulties into a broader narrative of growth and meaning. The coexistence of struggle and joy suggests that the "bitter" aspects of teaching do not overshadow its rewards; instead, they enhance the significance of positive experiences.

This integrative perspective reflects a deeper level of psychological processing, where individuals are able to accept the complexities of their experiences without regret. By acknowledging both challenges and fulfillment, participants construct a coherent and balanced life narrative that contributes to their sense of completeness and acceptance in retirement. This supports Westerlund et al., (2021), emphasizing meaning reconstruction in retirement.

In addition, this finding aligns with broader perspectives on life review, where individuals reinterpret past experiences to derive meaning and achieve psychological well-being. The ability to integrate both positive and negative aspects of one's professional life reflects a successful transition toward ego integrity, as described in Erikson's psychosocial theory. Through this process, participants are able to appreciate their teaching journey in its entirety, recognizing that both hardship and fulfillment were essential in shaping their identity and sense of purpose.

### **A – Adjusting to Change: Life After Retirement**

**Freedom and Relief.** Participants' narratives consistently revealed that retirement was initially experienced as a significant release from the demands, pressures, and structured routines of professional teaching. This transition was characterized by a marked sense of relief, as individuals described retirement as an opportunity to disengage from long-standing occupational responsibilities and regain personal autonomy. Rather than being perceived solely as an endpoint, retirement emerged as a shift toward a more self-directed and less constrained way of living, where individuals could finally prioritize rest and personal well-being after years of sustained professional engagement.

Nalakaak unay... awanen ti stres.  
(I am very relaxed... No more stress.) (P1)

Naragsakak ta awanen ti trabaho nga agpabpabannog kaniak.  
(I am happy because there is no more work that exhausts me.) (P4)

Naimbag ti riknak ta makapahingaak manen iti awan presyur.  
(I feel good because I can finally rest without pressure.) (P7)

These statements reflect a shared experience of relief from occupational strain, indicating that retirement provided participants with both physical rest and emotional ease. The narratives suggest that years of continuous teaching responsibilities had accumulated stress, and retirement served as a release from these demands. The absence of daily obligations allowed participants to reallocate their time toward rest, personal activities, and

slower routines, thereby restoring a sense of balance that was previously constrained by professional commitments.

While participants described this transition as liberating, the findings also reveal that this sense of freedom represents more than just the absence of work. It signifies the beginning of a broader process of adjustment, wherein individuals shift from externally imposed schedules to self-regulated living. This change reflects an important dimension of identity reconfiguration, as participants begin to redefine their daily roles outside the structure of the teaching profession. In this context, freedom is not only experienced as relief but also as an opportunity to renegotiate one's relationship with time, purpose, and self-definition.

These findings align with Hershey, Henkens, and Van Dalen (2021), who emphasized that adequate preparation across financial, social, and health domains facilitate smoother retirement transitions and contribute to reduced stress. Similarly, Andoh-Robertson et al. (2022) found that retirees who undergo effective preparation tend to report higher emotional stability and life satisfaction, which supports the observed sense of calm and ease among participants. Dingemans and Henkens (2019) further noted that voluntary retirement is associated with improved well-being, suggesting that the participants' expressions of relief may be linked to their willingness and readiness to retire.

From a psychosocial perspective, this experience of freedom reflects the early phase of navigating Erikson's stage of ego integrity versus despair. The relief expressed by participants indicates a positive acceptance of life transitions, where individuals begin to look back on their professional contributions with a sense of fulfillment while adjusting to their current circumstances. At the same time, this phase marks the beginning of identity transformation, as retirees gradually move away from externally defined professional roles toward more flexible and personally meaningful activities.

The sub-theme of Freedom and Relief illustrates that retirement is not merely the cessation of employment but a transitional experience that provides both recovery and reorientation. While participants experience immediate relief from stress and responsibilities, this freedom simultaneously initiates the process of identity reconstruction and psychosocial adjustment. In this sense, freedom in retirement functions as both an outcome of disengagement and a foundation for continued personal development, supporting the broader journey toward achieving balance, meaning, and eventual ego integrity.

### **C – Continued Service: Generativity Beyond the Classroom**

Spiritual Engagement. Faith emerged as a coping mechanism, providing emotional stability and guidance. This result suggests that spirituality plays a central role in how participants navigate the transition to retirement. As individuals move away from structured professional roles, they turn to faith as a source of direction, comfort, and inner strength. Spiritual engagement becomes a means through which they interpret life changes, manage uncertainties, and maintain a sense of peace and acceptance.

Nagkararagak iti Apo para iti tulong.

(I prayed to the Lord for help.) P3

Kanayon nga agkararag.

(Always praying. or I always pray.) P10

Ti pammati ti mangtulong kaniak.

(Faith is what helps me.) P8

These responses indicate that spirituality functions as both a coping strategy and a source of meaning.

Furthermore, these narratives reflect that faith is not only practiced during moments of difficulty but is also integrated into participants' daily lives. The consistency of prayer and reliance on belief systems suggests that

spirituality provides a stable foundation that supports emotional regulation and psychological well-being. Through spiritual practices, participants are able to sustain hope, maintain resilience, and find reassurance in the face of life transitions.

In addition, spirituality appears to reinforce a sense of purpose beyond professional identity. Even after retirement, participants continue to see their lives as meaningful within a broader spiritual framework. This indicates that their sense of purpose is not solely tied to their former roles as teachers but is also anchored in their beliefs and values.

**Community Involvement.** Participants remained socially active, extending their roles into community engagement.

This result indicates that retirement does not lead to social withdrawal; instead, participants actively seek opportunities to remain engaged and contribute to their communities. Their involvement reflects a continuation of their roles as mentors, leaders, and contributors, suggesting that their identity as educators extends into broader social contexts.

**Presidente ti Senior Citizen Association.**

(President of the Senior Citizen Association.) P6

**Makipartisiparak iti barangay activities.**

(I participate in barangay activities.) P4

**Agserbiak iti komunidad.**

(I serve in the community.) P2

These findings demonstrate continued generativity and social participation. Moreover, participants' involvement in community activities provides them with a sense of belonging and continued relevance. By taking on leadership roles and participating in local initiatives, they are able to maintain social connections and actively contribute to communal well-being. This engagement not only reinforces their self-worth but also allows them to apply their skills and experiences in meaningful ways beyond the classroom.

Additionally, community involvement serves as a platform for sustaining interpersonal relationships and preventing social isolation. Through active participation, participants are able to remain connected to others, share their knowledge, and continue influencing their communities. This reflects the enduring nature of their service-oriented identity, where helping others remains a central aspect of their lives.

Both spiritual engagement and community involvement highlight that participants continue to embody generativity even after retirement. Their actions demonstrate a sustained commitment to contributing to others' well-being, which is a key component of successful aging and life satisfaction. Calvo et al., (2021) found that social engagement improves well-being.

Furthermore, this finding aligns with broader perspectives on aging that emphasize the importance of active participation in social and meaningful activities. Continued engagement in both spiritual and community domains enable individuals to maintain a sense of purpose, strengthen emotional well-being, and enhance overall quality of life. In this context, retirement is not characterized by disengagement but by the transformation of roles, where individuals continue to serve and contribute in new and meaningful ways.

## **Y – Yielding with Resilience: Coping with Financial and Health Realities**

Finally, the theme Yielding with Resilience highlights adaptive coping in financial and social domains. The codes include Financial Adaptation (FA) and Family Support (FS).

This result emphasizes that retirement is not only a psychological transition but also a practical adjustment to new financial and social realities. Participants demonstrated the ability to navigate these changes through proactive strategies and reliance on support systems. Rather than viewing these challenges as limitations, they responded with adaptability, resourcefulness, and resilience, indicating an active engagement with their circumstances.

Nabayag unay ti pananguray iti pension.

(The waiting time for the pension is very long.) P3

Naannad a panagbudget.

(Careful budgeting.) P2

Nag-invest iti paupaan.

(Invested in rental property.) P10

These responses shows that participants encountered financial challenges, such as delays in pension release and adjustments to limited income. However, instead of remaining passive, they adopted practical strategies to manage their resources effectively. Careful budgeting and investment decisions reflect a continued sense of agency and responsibility, indicating that participants actively sought ways to maintain financial stability.

Moreover, these financial adaptations demonstrate that resilience is expressed through problem-solving and forward planning. Participants showed an ability to reassess their economic situation and adjust their behaviors accordingly, which contributed to their sense of control and independence. This means that financial resilience is not merely about having resources but about the capacity to manage and utilize them effectively in changing circumstances.

Adu ti tulong dagiti annak ko.

(My children help me a lot.) P5

Adda latta pamilya a mangsuporta.

(There is always family to support me.) P7

Ti pamilya ti kakampi ko.

(My family is my ally.) P9

These responses highlight the significant role of family as a source of emotional and practical support. Participants emphasized that their families provided assistance, reassurance, and companionship, which helped them navigate the challenges associated with retirement. This indicates that resilience is not solely an individual effort but is also shaped by the presence of strong relational networks.

In addition, family support contributes to a sense of security and belonging, which is essential for emotional well-being. The participants' reliance on their families reflects the importance of interdependence in later life, where support systems play a crucial role in sustaining quality of life. This relational dimension of resilience reinforces the idea that successful adjustment to retirement involves both personal adaptability and social connectedness.

Taken together, these findings highlight resilience as both personal and relational, where individuals actively manage their circumstances while also drawing strength from their social environment. The combination of financial adaptation and family support enables participants to maintain stability, dignity, and a sense of control despite the challenges of retirement.

These findings highlight resilience as both personal and relational, aligning with Segel-Karpas and Ayalon (2022).

Furthermore, this result aligns with broader perspectives on successful aging, which emphasize the importance of adaptability, resourcefulness, and social support in maintaining well-being. The participants’ ability to cope with financial and social realities reflects a balanced approach to retirement, where challenges are met with both internal strength and external support systems.

The findings reflect a structured progression from identity preservation to resilience, demonstrating that retirement among teachers is not a period of disengagement but a transformative phase. These themes collectively provide a strong empirical foundation for the development of the Legacy Framework for Sustaining Life Balance among Retired Teachers.

This progression illustrates how retired teachers move from sustaining their professional identity to redefining their roles, maintaining meaningful engagement, and ultimately developing resilience in the face of life changes. Each theme builds upon the previous one, showing a continuous process of adaptation and meaning-making. From maintaining identity and pride, to integrating life experiences, adjusting to change, continuing service, and developing resilience, participants demonstrate a holistic transition that encompasses emotional, social, and practical dimensions.

These findings shows that retirement should be viewed not as an endpoint but as a stage of ongoing development. The experiences of the participants show that individuals can continue to grow, contribute, and find meaning even after leaving formal employment. The Legacy Framework, therefore, is grounded in these lived experiences and reflects the dynamic and multidimensional nature of retirement among teachers.

### Legacy Framework for Sustaining Life Balance among Retired Teachers



Figure 2. Legacy Framework for Sustaining Life Balance among Retired Teachers

The illustration presents a conceptual flow of retirement transition among teachers, showing how their lived experiences are transformed into meaningful outcomes that lead to successful aging.

At the top of the diagram, Retirement Transition represents the starting point, marking the shift from active teaching service to retirement. This stage signifies a major life change that initiates psychological, emotional, and social adjustments. It is followed by Lived Experiences, which capture the personal narratives, reflections, and realities encountered by retired teachers. These experiences serve as the foundation of the entire framework, as they provide the raw data from which meaning is constructed.

From these experiences emerge the Core Dimensions, summarized through the acronym LEGACY. Each dimension represents a critical aspect of the retirees' lives. Lifelong Identity shows that teachers continue to see themselves as educators even after retirement. Enduring Pride reflects their sustained sense of competence and accomplishment. Growth through Duality highlights the balance between struggles and fulfilling moments in teaching. Adjusting to Change emphasizes the process of adapting to a new life phase. Continued Service illustrates their ongoing engagement in spiritual and community roles, while Yielding with Resilience captures their ability to cope with financial and health challenges.

These dimensions collectively feed into the Meaning-Making Process, which includes reflection, life review, identity continuity, and coping. This stage is crucial because it explains how retirees interpret their past experiences and integrate them into a coherent life narrative. Through this process, they are able to reconstruct meaning, regulate emotions, and maintain a sense of self despite changes brought by retirement.

The outcome of this process is reflected in the Life Balance Outcomes, which include emotional well-being, sense of purpose, social connectedness, and ego integrity. These outcomes indicate that retirees have successfully managed the transition by maintaining psychological stability, meaningful relationships, and a positive evaluation of their lives.

Finally, the diagram culminates in Successful Aging, which represents the ultimate goal of the framework. This stage signifies that retired teachers have achieved a balanced and fulfilling life, characterized by acceptance, resilience, and continued relevance.

All in all, the illustration demonstrates that retirement is not a linear decline but a dynamic and transformative process. It highlights that successful aging is achieved through the interaction of identity, experience, reflection, and adaptation. The framework underscores the importance of sustaining purpose, maintaining connections, and embracing life's changes to achieve well-being in later life.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that retirement among teachers is not a period of disengagement but a meaningful and transformative stage of life that requires continuous support and adaptation. Retired teachers sustain their identity, sense of purpose, and well-being through identity continuity, reflective meaning-making, social engagement, and adaptive coping strategies. These findings emphasize that successful retirement is not achieved through financial preparation alone but also through emotional, psychological, and social readiness.

The findings further reveal that continued engagement in community and spiritual activities, along with strong family support, plays a vital role in maintaining life balance and resilience. This highlights the need for educational institutions, policymakers, and communities to provide holistic support systems that extend beyond active service.

The developed Legacy Framework for Sustaining Life Balance among Retired Teachers demonstrates that successful aging is achieved when retired educators remain connected to their professional identity, actively participate in meaningful activities, and adapt positively to life changes. Thus, retirement should be supported through comprehensive programs and interventions that promote well-being, sustained engagement, and lifelong purpose among retired teachers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Educational institutions, particularly the Department of Education (DepEd), may develop and implement comprehensive retirement programs that go beyond financial preparation. These programs should include components on identity transition, emotional well-being, and opportunities for continued engagement, such as mentorship, volunteer teaching, and community-based initiatives.

School administrators and academic institutions may establish structured support systems for retired teachers by strengthening alumni networks and creating platforms where retirees can remain involved in school or community activities. This may help sustain their sense of purpose and professional identity.

Retired teachers may be encouraged to actively participate in meaningful activities such as community service, spiritual engagement, and lifelong learning. Continued involvement in these areas can enhance emotional well-being, maintain social connectedness, and support successful aging.

Families of retired teachers may provide continuous emotional, social, and, when necessary, financial support. Strengthening family relationships can help retirees cope with changes, maintain stability, and reinforce their sense of belonging and resilience.

Local government units and community organizations may design inclusive programs that engage retired teachers in leadership roles, advisory functions, or community development initiatives. Such opportunities can allow retirees to share their expertise while remaining socially active and relevant.

Policymakers may consider integrating psychosocial support into retirement policies for educators. Programs that address mental health, social engagement, and identity continuity may be developed to ensure a more holistic approach to retirement.

Future researchers may conduct further studies on retirement experiences across different contexts, such as urban settings or other professions, to broaden understanding and validate the findings of this study. Further research may also assess the applicability and effectiveness of the Legacy Framework for Sustaining Life Balance among Retired Teachers.

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