

Predictors of School Retention Among Severely Unlocalized Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Teacher retention remains a critical concern in geographically isolated and disadvantaged schools, where severely unlocalized teachers often encounter professional, financial, and personal challenges that affect their decision to remain in their assigned schools. Understanding the factors that predict teacher retention is essential for developing evidence-based policies that strengthen workforce stability and educational quality.

This study identified the demographic, organizational, and contextual factors that predict school retention among severely unlocalized public school teachers. Specifically, it examined the influence of personal characteristics, community integration, school leadership support, financial incentives, and workplace conditions on teachers' two-year retention.

A quantitative predictive research design was employed involving severely unlocalized public school teachers assigned to selected schools. Data were collected using a validated researcher-developed survey instrument that measured demographic characteristics, perceived community integration, school leadership support, financial incentives, and work-related factors. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics, while chi-square analysis, Pearson correlation,

and binary logistic regression were employed to identify significant predictors of school retention. Statistical significance was established at the 0.05 level.

The logistic regression model identified several significant predictors of teacher retention. Community integration, school leadership support, and the provision of the Special Hardship Allowance positively influenced teachers' likelihood of remaining in their assigned schools, whereas greater distance from home reduced the probability of retention. The predictive model demonstrated that retention decisions are influenced by the interaction of organizational, economic, and social factors rather than by financial incentives alone.

Teacher retention among severely unlocalized teachers is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by both institutional support and community-related experiences. Policies that combine financial incentives with effective instructional leadership, mentoring, and community integration initiatives are more likely to improve long-term teacher retention than interventions focusing solely on economic benefits.

Keywords: *Teacher Retention, Community Integration, Educational Leadership, severely unlocalized teachers, binary logistic regression, school leadership, Special Hardship Allowance*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher retention has become one of the most pressing concerns in educational systems worldwide, particularly in geographically isolated and underserved communities where schools experience persistent staffing shortages and high teacher turnover. Retaining qualified teachers is essential for ensuring instructional continuity, maintaining school stability, and improving student learning outcomes. In the Philippines, this challenge is particularly evident among severely unlocalized public school teachers who are assigned to schools far from their permanent residences. These teachers often encounter financial constraints, social isolation, transportation difficulties, and limited access to family support, all of which may influence their decision to remain in or leave their assigned schools.

The Department of Education has introduced several initiatives to support teachers assigned to difficult or disadvantaged areas, including the provision of the Special Hardship Allowance and various professional development opportunities. While these interventions address some economic concerns, evidence suggests that financial incentives alone may not be sufficient to ensure long-term teacher retention. Organizational support, school leadership, mentoring, workplace climate, and teachers' integration into the local community likewise influence commitment to the profession and decisions regarding continued service.

Previous studies have consistently identified multiple determinants of teacher retention, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, leadership practices, workload, compensation, and working conditions. More recent research emphasizes that retention is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the interaction of personal, professional, organizational, and community-related factors. However, relatively few studies have specifically examined the experiences of severely unlocalized teachers in the Philippine public school system,

particularly through predictive statistical modeling capable of identifying the strongest determinants of actual school retention.

Addressing this gap is important because educational policies often rely on generalized retention strategies that may not adequately reflect the unique circumstances of teachers assigned to remote and underserved communities. Understanding the factors that most strongly predict retention among severely unlocalized teachers provides school leaders and policymakers with evidence necessary to design targeted interventions that improve workforce stability while enhancing educational quality.

Guided by theories of organizational commitment, employee retention, and educational leadership, this study examined the demographic, organizational, and contextual factors associated with school retention among severely unlocalized public school teachers. Specifically, the study investigated the influence of personal characteristics, perceived community integration, school leadership support, financial incentives, workplace conditions, and related factors on teachers' two-year retention. Binary logistic regression was employed to determine the variables that significantly predicted retention while controlling for the influence of other factors.

The findings contribute to the growing body of research on teacher retention by providing empirical evidence on the relative importance of financial, organizational, and community-based supports. More importantly, the study offers practical guidance for educational leaders and policymakers seeking to strengthen teacher retention through comprehensive interventions that extend beyond economic incentives and promote supportive professional and community environments.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative predictive research design to identify factors associated with school retention among severely unlocalized public school teachers. A predictive design was selected because the primary objective was to determine which demographic, organizational, financial, and contextual variables significantly influenced teachers' likelihood of remaining in their assigned schools over a two-year period. Binary logistic regression served as the principal analytical technique because the dependent variable—teacher retention—was dichotomous.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted among severely unlocalized public school teachers assigned to schools within the selected Schools Division Office in the Philippines. Participants met the Department of Education's criteria for severely unlocalized teachers, indicating assignment to schools located a considerable distance from their permanent residences.

A total of eligible teachers participated in the study using the sampling procedure described in the dissertation. Respondents represented various grade levels, teaching experience, and school classifications, thereby providing a broad representation of teachers assigned to geographically distant schools.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of two sections. The first section gathered demographic and

professional information, including age, sex, marital status, teaching experience, educational attainment, assignment history, and distance from home.

The second section measured factors hypothesized to influence school retention, including perceived community integration, school leadership support, mentoring, workplace conditions, financial incentives, and the Special Hardship Allowance. Prior to administration, the instrument underwent expert validation to establish content validity, and pilot testing was conducted to assess reliability. The reliability coefficients indicated that the instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency for research purposes.

Data Collection Procedure

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate educational authorities before data collection commenced. After securing institutional permission, eligible participants were invited to participate voluntarily. The objectives of the study were explained, informed consent was obtained, and respondents completed the questionnaire under conditions that ensured privacy and confidentiality.

Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness before encoding into the statistical software used for data analysis.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize participant characteristics and responses.

Chi-square analysis examined associations between selected categorical variables and teacher retention, while Pearson product-moment

correlation assessed relationships among continuous variables.

Binary logistic regression was employed to determine the variables that significantly predicted teacher retention while controlling for the influence of other predictors. Regression coefficients, adjusted odds ratios, 95% confidence intervals, and significance values were examined to evaluate the contribution of each predictor to the final model. Model adequacy was assessed using appropriate goodness-of-fit statistics and classification accuracy measures. Statistical significance was established at the 0.05 level.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles governing educational research. Approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional and educational authorities prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents before questionnaire administration.

Confidentiality and anonymity were protected through the use of coded identifiers instead of participant names. All responses were treated confidentially, stored securely, and reported only in aggregate form. Participants were informed that they could decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty and that their responses would be used solely for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents

The respondents were severely unlocalized public school teachers assigned to geographically distant schools. Their demographic and

professional characteristics varied in terms of age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, teaching experience, distance from home, and years of service. These characteristics provided the contextual basis for examining factors associated with teacher retention.

Factors Associated with Teacher Retention

Initial analyses examined the relationships between selected demographic, organizational, and contextual variables and teacher retention. Chi-square and correlation analyses identified several variables that demonstrated statistically significant associations with teachers' decisions to remain in their assigned schools.

Among the variables examined, perceived community integration, school leadership support, mentoring, the availability of the Special Hardship Allowance, and distance from home showed meaningful relationships with teacher retention, suggesting that retention decisions are influenced by both organizational and personal factors.

Predictors of Teacher Retention

Binary logistic regression was conducted to identify the variables that significantly predicted school retention while controlling for the influence of other factors included in the model.

The regression analysis demonstrated that community integration, school leadership support, and receipt of the Special Hardship Allowance significantly increased the likelihood of teacher retention. Conversely, greater distance from teachers' permanent residences significantly reduced the probability of remaining in their assigned schools.

The predictive model explained a substantial proportion of the variation in teacher retention and demonstrated satisfactory classification

performance, indicating that the selected predictors effectively distinguished teachers who remained in their assigned schools from those who did not.

Relative Contribution of Significant Predictors

Among the variables included in the final regression model, community integration emerged as one of the strongest positive predictors of teacher retention, indicating that teachers who developed stronger social and professional connections within their assigned communities were more likely to continue serving in those schools.

Supportive instructional leadership and mentoring likewise contributed positively to retention by fostering professional commitment and strengthening teachers' confidence in their work environment. Financial incentives, particularly the Special Hardship Allowance, also demonstrated a significant positive influence on retention, although their effect appeared to complement rather than replace organizational and social support.

Distance from home remained the principal negative predictor of retention, suggesting that prolonged separation from family and increased travel demands continue to present major challenges for severely unlocalized teachers.

Overall, the findings indicate that teacher retention is determined by the combined influence of organizational support, financial assistance, community integration, and geographical factors rather than by any single predictor alone.

DISCUSSION

This study identified several significant predictors of school retention among severely unlocalized public school teachers, demonstrating that retention is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the interaction of organizational, financial, social, and geographic factors. The findings suggest that retaining teachers assigned to geographically distant schools requires more than financial incentives alone; it demands comprehensive support systems that address teachers' professional, personal, and community-related needs.

One of the most important findings is the significant influence of **community integration** on teacher retention. Teachers who developed positive relationships within their assigned communities were more likely to remain in their schools despite the challenges associated with distance and relocation. This finding highlights the importance of social belonging in promoting organizational commitment. When teachers feel accepted, supported, and connected to the communities they serve, they are more likely to perceive their assignments as meaningful and sustainable. Community integration therefore serves not only as a social resource but also as a protective factor against professional isolation.

The study likewise demonstrates that **school leadership support** plays a critical role in teacher retention. Teachers who perceived their school heads as supportive mentors and instructional leaders exhibited a greater likelihood of remaining in their assigned schools. Effective leadership extends beyond administrative supervision by fostering professional trust, recognizing teacher accomplishments, providing constructive feedback, and creating a positive school climate. These findings reinforce leadership theories that emphasize supportive and transformational leadership as important determinants of employee commitment and organizational stability.

Financial incentives, particularly the **Special Hardship Allowance**, also emerged as significant predictors of retention. The findings indicate that financial support remains an important consideration for teachers assigned to difficult or geographically isolated schools because it helps offset the economic burden associated with relocation, transportation, and separation from family. However, the results also suggest that financial incentives alone are insufficient to ensure long-term retention. Teachers who received financial support but lacked organizational encouragement or community acceptance remained vulnerable to leaving their assignments, indicating that financial assistance should complement rather than replace broader retention strategies.

Conversely, **distance from home** remained a significant negative predictor of teacher retention. Teachers assigned farther from their permanent residences faced greater logistical, financial, and emotional challenges associated with travel and family separation. These findings underscore the continuing influence of geographic isolation on teacher mobility and highlight the need for targeted policies that reduce the burden of distant assignments through transportation assistance, housing support, or strategic deployment practices.

Collectively, the findings support an integrated understanding of teacher retention in which organizational support, financial assistance, community integration, and geographic context interact to influence teachers' decisions to remain in their assigned schools. The results demonstrate that successful retention policies should move beyond isolated interventions and instead adopt comprehensive approaches that simultaneously address professional development, leadership, economic support, and social integration.

Despite the strengths of the study, several limitations should be acknowledged. The research was conducted within a single Schools Division Office, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to

other regions. In addition, the predictors examined were limited to the variables included in the research model. Future studies may investigate additional psychological, organizational, and policy-related factors that influence teacher retention using larger and more geographically diverse samples.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that teacher retention among severely unlocalized public school teachers is influenced by multiple interconnected factors rather than by financial incentives alone. Community integration, supportive school leadership, and the provision of the Special Hardship Allowance significantly increased the likelihood of teachers remaining in their assigned schools, whereas greater distance from home reduced retention. These findings highlight the importance of combining organizational, social, financial, and geographic considerations when designing teacher retention initiatives.

The predictive model developed in this study provides empirical evidence that comprehensive support systems are more effective than isolated interventions in promoting long-term teacher commitment. Strengthening instructional leadership, enhancing teachers' integration into their local communities, and sustaining appropriate financial assistance can contribute to improved workforce stability, particularly in geographically isolated and disadvantaged schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The Department of Education should develop integrated teacher retention policies that combine financial assistance with leadership development, mentoring, and community engagement programs for severely unlocalized teachers.

Schools Division Offices should strengthen support systems for newly assigned teachers by implementing structured orientation programs, peer mentoring initiatives, and community integration activities that facilitate adjustment to local school environments.

School heads should adopt supportive instructional leadership practices that foster trust, professional recognition, and teacher well-being while maintaining regular mentoring and coaching throughout teachers' assignments.

Local government units and community stakeholders should collaborate with schools to create welcoming environments that encourage teachers' participation in community activities and strengthen their sense of belonging.

Future researchers should validate the predictive model using larger and more diverse samples across multiple regions and explore additional predictors, such as teacher well-being, resilience, organizational commitment, and work–life balance, to further refine teacher retention strategies.