

Professional Well-being and Service Retention of Teachers Assigned in Far-Flung Areas in Selected Elementary and Secondary Schools in San Fernando, Masbate

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Abstract

This study determined the relationship between professional well-being and service retention of teachers assigned in far-flung areas in selected elementary and secondary schools in San Fernando, Masbate. Anchored on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Social Exchange Theory, the research examined professional well-being in terms of job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and administrative and community support, alongside service retention in terms of length of service, intention to stay, commitment to the teaching profession, and turnover intentions. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was employed with 33 public elementary and secondary school teachers selected through convenience sampling. Data were gathered using a researcher-made structured questionnaire employing a four-point Likert scale that underwent expert content validation. Weighted means and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were used for analysis. Results showed high levels of professional well-being, with job satisfaction registering the highest composite mean of 3.59 (Strongly Agree), followed by support system at 3.48, work-life balance at 3.29, and emotional and mental well-being at 3.27. Service retention was also favorable, with commitment to the teaching profession attaining the highest mean of 3.72 (Strongly Agree), intention to stay at 3.32, length of service at 3.20, and low turnover intentions at 2.15 (Disagree). A moderate positive and statistically significant relationship existed between professional well-being and service retention ($r = 0.55$). The study concludes that higher professional well-being is associated with stronger service retention among teachers in geographically isolated schools. Recommendations include sustained wellness programs, strengthened administrative support, continuous professional development, and policy initiatives promoting teacher welfare and long-term service in far-flung areas. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education by supporting a stable teaching workforce in underserved communities, and with Sustainable Development Goal 3 on good health and well-being through attention to teachers' emotional and professional resilience. It contributes to educational and institutional sustainability by generating localized evidence that can inform interventions to reduce turnover risks and sustain quality learning delivery in remote Philippine schools.

Keywords: Commitment to the Teaching Profession; Far-Flung Areas; Job Satisfaction; Professional Well-Being; Service Retention; Teacher Retention; Work-Life Balance

1. Introduction

Teachers are regarded as the cornerstone of the educational system because they directly influence learners' academic achievement, character formation, and lifelong development. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes that achieving quality, equitable, and inclusive education depends largely on maintaining a competent, motivated, and professionally fulfilled teaching workforce. This commitment is reflected in the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030, which emphasizes strengthening teacher quality, improving teacher support systems, and creating favorable working conditions to ensure quality learning outcomes across all schools, including those situated in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Teachers assigned in far-flung or geographically isolated schools perform their duties under conditions that differ significantly from those of their counterparts in urban communities. They often face challenges such as limited instructional resources, inadequate transportation, poor internet connectivity, professional isolation, and restricted access to professional development opportunities. Despite these difficulties, they remain responsible for delivering quality instruction while fulfilling numerous administrative and community-related functions. These realities highlight the importance of promoting teachers' professional well-being and ensuring their continued commitment to public service. The Department of Education acknowledges that teacher welfare is essential to educational quality. (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017) or the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) emphasizes that teachers should continuously develop professionally while receiving institutional support that enables them to perform effectively. The PPST recognizes professional engagement, personal growth, collaboration, and reflective practice as essential characteristics of quality teachers. Likewise, (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2020), which established the National Adoption and Implementation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan, highlighted the importance of supporting teachers' psychosocial well-being, professional resilience, and adaptive capacities during challenging circumstances. These policies reinforce the need to safeguard teachers' welfare, particularly those assigned to schools with limited resources and difficult working environments.

The changing educational landscape has further expanded teachers' professional responsibilities. According to Rupnarain (2024), teachers are now expected to adopt flexible instructional approaches while responding effectively to emerging educational demands and societal changes. These evolving responsibilities require greater adaptability, innovation, and emotional resilience. For teachers assigned in remote schools, these expectations become even more demanding because they often perform multiple roles beyond classroom instruction with limited institutional support. Professional well-being significantly influences teachers' effectiveness and commitment to remain in the profession. Klusmann, Richter, and Lüdtke (2016) found that emotional exhaustion among teachers negatively affects instructional effectiveness and student achievement, demonstrating that teachers' psychological health is closely linked to educational quality. Maintaining positive professional well-being therefore becomes an essential factor in sustaining both teacher performance and long-term service.

Access to continuous professional development also contributes to teachers' motivation and retention. Li and Shu (2019) reported that professional development opportunities improve instructional competence and positively influence student achievement, particularly in rural schools. However, teachers assigned to geographically isolated schools often encounter barriers to participating in training due to travel distance, financial limitations, and inadequate technological infrastructure. These constraints may reduce professional satisfaction and ultimately influence teachers' decisions to remain in their assigned schools. The modern teaching profession extends beyond instructional delivery. Fleet and Huddleston (2022) explained that contemporary teachers serve not only as classroom facilitators but also as mentors, leaders, collaborators, and advocates for learners' holistic development. Similarly, Jenkins (2022) emphasized teachers' responsibility in promoting inclusive, peaceful, and socially responsive learning environments. These expanded professional roles require adequate institutional support, particularly in schools where teachers work under challenging geographical conditions.

Recent Philippine studies further demonstrate the realities experienced by teachers assigned in remote communities. Alamansa and Sinang (2025) revealed that teachers in remote schools exhibit remarkable resilience despite inadequate facilities, transportation challenges, and limited educational resources. Likewise, Salazar and Plaza (2025) documented how teachers assigned in far-flung areas continue to demonstrate commitment and dedication while overcoming professional and personal hardships. Molleno (2025) likewise found that teachers in remote barangays experience professional isolation, heavy workloads, and resource limitations, yet remain committed to serving their learners. Supporting these findings, Clarin (2023) concluded that teachers' wellness is strongly associated with organizational support, work-life balance, and job satisfaction, all of which influence their willingness to remain in the teaching profession. Teacher deployment policies also influence workforce stability in geographically isolated schools. Mejia et al. (2025) explained that the implementation of teacher localization policies aims to improve teacher retention by assigning educators closer to their communities whenever possible. Nevertheless, many public-school teachers continue to serve in remote areas where challenging working conditions may affect their professional well-being and long-term commitment. These circumstances suggest that teacher retention depends not only on deployment policies but also on the extent to which teachers experience supportive working environments and professional fulfillment.

The literature on teachers' professional well-being and service retention emphasizes that educators assigned in rural and geographically isolated schools encounter unique professional and personal challenges that influence

their job satisfaction, emotional well-being, and commitment to remain in the teaching profession. Bozkurt et al. (2020) explained that the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed teachers' professional responsibilities worldwide, resulting in increased workloads, emotional stress, and instructional adjustments. Similarly, Ashraf (2025) emphasized that the rapid integration of digital technologies into education expanded teachers' responsibilities while creating opportunities for innovation and professional growth. Consequently, both studies highlighted that continuous institutional support, professional development, and responsive leadership are essential in sustaining teachers' professional well-being amid changing educational environments. Regarding teachers assigned in rural schools, Namyssova and Tajik (2025) found that rural educators face numerous challenges, including limited educational resources, inadequate technological facilities, professional isolation, and restricted access to training opportunities. Likewise, Tshewang (2025) stressed that improving the quality of education in geographically isolated communities requires strengthening teacher welfare, enhancing instructional support, and ensuring equitable access to educational resources. Therefore, both studies suggest that institutional and community support play a crucial role in promoting teachers' professional well-being and encouraging them to remain in the teaching profession.

Job satisfaction has also been recognized as one of the primary indicators of teachers' professional well-being. Chiang et al. (2020) revealed that teacher autonomy significantly improves job satisfaction and work engagement among rural teachers by allowing educators greater participation in professional decision-making. In addition, Raghuram et al. (2019) emphasized that organizational flexibility, collaboration, effective communication, and supportive work environments positively influence employees' satisfaction and organizational commitment. Hence, both studies demonstrate that favorable working conditions contribute significantly to teachers' motivation and willingness to continue serving in their respective schools. Emotional and mental well-being likewise plays a vital role in sustaining teachers' professional performance. Nagar et al. (2024) explained that positive mental health enables employees to manage occupational stress, maintain resilience, and achieve greater workplace productivity. Similarly, Dennis et al. (2018) found that resilience serves as a protective factor against stress and burnout, enabling teachers to remain emotionally stable and professionally committed despite workplace challenges. Furthermore, the authors emphasized that educational institutions should implement wellness programs that strengthen teachers' coping mechanisms and psychological well-being.

Professional development has likewise been identified as an important contributor to teachers' effectiveness and long-term commitment. Glover et al. (2016) found that sustained professional development enhances rural teachers' instructional knowledge, classroom practices, and professional confidence. Moreover, Ashraf (2025) emphasized that continuous training and institutional investment in teachers' professional learning improve instructional competence and increase teachers' confidence in responding to educational reforms. Consequently, access to quality professional development opportunities strengthens teachers' professional well-being and encourages long-term service. Studies focusing on teachers assigned in geographically isolated communities further reinforce these findings. Du et al. (2020) revealed that teachers working in remote rural China experience professional isolation, inadequate instructional resources, transportation difficulties, and limited opportunities for career advancement. Nevertheless, many teachers continue serving because of their strong commitment to learners and communities. Likewise, Hewitt et al. (2017) concluded that supportive leadership, positive workplace relationships, manageable workloads, community engagement, and continuous professional learning significantly enhance teachers' well-being and increase their likelihood of remaining in rural schools. Thus, improving teachers' professional well-being serves as an effective strategy for strengthening teacher retention and ensuring educational continuity in geographically isolated communities.

Local literature similarly shows that teachers working in far-flung communities often encounter challenges related to limited resources, accessibility issues, heavy workloads, and professional isolation. Despite these difficulties, many educators remain committed because of their dedication to learners and the support they receive from their schools and communities. No et al. (2022) examined the expectations and lived experiences of newly hired teachers in public elementary schools in Bataraza, Palawan and revealed challenges related to classroom management, inadequate resources, and adjustment to their work environment. Narit and Pidor (2024) found that volunteer teachers assigned in far-flung areas of Agusan del Sur experienced difficulties associated with transportation, resource limitations, and geographical isolation, yet demonstrated resilience and commitment. Lariosa et al. (2022) revealed that teachers in far-flung schools encounter numerous obstacles, including inadequate instructional materials, limited access to professional development opportunities, and difficult transportation conditions. Datulio et al. (2025) found that teachers assigned in remote schools continue to experience professional isolation and resource scarcity; however, they remain motivated by their commitment to learners and their desire to contribute to community development. Abellanosa and Maglantay (2025) emphasized that non-indigenous teachers assigned in remote indigenous communities face cultural, social, and professional challenges that require adaptability, resilience, and strong interpersonal skills. Similarly, Servano and Juanico (2025) documented the lived experiences of teachers handling Manobo learners in remote areas, revealing the importance of culturally responsive teaching, resourcefulness amid limited materials, and personal resilience in sustaining professional commitment.

Workplace conditions have likewise been recognized as important determinants of teachers' satisfaction and performance. Abarquez and Dioso (2025) found a significant relationship between the working environment and teachers' performance, emphasizing that supportive workplace conditions contribute positively to teachers'

effectiveness and job satisfaction. Panuelos and Pili (2025) reported that public secondary school teachers who experience a higher quality of work life demonstrate greater professional satisfaction and positive workplace engagement. Emotional and psychological well-being also emerged as important factors. Cacayan (2025) found that quality of life, burnout, and emotional labor significantly influence teachers' compassion satisfaction and overall professional well-being. Alegre et al. (2025) emphasized that meaningful professional experiences, supportive relationships, and a sense of purpose contribute positively to teachers' personal and professional fulfillment. School leadership and organizational support play a crucial role. Marci and Naparan (2025) emphasized that effective leadership practices among school heads in last-mile schools contribute to a positive working environment, stronger teacher morale, and improved professional engagement. Guerta and Baguio (2025) found that teachers' professional competencies and reflective teaching practices significantly predict workplace retention among public secondary school teachers.

Foreign studies further demonstrate that teacher autonomy and psychological empowerment significantly enhance job satisfaction and professional commitment (Xie and Derakhshan, 2020); (Vangrieken et al., 2017). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, leadership support, and opportunities for professional growth significantly influence employee retention (Nafi, 2021; Xuecheng et al., 2022). Teacher burnout is negatively associated with job satisfaction and perceived self-efficacy, while positive relationships with colleagues and greater teacher autonomy reduce burnout (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2019). Workplace experiences, including supportive school environments, positive administrative relationships, and manageable workloads, contribute substantially to teacher retention in rural schools (Rabe-Hemp, 2018a; Rabe-Hemp, 2018b). The quality of rural education depends largely on teacher competence, professional preparation, and access to instructional resources (Sikder and Das, 2018). Geographical isolation, resource limitations, and increasing professional demands influence teachers' satisfaction and commitment (McLaughlin and Blackburn, 2019). Inadequate infrastructure, limited professional development opportunities, and social isolation are major challenges affecting rural teachers (Amini et al., 2025). Teachers with higher levels of culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy demonstrate greater confidence and effectiveness in rural school settings (Poteat and Spann, 2021). Culturally responsive teaching practices strengthen teacher-learner relationships (Meyer et al., 2017). Reforms in teacher education should strengthen teachers' competencies, adaptability, and responsiveness (Walia, 2004). Professional capabilities of rural schoolteachers are influenced by continuous professional learning, institutional support, and access to educational resources (Shamatov et al., 2023; Tajik et al., 2022).

Local studies confirm that teachers assigned in last-mile and disaster-prone schools encounter professional and environmental challenges but continue to demonstrate resilience (Martinez, 2024); (Tubianosa-Hao and Felinita III, 2025). Public high school teachers assigned in far-flung barangays and mathematics teachers in Indigenous Peoples schools experience transportation difficulties, limited instructional resources, professional isolation, cultural adjustments, and geographical challenges while remaining committed (Peralta and Rarugal, 2019); (Lopez, 2025). Effective school leadership and sound educational policies contribute to positive working conditions (Cuyegkeng, 2024; Saniel et al., 2022). Teachers encounter challenges associated with limited instructional resources, heavy workloads, curriculum implementation, and technological demands (Barcelona et al., 2023; Prias, 2024; Almeda, 2023). Rural teachers continue to experience difficulties in accessing continuing professional development because of geographical distance, financial constraints, and limited training opportunities (Manzano and Guillermo, 2018). Availability of instructional materials significantly influences curriculum implementation (Barrera, 2022). Senior high school students and teachers in remote areas continue to experience educational barriers related to limited resources and accessibility (Lingling, 2025; Almaden, 2024). Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that teachers' professional well-being is influenced by job satisfaction, emotional and mental well-being, professional development, administrative support, and community engagement. These factors collectively contribute to teachers' service retention by increasing their commitment, motivation, and willingness to continue serving in challenging school environments.

Masbate is an island province in the Philippines located near the midsection of the nation's archipelago, consisting of three major islands: Masbate, Ticao, and Burias. San Fernando, officially the Municipality of San Fernando, is a municipality in the province of Masbate located on Ticao Island, with a population of 22,006 people according to the 2024 census. It is politically subdivided into 26 barangays, many of which are coastal, upland, and isolated. The establishment of far-flung schools in San Fernando is closely linked to the municipality's geographical and socio-economic conditions. Access to education was historically concentrated in población-based schools, leading to low participation rates and high dropout risks among learners in geographically isolated areas. In response, the Department of Education, in partnership with Local Government Units and communities, established satellite and community schools. The expansion of far-flung schools was strengthened by national policies aimed at ensuring inclusive and accessible education, including prioritization of "Last Mile Schools"—schools located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas that lack adequate resources. Despite challenges such as difficult terrain, lack of access roads, and limited resources, the continued establishment and development of far-flung schools in San Fernando reflect the strong commitment of DepEd and its partners to uphold the constitutional mandate of providing free and accessible basic education. Nationally, DepEd policies such as the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers and the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan underscore the need to support teacher well-being and resilience. Globally, studies from rural China, Kazakhstan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and other contexts consistently document professional isolation, resource scarcity, and retention challenges among

rural teachers, while highlighting the protective roles of autonomy, leadership support, professional development, and community engagement.

This research is anchored on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory by Abraham Maslow (1943), Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory by Frederick Herzberg (1959), and Social Exchange Theory by Peter Blau (1964).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory explains that individuals are motivated to satisfy a hierarchy of needs, beginning with basic needs and progressing toward self-actualization. In the teaching profession, teachers who experience job security, supportive relationships, recognition, and opportunities for professional growth are more likely to attain higher levels of professional well-being. These fulfilled needs contribute to greater job satisfaction, improved work-life balance, emotional stability, and stronger commitment to their profession. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between motivator factors, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and professional growth, and hygiene factors, including salary, working conditions, administrative support, and interpersonal relationships. Motivators increase job satisfaction, while adequate hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction. Teachers assigned in far-flung schools who receive sufficient administrative support, favorable working conditions, and opportunities for professional growth are more likely to experience higher levels of professional well-being and remain committed to the teaching profession.

Social Exchange Theory explains that relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges of benefits, trust, and mutual support. Employees who perceive that their organization values their contributions and provides adequate support are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty, commitment, and continued service. Teachers who receive support from school administrators, colleagues, and the community are more likely to develop stronger organizational commitment and greater intention to remain in their schools. The researcher theorized that the professional well-being of teachers assigned in far-flung areas, as reflected in their job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and administrative and community support, significantly influences their service retention, particularly in terms of length of service, intention to stay, commitment to the teaching profession, and turnover intentions.

Although previous studies have investigated teacher wellness, workplace experiences, and retention in remote schools, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the relationship between professional well-being and service retention among elementary and secondary school teachers assigned in far-flung areas of San Fernando, Masbate. Most existing studies have focused on these variables independently or within broader educational settings. While previous studies have examined teachers' experiences in rural and far-flung schools, limited research has specifically investigated the relationship between professional well-being—in terms of job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and administrative and community support—and service retention—in terms of length of service, intention to stay, commitment to the teaching profession, and turnover intentions—among teachers assigned in geographically isolated elementary and secondary schools within a single local context. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing evidence-based interventions that strengthen teacher welfare, improve workforce stability, and sustain quality education in geographically isolated schools. This study bridges this gap by providing a more comprehensive and localized understanding of the factors influencing teachers' well-being and their decision to remain in the teaching profession, thereby serving as a basis for policies and intervention programs that strengthen teacher welfare and workforce retention in far-flung schools.

The study aligns primarily with SDG 4 (Quality Education) by addressing the conditions necessary for sustaining a stable, motivated teaching workforce capable of delivering quality instruction in geographically isolated and disadvantaged schools. It also aligns with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) through its focus on teachers' emotional, mental, and professional well-being as critical determinants of sustained service. Further alignment exists with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by examining factors that promote decent working conditions, job satisfaction, and long-term retention in challenging assignments. SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) is relevant insofar as effective school leadership, administrative support, and institutional policies contribute to stronger educational institutions. SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) is reflected in the recognized roles of school-community collaboration and multi-stakeholder support in sustaining teacher well-being and retention.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by generating evidence on how professional well-being supports continuous teacher service and quality learning outcomes in far-flung schools, thereby helping prevent disruptions caused by high turnover. It advances socio-economic sustainability by identifying conditions that enable teachers to remain productively employed and committed in remote communities, supporting local human-capital development. Institutional sustainability is strengthened through insights that can inform DepEd policies, school-leadership practices, and support systems for last-mile schools. Public-health sustainability is addressed via attention to teachers' emotional and mental well-being as foundations for resilient professional practice. Community sustainability is reinforced by recognizing the reciprocal support between teachers and local stakeholders that sustains both educational access and social cohesion in geographically isolated areas. Collectively, these contributions support multidisciplinary efforts to maintain equitable, resilient, and high-quality basic education systems in challenging contexts.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between professional well-being and service retention of teachers assigned in far-flung areas in selected elementary and secondary schools in San Fernando, Masbate. The design aimed to describe the level of professional well-being of teachers in terms of job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and support system (administrative and community support). It likewise determined the level of service retention in terms of length of service, intention to stay, commitment to the teaching profession, and turnover intentions, and examined whether a significant relationship exists between professional well-being and service retention. The descriptive component focused on describing existing conditions and perceptions as they naturally occur, while the correlational component assessed the degree of association between the two major variables without manipulation. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), quantitative descriptive research designs are appropriate when the objective is to systematically describe existing conditions and perceptions as they naturally occur, while correlational designs are suitable for determining the degree of relationship between variables. Similarly, Ary et al. (2019) emphasized that descriptive-correlational research is appropriate in educational and social research when the purpose is to describe variables and examine associations without manipulating them. This design was deemed appropriate as it allowed for an objective, systematic, and statistical examination of the variables under study.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in selected public elementary and secondary schools classified as far-flung within the Municipality of San Fernando, Masbate, during the School Year 2026–2027. San Fernando is a municipality in the province of Masbate located on Ticao Island and is politically subdivided into 26 barangays, many of which are coastal, upland, and isolated. The delivery of basic education in these areas has long been challenged by distance, terrain, and limited transportation. Far-flung or last-mile schools in the municipality originated from efforts to decentralize education services and bring learning closer to learners in geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities. The selected schools represent settings where teachers face limited instructional resources, inadequate transportation, poor connectivity, professional isolation, and restricted access to professional development opportunities.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of thirty-three (33) public elementary and secondary school teachers assigned in selected far-flung schools in the Municipality of San Fernando, Masbate. These teachers were chosen because they are directly exposed to the unique working conditions and professional experiences associated with teaching in geographically isolated and disadvantaged schools. Their experiences and perceptions provided the primary source of data for determining the levels of professional well-being and service retention as well as the relationship between these variables.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized a convenience sampling technique in selecting the respondents. This method was adopted because it enabled the researcher to collect data from teacher-respondents who were readily accessible, available, and willing to participate during the conduct of the study. The respondents were selected based on their assignment in far-flung elementary and secondary schools and their willingness to accomplish the research questionnaire. Convenience sampling was considered appropriate due to the geographical location of the schools, the limited number of teachers assigned in far-flung areas, and the time and logistical constraints encountered during the research. Although this technique does not provide every member of the population with an equal opportunity to participate, it allowed the gathering of relevant information from teachers who possess firsthand knowledge of professional well-being and service retention in geographically isolated schools.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary data-gathering instrument was a researcher-made structured survey questionnaire developed based on the objectives of the study, related literature, and related studies concerning teachers' professional well-being and service retention. The questionnaire was systematically organized into two major parts aligned with the statement of the problem. The first part measured professional well-being across four dimensions: job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and support system (administrative and community support). The second part measured service retention through indicators related to length of service, intention to stay, commitment to the teaching profession, and turnover intentions. The instrument employed a four-point Likert scale coded as 4 – Strongly Agree, 3 – Agree, 2 – Disagree, and 1 – Strongly Disagree to quantify responses and enable computation of weighted means. Prior to administration, the questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in educational management, research, and measurement and evaluation to ensure clarity, relevance, appropriateness, and alignment with the study objectives. Comments and suggestions from the validators were

incorporated to improve content, wording, sequence, and organization. The structured format ensured consistency, objectivity, and ease in gathering quantitative data.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The research process followed systematic phases. After the research title and proposal were approved, the researcher developed the structured questionnaire and subjected it to expert validation, incorporating revisions based on feedback. A permission letter noted by the adviser was submitted to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent for approval. Once permission was granted, the researcher personally administered the validated questionnaires to the selected respondents, explaining clear instructions to ensure proper understanding. Adequate time was allotted for completion, and all accomplished forms were retrieved on the same day, resulting in a 100 percent retrieval rate. The collected data were then systematically encoded, organized, recorded, and tabulated. An expert statistician assisted in the subsequent analysis and interpretation. Ethical standards were observed throughout, with responses treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The gathered data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency count and percentage distribution were used to describe the profile of the respondents where applicable. Weighted mean was utilized to determine the level of professional well-being of teachers in terms of job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and support system, as well as the level of service retention in terms of length of service, intention to stay, commitment to the teaching profession, and turnover intentions. The weighted mean was computed using the formula involving the sum of the products of frequency and corresponding weight divided by the total number of respondents. To determine the significant relationship between professional well-being and service retention, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was employed at the 0.05 level of significance. The results were interpreted using verbal and adjectival interpretations consistent with the four-point Likert scale adopted in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Professional Well-Being of Teachers Assigned in Far-Flung Areas

3.1.1 Job Satisfaction

Teachers assigned in far-flung areas demonstrated a high level of job satisfaction, with an overall composite mean of 3.59, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The highest mean of 3.79 was recorded for the indicator on enjoying daily interactions with students, while the lowest means of 3.52 were obtained for feeling satisfied with the teaching profession in a far-flung area and being happy with the current teaching assignment. All indicators fell within the Strongly Agree range.

These results indicate that teachers derive substantial fulfillment from their work despite remote conditions, particularly through positive student relationships. The findings are supported by the study of Xie and Derakhshan (2020), who found that teacher autonomy and psychological empowerment significantly improve job satisfaction among rural teachers. According to the authors, teachers who are trusted in carrying out their responsibilities and who receive sufficient support from their schools tend to develop a more positive attitude toward their profession. This is related to the present study since the respondents, despite being assigned in far-flung schools, manifested a high level of job satisfaction, indicating that positive professional experiences and supportive working conditions contribute to their overall professional well-being.

3.1.2 Work-Life Balance

The overall composite mean for work-life balance was 3.29, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The highest mean of 3.58 was for the perception that workload is manageable, while the lowest mean of 3.06 was for not being overwhelmed by responsibilities. Six indicators were rated Strongly Agree and four were rated Agree.

Teachers generally reported being able to balance professional and personal responsibilities, although occasional feelings of being overwhelmed persist. The findings are consistent with the literature of Cacayan (2025), who emphasized that teachers' quality of life is closely associated with their ability to balance professional responsibilities and personal well-being. The study explained that maintaining a healthy work-life balance reduces stress and burnout while improving teachers' overall satisfaction with their profession. This supports the present findings, as the respondents demonstrated a high level of work-life balance, suggesting that they can manage the demands of teaching while maintaining their personal well-being despite the challenges of working in far-flung schools.

3.1.3 Emotional and Mental Well-Being

Emotional and mental well-being yielded a composite mean of 3.27, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The highest mean of 3.52 was for maintaining a positive attitude toward work, while the lowest mean of 2.94 was for rarely feeling emotionally exhausted. Seven indicators were Strongly Agree and three were Agree.

Teachers generally maintained emotional stability and adaptability, though emotional exhaustion remained a relative concern. The findings are supported by Dennis et al. (2018), who emphasized that resilience plays a

significant role in helping teachers manage occupational stress and prevent burnout. Their study revealed that emotionally resilient teachers are better able to cope with workplace challenges while maintaining positive professional attitudes. This is closely related to the present study because the respondents exhibited a high level of emotional and mental well-being, indicating that they possess the resilience needed to remain effective and committed despite the difficulties encountered in geographically isolated schools.

3.1.4 Support System (Administrative and Community Support)

Support system obtained a composite mean of 3.48, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The highest means of 3.61 were for colleagues providing support when needed and the community respecting teachers, while the lowest mean of 3.36 was for receiving timely assistance from supervisors. All indicators were rated Strongly Agree. Teachers perceived strong collegial and community support, with slightly lower ratings for supervisory responsiveness. The findings are consistent with the literature of Marci and Naparan (2025), who found that effective leadership practices in last-mile schools strengthen teachers' motivation, confidence, and commitment through continuous administrative support and positive stakeholder relationships. The authors emphasized that supportive school leaders create an environment where teachers feel valued and encouraged to perform their responsibilities effectively. This supports the present findings, as the respondents perceived a high level of administrative and community support, contributing positively to their professional well-being.

3.2 Level of Service Retention of Teachers in Far-Flung Areas

3.2.1 Length of Service

The composite mean for length of service was 3.20, interpreted as Agree. The highest mean of 3.61 was for willingness to serve despite challenges, while the lowest mean of 3.03 was for not planning to transfer soon. Two indicators were Strongly Agree and eight were Agree.

Teachers expressed general willingness to remain in their assignments over time, particularly through resilience in facing challenges. The findings are supported by Rabe-Hemp (2018a), who found that teachers' decisions to remain in rural schools are influenced by positive workplace experiences, supportive school environments, and commitment to serving their communities. The study emphasized that despite geographical challenges, teachers often continue their service when they perceive their work as meaningful. This relates to the present findings, as the respondents demonstrated favorable indicators of length of service despite their assignments in far-flung schools.

3.2.2 Intention to Stay

Intention to stay registered a composite mean of 3.32, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The highest means of 3.58 were for feeling a sense of belonging in the school and valuing one's role in the school, while the lowest mean of 3.12 was for preferring to remain in the assignment. Four indicators were Strongly Agree and six were Agree.

Teachers showed a strong desire to continue in their current schools, driven by belonging and role appreciation. The findings are consistent with the study of Nafi (2021), who reported that job satisfaction, organizational support, and positive working conditions significantly influence employees' intention to remain in their organizations. The study explained that employees who feel valued and supported are less likely to leave their workplace. Similarly, the respondents in the present study demonstrated a high intention to stay, indicating that their professional well-being contributes to their willingness to continue serving in their assigned schools.

3.2.3 Commitment to the Teaching Profession

Commitment to the teaching profession obtained the highest composite mean of 3.72, interpreted as Strongly Agree. The highest mean of 3.79 was for striving to improve teaching skills, while the lowest mean of 3.64 was for being passionate about teaching. All indicators were Strongly Agree.

Teachers exhibited very high dedication, pride, and professional responsibility. The findings are supported by Xuecheng et al. (2022), who found that supportive leadership and positive social exchange relationships strengthen employees' organizational commitment and long-term retention. According to the authors, individuals who receive support and recognition from their organization develop stronger commitment to their profession. This supports the present findings, as teachers assigned in far-flung schools demonstrated a high level of commitment to the teaching profession despite the challenges they encounter.

3.2.4 Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions (reverse scored) yielded a composite mean of 2.15, interpreted as Disagree. The highest mean of 2.58 was for considering transferring to another school, while the lowest mean of 1.82 was for planning to resign soon. One indicator was Agree and nine were Disagree.

Teachers generally disagreed with statements indicating desire to leave, reflecting low immediate turnover intentions. The findings are consistent with Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2019), who found that higher job satisfaction, teacher autonomy, and positive workplace relationships reduce burnout and minimize teachers' intentions to leave the profession. The study emphasized that supportive work environments encourage teachers to remain in their current positions. This relates to the present findings, where respondents exhibited low turnover intentions, indicating a strong willingness to continue their teaching careers.

3.3 Significant Relationship Between Professional Well-Being and Service Retention

Pearson *r* correlation analysis revealed a computed *r*-value of 0.55, indicating a moderate positive linear relationship between professional well-being and service retention. With 31 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance, the critical *r*-value was ± 0.3440 . Since the computed value exceeded the critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming a statistically significant relationship.

The moderate positive relationship indicates that higher professional well-being is associated with stronger service retention. Teachers experiencing greater job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and support are more likely to remain committed to their assignments in far-flung schools. These results underscore the value of supportive conditions, professional development, and wellness initiatives in sustaining the teaching workforce in geographically isolated settings.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

Teachers assigned in far-flung areas of San Fernando, Masbate demonstrated high levels of professional well-being across all dimensions, with job satisfaction obtaining the highest composite mean, followed by support system, work-life balance, and emotional and mental well-being. Service retention was likewise favorable, with commitment to the teaching profession registering the highest rating, followed by intention to stay and length of service, while turnover intentions remained low. A moderate positive and statistically significant relationship was established between professional well-being and service retention. These findings indicate that teachers who experience higher professional well-being are more likely to remain committed to their assignments and continue serving in geographically isolated schools.

School administrators should continue implementing programs that promote teachers' professional well-being through wellness activities, recognition, and support services. School heads and the Schools Division Office should strengthen administrative support, provide adequate resources, and offer continuous professional development and incentives for teachers in far-flung areas. Teachers should actively participate in professional development programs and practice strategies that promote work-life balance and emotional well-being. The Department of Education should develop policies and programs that enhance teachers' professional well-being and encourage long-term service in geographically isolated schools.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors affirm that no conflicts of interest exist in relation to this study. The research was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles for human-participant research involving educators. Informed consent was obtained from all teacher-respondents prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly protected through coded responses, secure data storage, and aggregated reporting that prevented identification of individual participants or schools. The study procedures were non-invasive and limited to the administration of a validated structured questionnaire measuring professional well-being (job satisfaction, work-life balance, emotional and mental well-being, and administrative and community support) and service retention (length of service, intention to stay, commitment to the teaching profession, and turnover intentions). Necessary institutional approvals were secured from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent prior to the conduct of the research and the administration of the research instrument.

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