

## **Work motivation and job satisfaction of teachers in upland communities: Implications to work commitment**

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**Abstract.** Upland teachers face an enormous amount of challenge just to ensure quality teaching reaches learners in far-flung communities. Commitment is necessary to deliver the job expected of them. This study investigates the work motivation, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of upland teachers in the Province of Capiz. Usual factors, such as salary, benefits, and promotions were noted as among the work motivations of upland teachings. Despite the hardship they encountered with the crude lifestyle and work environment presented by their work location, they remain motivated, satisfied and remain committed in delivering instruction and accomplishing their tasks.

Keywords: upland school, remote school, work motivation, job satisfaction, work commitment

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### INTRODUCTION

Upland teaching is entirely a different world for public school teachers in the Philippines. The practice of profession is challenging because the community lacks electricity, potable water, teaching facilities, and sources of basic necessities (SOURCE). They also encounter difficulty in transport. Roads could sometimes get impassable and could only be reached by foot, enduring muddy trail, ascending and descending steep roads. They walk in a less sorry state when the dirty road really gets nasty after a downpour. Others need to cross rivers every time they report to their schools that would entail a death-defying stunt [1].

Despite this, upland teachers serve as the pivot in the field. They introduce new trends in the teaching-learning process. Their motivation is a factor for classroom effectiveness and school enhancement in general. Their level of participation is vital for the achievement of educational goals. With this, teachers need to be assertive to sustain their motivation at work. If a teacher is interested, he will remain actively involved in achieving the goals of the institution and this requires that one remain motivated, satisfied and involved. An attempt to look at how these factors interrelate helps understand the many challenges they face and how and why they remain committed to teaching. This will also give us a view on how teachers perceive their job. It is on this premise that the researchers were moved to determine whether the work motivation and job satisfaction are related to organizational commitment.

#### *Problem Statement*

This study investigated the work motivation, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of upland teachers in the Province of Capiz. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of work motivation of upland teachers?
2. What is the level of job satisfaction of upland teachers?
3. What are the implications of work motivation and job satisfaction to the teachers' commitment to teach in upland schools?

### *Theoretical Framework*

On the premise of the Two-Factor theory (also known as Motivation-Hygiene theory and Dual-Factor Theory) [2], individuals are not contented with the satisfaction of lower-order needs at work, for example, those associated with minimum salary levels or safe and pleasant working conditions. Rather, individuals look for the gratification of higher-level psychological needs having to do with achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and the nature of the work itself. So far, this appears to be parallel to Maslow's theory of a need hierarchy. However, Herzberg added a new dimension to this theory by proposing a two-factor model of motivation, based on the notion that the presence of one set of job characteristics or incentives lead to worker's satisfaction at work, while another and separate set of job characteristics lead to dissatisfaction at work. Thus, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are independent from each other. This theory suggests that to improve job attitudes and productivity, teachers must recognize and attend to both sets of characteristics and not assume that increase in satisfaction leads to decrease in dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, considering Becker's Side-Bet Theory [3], organizational commitment appears to be a structural phenomenon that occurs as a result of individual organizational transactions and alterations in side bets over time. This theory emphasized that the more one invests his or her time, energy, skill and other personal assets in the organization, the more one has at stake in leaving it. Hence, it is natural to expect a greater personal commitment on the part of the individual to an organization as time goes by. Employees are said to be committed to the organization when their goals are in congruence to those of the organization, when they are willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and when they desire to maintain their connection with the organization. Likewise upland teachers will be highly committed when they love their work and concern about the betterment of their clientele even in the mountainous and far-flung areas.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Upland Defined*

Of the Philippines' 60 million-hectare land area, approximately 14.9 million is classified as uplands [4]. An area is considered upland if it has a slope ranging from 18 percent upward, encompassing grassland and forest ecosystems. The major source of income, while meager, is seasonal farming. In terms of education, they are the least educated, least hopeful, and considered the most neglected by the Philippine government in terms of exerting effort for their agricultural development. Efforts by the Department of Education to address these problems in literacy led to the establishment of more schools in the uplands [5]. The agency's Last Mile Schools Program "aims to address the gaps in resources and facilities of schools that are located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas." [6]

### *Teacher's Motivation*

Motivation is defined as the willingness, drive or desire to engage in good teaching which is furthermore acted upon. For the case of teachers, motivation is seen as one of the important determinants of learning outcomes. In developing countries, high teacher motivation leads to positive educational outcomes, while low teacher motivation leads to negative educational outcomes. Higher level of motivation is seen as a factor that leads to progress of performance of both teachers and the students. [7] [8] [9]

For young professionals, working with dynamic learners is seen their motivation for work [10]. Salary, benefits or prestige comes next. However, the longer a teacher stays in the organization, the more they need to sustain the drive. Various factors like salary, working

conditions, treatment of teachers, professional development opportunities, supportive supervision, teacher stress, pupils behavior, relationship with peer group, attitude towards teaching, interest in teaching, gender, age, work experience, work load, etc are all considered as among the motivating factors. Positive relationship between work motivation and teachers' work performance, organizational commitment, leadership behaviors, job satisfaction and negative relationship with teacher's work responsibility were also observed [11].

Richer, Blanchard, and Valleyrand [12] also emphasized that teacher motivation is affected by the task itself. Anyone can be de-motivated by a boring job and if the job is challenging, the teacher enjoys doing that job. The job should be designed in such a way that it looks interesting and challenging.

Socio-economic considerations may also affect how teacher motivations in rural communities vary. In rural Zimbabwe, the unattractiveness of living and working conditions in rural areas compels most teachers to strongly resist to deployment to rural schools. Furthermore, teachers in rural areas have to work harder than their colleagues in urban schools because of inadequate resources and big workloads that have been precipitated by the policy of education for all and the recruitment freezes imposed by the government. This results to rural schools having less qualified, less experienced and demotivated teachers. Staff turnover is evident [13]. In rural Florida, security, activity, social service, variety, and ability utilization were intrinsic factors that contributed to teacher's job satisfaction. Extrinsic factors included company policies, opportunities for advancement, co-workers, and compensation most influenced dissatisfaction [14].

Teacher motivation is important in rural areas where the living and working conditions are very challenging for teachers. While popular view advances that teachers are motivated by monetary rewards, Shikalepo [15] posits that there are more to far-flung communities other than monetary compensations that motivates teachers to work there. These factors include promotional posts and the benefits that comes with it, bonding with different family backgrounds in rural areas, the humane leadership of rural schools, enriching experience and cost-cutting measures, employment opportunities for new recruits, support services for rural teachers and financial incentives (such as hazard pay and transport allowance) [16].

Maintaining high level of motivation is necessary for teachers to deliver their obligations. Low motivation results to absenteeism, underutilization of class time, professional misconduct, reliance on traditional teaching practices, poor preparation and secondary income generating activities that distract from teaching duties [17]. In addition, organizations with highlight motivated employees are more successful, as their employees continuously look for ways to improve their work getting the employees to reach their full potential [18].

### *Teacher's Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is how employees feel about their job. It is a state of mind towards the nature of their work. Various factors affect job satisfaction and in turn, job satisfaction affects organizational commitment [19].

Evans [20] notes that personality variables interfere with the effect of school-based variables that impinge on job satisfaction and motivation. In addition, the school's micro-politics and culture [21], and non-school based variables (government policies or imposed curriculum), have been cited as variables that influence teachers' job satisfaction [22].

For Kalhotra [23], job satisfaction is influenced by salary, promotional avenues and services conditions, physical facilities, satisfaction with authorities, satisfaction with social status and family welfare rapport with students, and relationship with co-workers.

Feng [24] also indicated that teacher satisfaction tends to be low when it comes to salary and work intensity, but are high in self fulfillment. In general age, length of service, core courses in teaching significantly affects teachers' job satisfaction.

For rural teachers, security, activity, social service, variety and ability utilization were intrinsic factors which ranked highest in contributing to the rural school teachers' job satisfaction while extrinsic factors such as recognition, company policies, opportunities for advancement, co-workers and compensation greatly affects dissatisfaction [25]. Satisfaction in the work environment may be achieved when there is conducive physical working condition, good salary, security of tenure, benefits and privileges [26].

There are also researchers who underscored that job satisfaction isn't all about money or promotion. A teacher is satisfied with his job if one's work is highly regarded in the community [27]. Social influences may be given more weight than work situation in determining job satisfaction, and some form is associated with job satisfaction of the teachers [28]. While intrinsic forces may motivate people to become teachers, extrinsic conditions can influence their job satisfaction and their desire to remain in throughout their career [29].

## METHODOLOGY

This mixed methods research used survey and focus group discussion (FGD) to gather data. A researcher-made survey questionnaire was administered to 240 respondents out of a total of 593 upland teachers from 13 school districts in the province of Capiz. Stratified proportionate random sampling was used in the identification and selection of the respondents. The questions were pilot tested to determine the reliability before they were administered to the respondents.

The researchers sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Department of Education Division of Capiz, Philippines, to conduct the research and to access the list of teachers receiving hardship allowances annually. This record served as the basis in identifying the teachers who were assigned in the uplands.

Once the respondents were identified, the researchers administered the questionnaires to the respondents. Data gathering from conducted from January to March 2019.

Two sets of focus group discussion were also conducted in an upland school. The first FGD was participated by 15 upland teachers, while the second FGD enjoined 12 learners who were randomly selected from nearby upland schools. Parental consent was sought from the parents of the learners prior to the conduct of the FGD. Ethics in research was accordingly applied since the involvement of the discussants was voluntary.

Mean was used to describe the level of work motivation and job satisfaction and of the upland teachers in the province of Capiz. Thematic analysis was used to process the qualitative data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Distribution and Profile of the Upland Teachers*

Table 1 . Distribution of upland teachers in the Capiz Division

| No. | Location | N  | N  |
|-----|----------|----|----|
| 1   | Panitan  | 31 | 13 |
| 2   | Pilar    | 57 | 23 |
| 3   | Maayon   | 8  | 3  |

|    |               |     |     |
|----|---------------|-----|-----|
| 4  | Pres. Roxas   | 8   | 3   |
| 5  | Mambusao East | 58  | 23  |
| 6  | Mambusao West | 37  | 15  |
| 7  | Jamindan      | 61  | 25  |
| 8  | Tapaz East    | 77  | 31  |
| 9  | Tapaz West    | 72  | 29  |
| 10 | Sigma         | 20  | 8   |
| 11 | Sapian        | 44  | 18  |
| 12 | Dumarao       | 55  | 22  |
| 13 | Dumalag       | 65  | 27  |
|    | Total         | 593 | 240 |

Table 1 shows the distribution of the upland teachers. A total of 593 teachers are assigned to upland schools spread in the 17 municipalities in the province of Capiz; 240 of these teachers participated in this study. This only indicates that despite the terrain, distance, and logistics challenge, the Department of Education continues to exert effort to reach remote areas [6] and bring education to the “poorest of the poor.”

### *Profile of the Respondents*

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents

| Variables          | F   | %    |
|--------------------|-----|------|
| Age                |     |      |
| 21-30 yrs old      | 80  | 33.3 |
| 31-40 yrs old      | 107 | 44.6 |
| 41-50 yrs old      | 40  | 16.7 |
| 51-60 yrs old      | 12  | 5.0  |
| 61-65 yrs old      | 1   | 4.0  |
| Sex                |     |      |
| Male               | 80  | 33.3 |
| Female             | 160 | 66.7 |
| Marital Status     |     |      |
| Single             | 104 | 43.3 |
| Married            | 128 | 53.3 |
| Widowed            | 8   | 3.3  |
| Position           |     |      |
| Teacher I          | 153 | 63.8 |
| Teacher II         | 29  | 12.1 |
| Teacher III        | 38  | 15.8 |
| Master Teacher I   | 10  | 4.2  |
| Master Teacher II  | 2   | .8   |
| Master Teacher III | 2   | .8   |
| Head Teacher I     | 4   | 1.7  |
| Head Teacher III   | 2   | .8   |
| Length of Service  |     |      |

|                                   |     |       |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 1-5 yrs                           | 110 | 45.8  |
| 6-10 yrs                          | 67  | 27.9  |
| 11-15 yrs                         | 42  | 17.5  |
| 16-20 yrs                         | 9   | 3.8   |
| 21 yrs & above                    | 12  | 5.0   |
| Distance of Residence from School |     |       |
| 1-10 km                           | 100 | 41.7  |
| 11-20 km                          | 70  | 29.2  |
| 21-30 km                          | 49  | 20.4  |
| 31 km & above                     | 21  | 8.8   |
| Education                         |     |       |
| Bachelor's degree                 | 173 | 72.1  |
| Master's degree                   | 63  | 26.3  |
| Doctorate degree                  | 4   | 1.7   |
| Total                             | 240 | 100.0 |

Table 2 represents the profile of the respondents. Data revealed that upland teachers are predominantly 31-40 years old (107, 44.6 percent). Teachers aged 21-30 years old, (80, 33.3 percent) also comprise a good number of teacher population assigned in the uplands. In fact, these are teachers who are newly hired and were taken on the job because of their willingness to work despite the challenging nature of the job.

In terms of sex, female upland (104, 66.7 percent) teachers outnumber the male teachers (80, 33.3 percent). Interestingly, there are more married teachers (128, 53.3 percent) than single teachers (104, 43.3%), and very few are widowed/widower (8, 3.3%)

There are more entry level teachers or those occupying Teacher I positions (153, 63.8%) assigned to teach in the uplands. There lesser number of teachers who occupy higher positions (head and master teacher positions) indicates the lack of these items given to upland schools. This also suggests the over-all lack of higher-ranking positions in the Department of Education [30].

Furthermore, more teachers who are in service between 1-5 years (110, 45.8 percent) are assigned to teach in the upland. The number declines as teachers with longer years of service are more likely to request for reassignment to the lowlands or schools near their homes [31].

Although many upland teachers (100, 41 percent) live 1-10 kilometers away from school, there are still are good number who live 11-20 (70, or 29.2%) and 21-30 kilometers (49 or 20.4%) away. There are even some (21, 8.8%) who live 31+ kilometers away and they usually stay in the community for the duration of the week.

As to their educational attainment, data further revealed that majority (173, 72.1%) are bachelor's degree graduates. Some (63, 26.3%) have master's degree graduates, while only a handful (4, 1.7%) have graduated their doctorate degree.

#### *Upland Teachers' Work Motivation*

Upland teachers are "highly motivated" ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = .41$ ) and this reflects on their intent to realize their duties and responsibilities in the practice of their profession in the mountainous areas. They are actively involved in both of the academic and non-academic events of school despite the distance and topography. They never allowed any challenges, such as road condition, distance of the school from residence, lack of safe water and electricity supply, to prevent them from performing their duties. In fact, they find ways to fill

the gaps of learning among the students enabling them to master the macro skills especially reading and writing.

The teachers' sense of accountability is one factor that keeps them motivated. They believe that they are responsible for the students' learning – mastering skills and competencies that are directed to educational success and performance. The bond formed by the teachers with their students, their family, and the community further motivates them to deliver. They are highly respected and esteemed by community members and they want to reciprocate them by fulfilling their job.

The result is also affirmed by the discussants during the focus group discussion with the teachers.

*I decided to accept the post because I love to teach, the learners are cooperative, and there's good interaction between me and my pupils. I have also built rapport with colleagues and I feel greatly how the community appreciates our efforts.*

*The pupils and the parents expect a lot from us teachers. The parents rely on their children for a better future so they send them to school, no matter how far away it is. I feel badly if I don't do good in this job, it would be unfair to my students. I take it seriously whatever I teach them so I really strive to give them the quality instruction, no matter how challenged the school is facility-wise.*

#### *Upland Teachers' Job Satisfaction*

The result of this study shows that upland teachers are “highly satisfied” with their job ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) because it gives them a sense of personal and professional accomplishment. Regardless of the location, they still see teaching as stable employment that provides them steady income and where opportunities for promotion is available. They felt satisfied with the encouragement given to them, particularly by the community, regardless of the limited resources in the uplands. Since these learning environments are situated in the remote areas, students mostly belong to indigenous groups. They find that exposure to a culture different from theirs expands their perspectives and opens up to the value of diversity, respect for differences in gender, culture, ethnicity and socio-economic diversities.

In building connections with their students and the community, the teachers feel a sense of belongingness where they find a home away from home in the uplands. The respect and esteem the community gives them, they feel a sense of connectedness, especially to the people who treated them as part of their family. They also feel they have a greater mission, which is to work as one towards a common goal of improving the lives of the students.

*What satisfies me is that when I see my students learn how to read especially I am a Grade 1 teacher. My happiness is complete when they have learned something from me since there are a lot of illiterate people in the community. One thing more, Our respective offices (district and division) provide us in-service trainings, seminars and workshops in order to update the new approaches and methods in teaching. This is of huge help to also enhance and capacitate our learners.*

*I am satisfied when there is a high sense of achievement. I realize that my pupils learn, it seems my efforts and sacrifices are not in vain. And also the praises and appreciation I receive from my DepEd family for the efforts I have exerted for a good cause.*

### *Implications to Organizational Commitment*

Findings from the focus group discussion suggest that despite the challenges hurdled by upland teachers, they remain committed to their work considering their motivation and job satisfaction remain high. This may also imply that their psychological attachment to the Department of Education (DepEd) is strong and they desire to stay and pursue in the organization because they believe that there is a need for them to assist in the achievement of organization's goals.

This commitment and dedication of the respondents are facts that keep them going . The more committed they are, the less likely to exhibit withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism and intention to leave their teaching jobs[8]. Their commitment lies no longer on the financial reward, but more on having a strong family support that they feel within the organization.

*When I accepted the teaching job in the upland, I gained a family. So, it's a little difficult for me to leave.*

*I feel deeply connected to my present school because I feel like I have a new family that accepts and believes in me. They help me accomplish my tasks and help make my work more bearable.*

*I choose to stay where I teach now because I found that we share the same values to that of the school. The relationship I have with my colleagues at work also inspires me to stay."*

Considering the lack of resources of the school, teachers usually spend their own money for classroom purposes, like beautifying the rooms and buying instructional materials [1]. They perform well not because they are paid by the government, but because a higher sense of commitment and value for work where they derive their sense of fulfilment. They love it and it is their obligation to do what is expected from them.

Participants also shared that another factor that influences their commitment to teaching is the hope that one day they would receive their much-wanted promotion or reassignment to a school closer to their home. During the focus group discussion, the upland teachers revealed how they foresee themselves several years from now teaching in a lowland community. They long for their family, pursue further studies, and ease the inconvenience when traveling to the district or division office.

*I love where I teach now, but I still want to see the day that I would teach near or within the town where I live. It will help me become more productive in performing my duties and responsibilities as a public school teacher. I don't want to deny the fact that I terribly miss my family and it is one reason why I want to work nearer where I live.*

The focus group discussion with the learners also revealed how they highly esteem their teachers, an implication at how committed they are to accomplish their work. Here are some thoughts of the learners that they shared during the focus group discussion:

*I personally consider them as our hero. They work and impart so much in us. If they leave us, I will be sad but more than that.*

*I am grateful because of the countless things they have done for us.*

However, even the learners have observed the turn-over of teachers, who, after a year or two, would request for transfer in the lowlands. Despite this, they still maintain a good relationship with their teachers even if they have transferred to another station.

*We are used to being left by our teachers. Our school has been a training ground for the teachers who are new in the service. When opportunity comes, they also leave us. Even if it's painful, there's nothing we can do about it. I still value their advices to keep going.*

## CONCLUSION

Usual factors, such as salary, benefits, and promotions were noted as among the work motivations of upland teachings. Despite the hardship they encountered with the crude lifestyle and work environment presented by their work location, they remain motivated, satisfied and remain committed in delivering instruction and accomplishing their tasks. It makes them feel as if they are contributing to something larger than themselves, something important. Some people have personal missions they accomplish through meaningful work. Others truly love what they do or the clients they serve. Since they are emotionally attached in their respective educational institutions, upland teachers desire to maintain their connection with the agency and keep up their duties and responsibilities. The high regard shown by their students is a reflection of their work commitment, which in turn boost their work to work. While taking this into consideration, they keep encouraged to work on the right track regardless of the struggles they might experience in their respective schools. A sense of fulfillment is discernible as they help their students realize their fullest potentials rather than languish in hopelessness.

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