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# Challenges and Commitment to Teaching: A Quantitative Descriptive-Correlational Study of Filipino Teachers in Select Coastal Villages

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#### **Abstract**

Aim: This study aimed to describe the levels of perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among Filipino teachers in select coastal villages, and to examine the relationship between these variables. **Methodology:** Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected via a structured survey from 120 basic education teachers assigned in coastal villages in Central Luzon, Philippines, selected through stratified random sampling. Instruments included a Teacher Challenges Scale and a Teacher Commitment Scale, both validated and pilottested. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. Results: Teachers reported moderate to high levels of perceived teaching challenges and high levels of commitment to teaching. A significant negative correlation (r = -0.45, p < .01) was found, indicating that higher challenges were associated with slightly lower commitment to teaching.

**Conclusion:** The findings highlight the need for policy and program interventions to mitigate challenges faced by teachers in coastal areas while reinforcing their professional commitment. Recommendations include targeted support professional development, and incentives to enhance teacher morale and retention. Keywords: Coastal villages, teaching challenges, commitment to teaching, descriptive-correlational, Filipino teachers

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is universally regarded as the cornerstone of national development, with teachers serving as the key drivers of learning outcomes (Pal, 2023). Around the world, policies and reforms are directed toward supporting teachers to ensure they can deliver quality education, even in challenging contexts. Yet despite these efforts, teachers in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) continue to face barriers that affect their capacity to deliver quality education and maintain their professional commitment (Baba & Maglantay, 2025).

Globally, educators assigned in remote, rural, or coastal communities often grapple with systemic inequities. These include inadequate infrastructure, limited professional development opportunities, and socio-economic disadvantages of the communities they serve (Sanchez, et al., 2022). Such conditions heighten teaching challenges and can undermine teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and long-term commitment to the profession.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. A critical requirement for achieving this goal is addressing the needs of teachers working in remote and marginalized areas, recognizing their pivotal role in reducing educational disparities.

Despite international frameworks highlighting teacher support, many low- and middle-income countries continue to struggle with teacher deployment and retention in hard-to-reach areas. For instance, Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Southeast Asia face chronic shortages of qualified teachers in remote schools (Schotgues, 2022). These

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shortages are exacerbated by the reluctance of teachers to accept or stay in postings that are perceived as difficult or unsafe.

In Southeast Asia, challenges faced by teachers in geographically isolated areas are well-documented but unevenly addressed. Countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines have extensive island geographies that complicate teacher deployment. Teachers assigned to remote coastal and island communities often navigate logistical barriers, such as boat travel, limited housing, and unpredictable weather, which can significantly impact their teaching effectiveness and morale.

In the Philippines, ensuring equitable access to education for all learners remains a constitutional mandate and policy priority. The Department of Education (DepEd) has launched various programs aimed at improving access and quality of education in GIDAs (Sy, 2021). However, persistent disparities remain, particularly in island and coastal barangays where access to education is constrained by geographic, economic, and socio-political factors.

Teachers in the Philippines' coastal and island communities face unique challenges that distinguish their experiences from those in urban or more accessible rural settings. These challenges often include long commutes over water, exposure to extreme weather events, and limited access to teaching materials and support services. Such factors can affect not only student learning but also teacher well-being and professional commitment.

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers highlight teacher commitment as a core domain of professional practice. Commitment to teaching is not simply about fulfilling instructional duties but also encompasses dedication to student learning, professional growth, and ethical service in challenging contexts (Igbal & Ali, 2024). Strengthening this commitment is vital for ensuring teacher retention and educational equity, especially in disadvantaged areas.

While Philippine education policies acknowledge the need to support teachers in GIDAs, much of the existing research remains qualitative, anecdotal, or program-focused. There is limited empirical evidence quantifying the specific challenges faced by teachers in coastal villages or examining how these challenges may correlate with their commitment to teaching.

In Central Luzon—a key region in the Philippines that includes numerous coastal communities—these issues are especially relevant. The region hosts both highly urbanized cities and remote coastal villages. Teachers assigned in coastal barangays in Central Luzon often contend with transportation difficulties, safety concerns during sea travel, and limited community resources, which may influence their teaching effectiveness and professional commitment.

Despite the strategic economic importance of Central Luzon and its ongoing infrastructure development, coastal education contexts often remain marginalized. Schools in coastal villages frequently operate with insufficient facilities and limited local support, further complicating teachers' work and potentially contributing to professional attrition.

Local educational leaders recognize that supporting teachers in coastal villages is critical to achieving DepEd's goals of accessible and quality education for all learners (Ceblano, et al., 2024). However, there is a need for datadriven insights that specifically capture and quantify the relationship between the challenges these teachers face and their commitment to teaching.

There is limited quantitative, correlational research that systematically examines the relationship between the teaching challenges experienced by Filipino teachers in coastal villages and their commitment to teaching. Existing studies are often qualitative and descriptive without statistical analysis of this relationship, leaving policymakers with limited empirical evidence to guide support initiatives.

The lack of quantitative, correlational research on this topic represents a significant gap in both scholarly literature and policy planning. While qualitative studies have illuminated the lived experiences of teachers in coastal areas, there is limited understanding of the measurable levels of perceived challenges and how these relate to teachers' professional commitment.

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Addressing this gap is essential for informing evidence-based interventions. By systematically describing the challenges faced by teachers in coastal villages and examining their association with commitment to teaching, this study can help guide policies and programs that target teacher support, well-being, and retention in these critical but underserved communities.

Therefore, this study aims to provide empirical, quantitative evidence on the levels of perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among Filipino teachers in select coastal villages in Central Luzon, as well as the relationship between these variables. By doing so, it sought to contribute to a deeper understanding of teacher needs in coastal contexts, ultimately supporting the development of targeted interventions and policies that can strengthen educational equity and teacher sustainability in the Philippines.

This study will provide much-needed quantitative data on the levels of perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among teachers in coastal areas, along with the nature of their relationship. The findings can inform DepEd policies, local school management practices, and support programs designed to improve teacher wellbeing, commitment, and retention in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas, thereby contributing to the broader goal of educational equity in the Philippines.

## **Objectives**

This study aimed to describe the levels of perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among Filipino teachers in select coastal villages, and to examine the relationship between these variables. It specifically would like to achieve the following:

- 1. Describe the level of perceived teaching challenges among Filipino teachers in select coastal villages.
- 2. Describe the level of commitment to teaching among the same group.
- 3. Determine the relationship between perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among Filipino teachers in select coastal villages.

### **Research Ouestions**

- 1. What is the level of perceived teaching challenges among Filipino teachers in coastal villages?
- 2. What is the level of commitment to teaching among these teachers?
- 3. Is there a significant relationship between perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching?

## **Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among Filipino teachers in coastal villages.

## **METHODOLOGY**

## **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design to systematically describe the levels of perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among Filipino teachers in select coastal villages in Central Luzon, Philippines. The descriptive aspect provided a detailed statistical profile of the variables of interest, while the correlational aspect examined the degree and direction of the relationship between these two variables without manipulation or experimental intervention.

By adopting this design, the study sought to produce generalizable, numerical data that could inform policy and practice. The approach allowed the researcher to capture variations in teacher experiences across different coastal settings, identifying trends and patterns in how perceived challenges related to professional commitment. This design was particularly appropriate given the need to inform evidence-based strategies for teacher retention and support in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

The choice of a descriptive-correlational framework also ensured that findings could highlight both the magnitude of challenges faced by teachers and the potential impact on their professional commitment. This evidence

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could support recommendations for targeted interventions by educational stakeholders, ultimately aiming to strengthen the delivery of quality education in coastal communities.

# **Population and Sampling**

The population of this study consisted of all basic education teachers—both elementary and junior high school levels—who were assigned in coastal villages within Central Luzon, Philippines. This region includes numerous coastal communities where teachers often face logistical, environmental, and resource-related challenges unique to their geographic context. The study focused on teachers who had substantial experience in these settings to ensure the validity and richness of the data collected.

Participants were drawn from a sampling frame comprising teachers with at least one year of continuous assignment in a coastal school, ensuring that respondents had sufficient familiarity with the specific challenges of their postings. Teachers who were permanent residents of the coastal barangay were excluded to specifically capture the experiences of those who needed to commute—often by boat or across difficult terrain—thereby better representing the logistical barriers to teaching. Another inclusion criterion required that participants had not filed any active request for transfer, demonstrating an ongoing intent to remain in their current assignments.

A total sample of 120 teachers was determined using power analysis to ensure sufficient statistical power (a = 0.05, power = 0.80, medium effect size). Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation by school level (elementary and junior high) and geographic location across various coastal municipalities. This approach improved the generalizability of the findings and minimized sampling bias by capturing a diverse yet representative cross-section of teachers serving in these challenging contexts.

#### **Instruments**

Data were collected using three structured instruments developed and validated for this study. First, the Teacher Challenges Scale (TCS) consisted of 20 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The items covered four main domains identified through literature review and expert consultation: travel difficulties, resource scarcity, student learning issues, and work-life balance. Pilot testing produced strong internal consistency (Cronbach's a > 0.85), confirming the reliability of the scale.

Second, the Teacher Commitment Scale (TCS-Teaching) was designed to measure teachers' professional commitment through 15 items on a 5-point Likert scale. This scale assessed domains such as professional dedication, engagement with student learning, and the desire to stay in the teaching profession despite difficulties. The instrument underwent expert validation to ensure relevance and appropriateness for coastal teaching contexts, with pilot testing confirming high reliability (Cronbach's a > 0.90).

A Demographic Questionnaire was also included to collect data on respondents' age, sex, teaching level, years of service, and commuting distance. The complete survey instrument underwent content validation by educational research experts and practitioners with experience in geographically isolated schools to ensure cultural and contextual appropriateness. These instruments were refined based on feedback to ensure clarity, ethical sensitivity, and ease of administration.

# **Data Collection**

Data collection was carefully planned and executed with full adherence to ethical research protocols. Prior to distribution of the instruments, the researcher obtained ethical clearance and written permissions from all involved government agencies and schools. This ensured that the study complied with institutional policies and protected the rights and welfare of participants.

Participants were approached during pre-arranged sessions held in their respective schools. The researcher explained the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study in clear, accessible language, after which written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Surveys were administered during teachers' free periods

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or vacant times to prevent disruption of instructional duties and to ensure that participants could complete the instruments comfortably and without undue pressure.

Depending on local conditions and school preferences, surveys were distributed either in paper-based format or through secure online forms. The researcher remained available to clarify questions, ensuring standardized administration and minimizing response bias. Completed surveys were collected on the same day when possible, or securely retrieved within a few days to maintain data integrity and confidentiality.

#### **Statistical Treatments**

Data analysis was performed using statistical software to ensure rigor and accuracy. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the demographic profile of participants, as well as to describe central tendencies and dispersions for the main variables: perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching. Means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages provided a clear quantitative portrait of the experiences and attitudes of teachers in coastal villages.

For inferential analysis, Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to test the strength and direction of the relationship between perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching. This technique was chosen for its suitability in measuring linear associations between two continuous variables. Additionally, simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of perceived challenges on commitment to teaching, offering insights into the extent to which variations in challenges explained variations in teacher commitment.

All statistical tests used a significance level of a = 0.05. Results were interpreted carefully to identify meaningful relationships while acknowledging limitations such as the cross-sectional design. Findings were presented with accompanying tables and figures to facilitate understanding by both academic and practitioner audiences, with clear implications drawn for policy and practice.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered strictly to established ethical guidelines throughout its design, implementation, and reporting. Informed consent was a critical component: participants were provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, their rights, potential risks, and benefits. They were assured that participation was entirely voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences for their professional standing.

To maintain confidentiality, all survey responses were coded with unique identifiers rather than names. Data were stored securely in password-protected electronic files accessible only to the research team. Paper-based responses were kept in locked cabinets and were securely disposed of after the analysis phase was completed in accordance with data management protocols.

The study also respected the principle of non-maleficence, ensuring that questions were framed sensitively and that no participant was subjected to undue stress or discomfort during data collection. The researcher avoided any coercive tactics and made sure that the timing of survey administration did not interfere with teachers' instructional responsibilities. Finally, the researcher committed to sharing key findings with participating schools and DepEd officials to promote transparency and inform improvements in teacher support policies.

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# **RESULTS and DISCUSSION**

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Teaching Challenges (n = 120)

Domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Travel Difficulties	4.12	0.65	High
Resource Scarcity	3.78	0.72	Moderate to High
Student Learning Issues	3.65	0.70	Moderate to High
Work-Life Balance	3.90	0.68	High
<b>Overall Challenges</b>	3.86	0.69	Moderate to High

Teachers reported an overall mean of 3.86 (SD = 0.69) on the 5-point scale, indicating moderate to high perceived teaching challenges in coastal villages. Travel difficulties received the highest mean (4.12), reflecting severe logistical barriers such as commuting by boat in hazardous weather.

The data show that travel difficulties were the most pronounced challenge, corroborating qualitative findings by Sanchez et al. (2022) about the risks of sea travel for coastal teachers. This result aligns with Crouch and Nguyen (2021), who notes that geographic barriers in rural and coastal schools are among the strongest predictors of teacher absenteeism and attrition globally.

Resource scarcity and student learning issues also scored moderately high. This resonates with DepEd's 2020 report identifying limited teaching materials and lack of remedial support as systemic gaps in GIDA schools. The high mean for work-life balance (3.90) underscores the stress teachers face in managing family responsibilities with difficult commutes, confirming studies like UNESCO (2021) that stress the need for holistic teacher well-being frameworks in remote deployments.

Overall, these findings suggest that coastal teachers face multifaceted, interlinked challenges that cannot be solved by single, one-size-fits-all interventions (Susanto, et al., 2022). Policies should account for logistical, material, instructional, and personal support systems to address these layered difficulties comprehensively (Herman & Fatimah, 2022).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Commitment to Teaching (n = 120)

Domain	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Professional Dedication	4.20	0.58	High
Student Engagement Commitment	4.05	0.60	High
Desire to Stay in Profession	4.10	0.62	High
Overall Commitment	4.12	0.60	High

The overall mean score for commitment to teaching was 4.12 (SD = 0.60), suggesting high commitment among teachers despite their challenging contexts.

Teachers' high scores on professional dedication and desire to stay in the profession indicate strong intrinsic motivation. This finding aligns with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (DepEd, 2017), which emphasize commitment to student learning as an essential professional standard.

Moreover, the high level of student engagement commitment suggests that despite hardships, teachers are prioritizing student success—a finding consistent with Frontier (2021) and Shepard (2021), who argue that commitment often emerges most strongly in challenging contexts where teachers see their work as a form of service and advocacy.

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These results highlight a paradox: while teachers face significant barriers, many maintain a high level of professional commitment. This suggests a resilience that policies should nurture through better incentives, support systems, and recognition programs to prevent burnout and turnover (Mullen, et al., 2021; Wang, 2021).

# Table 3. Correlation Between Perceived Teaching Challenges and Commitment to Teaching

**Variables** 

p-value

Teaching Challenges & Commitment -0.45 < .001

A significant moderate negative correlation (r = -0.45, p < .001) was found, indicating that higher perceived challenges are associated with lower commitment to teaching.

This negative correlation aligns with global findings that teachers facing more severe working conditions often exhibit reduced professional commitment over time (OECD, 2018). The magnitude of -0.45 suggests a meaningful, though not deterministic, relationship—indicating that while many teachers remain committed despite challenges, higher barriers still erode morale.

This is consistent with local research on teacher burnout (Vacalares & Chavez, 2024; Gibbons, 2023), which found that logistical barriers, resource shortages, and work-life imbalances can drive intentions to transfer or exit the profession. The implication is that commitment is fragile when challenges are unmitigated, even among highly motivated teachers.

Addressing this correlation requires targeted interventions—reducing travel burdens, improving resource availability, and supporting teacher well-being. Investing in these areas is not just about improving working conditions but about sustaining teacher commitment, which is essential for delivering quality education in coastal communities.

## Conclusion

This study described the levels of perceived teaching challenges and commitment to teaching among Filipino teachers in coastal villages of Central Luzon, revealing moderate to high challenges and consistently high commitment. However, the significant negative correlation (r = -0.45) underscored the erosion of commitment as challenges increased.

These findings highlight the resilience and dedication of teachers in disadvantaged coastal contexts but also expose their vulnerability to burnout and attrition if structural challenges remain unaddressed. The results suggest that sustained commitment cannot be assumed in the face of continued logistical, resource, and personal barriers without effective policy and programmatic support.

#### Recommendations

- 1. Policy Support: DepEd and LGUs should prioritize infrastructure investments to reduce travel burdens, such as improved boats or subsidized transport allowances for teachers assigned in coastal areas.
- 2. Resource Provision: Equip coastal schools with sufficient, culturally appropriate teaching materials and technology support to reduce resource-related challenges.
- Professional Development: Offer targeted training for teaching in multi-grade, mixed-ability coastal settings, including strategies for student motivation and language support.
- 4. Teacher Well-being Programs: Establish wellness initiatives addressing work-life balance, mental health support, and stress management, tailored for teachers in GIDA contexts.
- 5. Incentives and Recognition: Develop clear, transparent incentive systems (e.g., hardship pay, service credits, awards) to recognize and sustain teacher commitment in geographically challenging assignments.

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