

# Experiences Of Former Rural Primary School Teachers In Guangxi Province

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## ABSTRACT

*This qualitative case study focused on exploring the reasons why the former rural primary school teachers in Guangxi Province left the teaching profession. The research participants were the selected ten (10) teachers in Guanxi Province, China.*

*Based on the result, majority of the personal reasons why the teachers left their jobs were categorized into physical problems, emotional and mental problems, behavioral problem, social and spiritual problem, and task-related problem experienced by the teachers. In terms of the professional reasons, the teachers were found to encounter dissatisfaction with the salary.*

*The results of the study will be a good parameter for the teachers and administration to come up with sound and comprehensive retention program that would inflict interest and determination to stay longer despite the result of what would be the possible reason for them to leave. Lastly, the findings could be an eye-opener to the administration to consider these simple yet very significant reasons for their teachers to stay. It was recommended that the administration of the schools should provide personal and professional development opportunities such seminars, trainings, workshops, and team-building exercises available to the teachers.*

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## I. Background of the Study

Teachers play a critical role in their student's lives, helping them develop the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen profession and enjoy a fulfilling path toward achieving their goals in life. A teacher committed to their craft does more than just instruct; they model for us how to be responsible members of society and global citizens. Teachers are required everywhere on the planet to provide accurate information to students and put the necessary knowledge into the minds of those still learning. There are a variety of approaches that teachers take to ensure that their students retain information. The kind of psychological and social atmosphere that will prevail in the classroom is also heavily influenced by the teachers, who play a vital part in this process. The nature of the relationship between the instructor and the pupils is frequently the deciding factor in this regard (Alexandrache, 2015).

It is essential to retain not only highly qualified teachers in order to provide a good quality of education; instead, it is more important to keep the teachers who have passion for what they are doing than to keep the highly qualified teachers who have passion in what they are doing. Hence, motivation is a strategy that can encourage teachers to remain loyal and work for extended periods. The function of teaching requires attention, namely in the area of motivation. Only teachers who are motivated will produce high-quality work. Thus, this is something that principals and other school leaders must keep in mind. When educators are prepared to teach in the classroom and invest their whole selves in their work, they have the opportunity to mold the minds of those who could become future leaders. They will not only cultivate and produce prospective quality leaders of the future, but they will also contribute progress of the country by educating the next generation, which is a win-win situation for everyone involved (Baruani, et al., 2021).

In recent years, the number of rural primary school teachers in China's minority areas, particularly less developed minority areas, has been insufficient. This not only has a significant impact on the education provided in rural schools and the expansion of the student body, but it also inhibits the growth of rural education in China's minority areas that are less developed. The current position of rural teachers is worrisome for several reasons, some of which are objective and others subjective. Some of these causes include geographical variations, delayed economic development, and inadequate implementation of educational reform.

As a result, the researcher, who is also an educator, was compelled to conduct a study on the issue mentioned above. The current study looked into the primary factors contributing to faculty recruitment and retention success. The researcher also investigated why some teachers would resign from their educator positions.

Specifically, this study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To describe the demographic profile of the primary school teachers in Guangxi Province China.
2. To identify the reasons why teachers from China leave teaching in terms of:
  - 2.1 Personal Reasons; and
  - 2.2 Professional Reasons
3. To recommend a plan of action based on the findings.
4. To present the implication of the study to educational management.

## **II. METHODS**

This study utilized the qualitative method of analysis, primarily a case study approach in exploring the experiences of former rural primary school teachers in Guangxi Province.

It was conducted in Guangxi Province China with the participation of selected ten (10) teachers in Guanxi Province, China. They were 20 years old and above, residing in Guanxi Province and either male or female, must be recently employed for atleast five (5) years in the institution and had a left the teaching profession.

## **III. RESULTS**

The participants in this study were teachers who worked and were former teachers from Guanxi Province China. The table below highlights the demographic characteristics along with the pseudonyms that were assigned to each participant.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Educational Degree</b>	<b>Years of teaching Experience</b>
Teacher 1	35	Single	Master's	7
Teacher 2	41	Married	Doctorate	12
Teacher 3	32	Single	Doctorate	6
Teacher 4	42	Married	Master's	19
Teacher 5	53	Married	Master's	10
Teacher 6	38	Married	Doctorate	8
Teacher 7	45	Married	Doctorate	15
Teacher 8	59	Married	Doctorate	14
Teacher 9	56	Married	Doctorate	8
Teacher 10	35	Married	Doctorate	7

**Reasons of Leaving the Teaching Profession**

The table below presents the reasons why teachers leave their posts.

Reasons	Frequency
<b>Personal Reasons</b>	
Physical Problems	9
Emotional and Mental Problems	9
Behavioral Problems	9
Social and Spiritual Problems	9
Family matters and other life events.	5
Lack of professional development opportunities	4
<b>Professional Reasons</b>	
Dissatisfaction with salary	10
Absence of incentive - reward system	9
Poor relationship and dissatisfaction with the administration	8
Frustration on poor working conditions	7
Hostile relationship with colleagues	7
Having fears of school safety	6
Student discipline issues	6
Number of Hours Used for Preparation of Lesson Plans	5
Number of Hours Used for Preparation of Instructional Materials	5
Number of Hours Used for Preparation and checking of exercises	5
Number of Hours Used for Conducting Research	5
Number of Days/Attendance to Seminars, Workshops and Similar programs	5
Number of Hours Used for Counselling, Mentoring, Coaching of Students including Home Visits	5
Number of Hours Used for Consultations and Conferences with Parents	5

Shown in the table are the reasons why the teachers left the teaching profession. All of these issues appear to stem from the level of job satisfaction that these teachers obtain from their teaching profession, which includes salary, opportunities for promotion, work environment, and so on. This study is being conducted against this backdrop in order to determine what factors contribute to teacher job satisfaction.

**Personal Reasons**

The majority of the personal reasons for teachers leaving their positions were classified as medical problems, emotional and mental problems, behavioral problems, social and spiritual problems, and task-related problems.

Teachers cannot escape experiencing various physical and health issues as a result of a succession of responsibilities that impede their ability to fulfill their tasks. An interview revealed medical issues such as work fatigue/exhaustion, throat infections, increased blood pressure, fear, irritable bowel syndrome, neck and back discomfort, renal trouble, damaged vocal chords, decreased energy levels, and ulcer.

Teachers reported feeling fatigued or exhausted while working at school. Other medical issues that instructors occasionally faced were throat infections, high blood pressure, panic attacks, irritable bowel syndrome, stomach difficulties, neck and back pain, damaged vocal chords, and a drop in energy levels.

This demonstrates that because their 8-hour time at school was absorbed, as was the majority of their time at home, instructors became fatigued from schoolwork and occasionally experienced the aforementioned physical and health difficulties.

Aside from encountering external problems, teachers cannot avoid to also experience some emotional and mental problems such as anxiety at work, experiencing anger, depression, stress, mood swings, forgetful, lack of focus and personal accomplishments, loss of enthusiasm in teaching and maybe having suicidal thoughts.

The majority of teachers are constantly stressed at work. Other emotional and mental problems observed by teachers were anxiety, rage, sadness, mood swings, forgetfulness, lack of focus or inability to concentrate, lack of personal successes, and loss of passion.

Virtually all of the teachers became agitated while completing their duties. According to the research, the majority of secondary teachers believed that teaching-related activities were more stressful than instructional tasks. Their responsibilities included documentation, assessment administration, parent conferences, house visits,

and other special assignments, among others. Teachers experienced the previously described emotional and mental issues, which impacted their workload performance. This study also demonstrates that teachers' conduct is changing as a result of the stress and weariness they feel while executing their duties at school. Sleep problems, increased alcohol consumption, relationship troubles, overeating, undereating or low appetite, and teeth grinding were among the behavioral issues mentioned by teachers during interviews. The statistics of the teachers who had such behavioral issues is shown below. They revealed that they occasionally experienced behavioral issues such as sleep problems, marital troubles, overeating, undereating, or low appetite, and teeth grinding, which had a detrimental impact on their work and relationships with their families, pupils, and friends. Furthermore, because teachers were overburdened with schoolwork, they missed out on social and spiritual obligations such as spending time with their families and friends, pursuing personal interests in hobbies and other areas, attending church, devotion/meditation/reflection, or other church-related activities, and being irritated with their students. The teachers mention that there were moments when they lost time socially, spiritually, and even with their personal interests in hobbies and other areas.

Teachers said that there were times when they spent their weekends at school completing tasks. Some said they didn't have time to contemplate at night because they were exhausted from work, so tired that they fell asleep in bed.

Additional reasons given for teachers leaving the profession include: (1) Other reasons unrelated to their job or career as a teacher, for example, family matters and other life events, indicating that having ample time for the family, for example, and even attending gatherings related to it, matters to the teachers; (2) a lack of professional development opportunities, indicating that teachers need professional development training and other opportunities that can help teachers become better at planning their time and responsibilities. This ultimately makes teachers more productive and allows them to devote more time to pupils rather than paperwork.

### **Professional Reasons**

According to 9 participants, the second issue is the lack of an incentive reward system. A good reward system will include qualitative data on a teacher's performance, such as administrator and parent assessments. By including such evaluations, the entire contribution of a teacher on many aspects can be examined. However, if a reward system puts too much weight on such evaluations, it is likely to be viewed as subjective, prey to favoritism, or manipulation. As a result, the majority of a teacher's compensation should be based on quantifiable data about student achievement (mainly value-added but probably also rewards for a high absolute level of performance, as mentioned above).

According to 8 individuals, the third reason is a poor relationship and unhappiness with the administration. Nevertheless, keeping teachers remains a challenge for school authorities around the country. With these figures continually rising, it is critical to investigate why teachers are quitting the field and how school managers may address these issues if schools are to maintain and improve their levels of success. The relationship instructors have with their building-level administrator is one of the reasons teachers leave the profession. Gray (2021) concluded in his study that the administrator's leadership style, the inclusion of induction/mentoring programs, teacher isolation, professional development/support, teacher incentives, and administrator-teacher relationships are all factors that may influence the administrator-teacher relationship.

Additional professional motivations for teachers leaving the teaching profession include: (1) Dissatisfaction with poor working conditions, according to seven teachers, indicating that teachers become upset when they believe that their students' poor academic work is not good, poor working environment (e.g. Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura 2011), and teachers' emotional labor, discrete emotions, and classroom management; (2) unfriendly connection with colleagues, according to seven teachers, a sign that teachers quit when strained relationships among coworkers are common; (3) having concerns about school safety, according to six instructors, indicating that teachers are leaving to seek safe schools that support the protection of pupils from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds; and, (4) Student discipline issues, according to six teachers, indicating that teachers have a difficult time acting as discipline officers themselves, where each uses discipline to ensure routine is maintained, school rules are enforced, and students are in a safe learning environment, and if a student does not follow the rules and does not complete classwork or homework, that student is missing out on valuable learning opportunities.

Furthermore, five teachers left the teaching profession due to the number of hours spent preparing lesson plans, instructional materials, preparing and checking exercises, conducting research, days/attendance at seminars, workshops, and similar programs, counselling, mentoring, and coaching of students, including home visits, consultations, and conferences with parents.

Though the Ministry of Education allows up to 30 hours of instruction each week, teachers found it to be too much because they still had other special assignments to do. Virtually all teachers reported that trying to

deal with diverse subjects or attempting to conduct a course outside his/her area of competence was a big concern for them and resulted to their teaching workload being unreasonable and unmanageable most of the time.

There were also several emergency occasions where they were required to take responsibility of their courses when some of their colleagues were missing or on trainings/seminars, which increased their teaching hours. As a result, teachers had less time to prepare for their other obligations.

Aside from the teaching loads, teachers were needed to prepare for their daily lesson plans or logs. The number of hours spent preparing their daily lectures varied according to the quantity of preparations or subjects they handled.

Teachers that have more than one preparation are usually the result of a teacher shortage. There was frequently a mismatch between the hired specialization/major subject teacher and the needs of the school. This data revealed that teachers were already overburdened with preparing and mastering subjects outside of their expertise, which took up a large portion of their time.

Another task assigned to teachers at school was to create action/work plans. This comprises a collection of objectives, techniques, and activities that may be used for teacher and student development/achievement and in which the school head, teachers, learners, parents, and the community may participate within a defined timeframe.

Teachers reported spending significantly more time producing curriculum materials for student-centered classrooms that permit various intelligences and bring out the diversity in learners. Likewise, teachers who handled more than one subject frequently took more time in creating their instructional materials than those who had less handled subjects. And, because they cannot simply rely on what is provided by the book, they must conduct additional research and gather related materials about the topic in order to comprehend and transmit the proper knowledge to their students. In this manner, teachers must first fill themselves with information about issues outside of their grasp before imparting it to their students.

The majority of teachers spent an average of 14 hours each week on their jobs. This demonstrates that lecturers who typically assign exercises spent more time checking, particularly in subjective assessments. This is the assignment that they frequently bring home because it requires more time in checking exercises, according to them. They cannot, however, continue to suspend it because the outcome of the assessment will direct the teacher whether to move on to the next topic or to reteach the current one. The data show that the 2-hour extra time allotted to teachers was insufficient for this specific teaching-related task.

Teachers record the students' scores as proof of their learning progress after checking the activities. All scores were manually recorded on the teacher's class record to keep track of them and to report quarterly to the learners' parents/guardians during parent-teacher conferences.

Furthermore, as it strives for evidence-based policymaking, the MOE continues to encourage its personnel to conduct research. Conducting research was strongly advised to all teachers at all levels; aside from providing extra credit for promotion, conducting research will help improve the educational system in all aspects.

The interview revealed that, although being urged by their school officials, instructors do not feel obligated to perform study. Furthermore, they were already overburdened with other teaching-related obligations, and they can no longer find time to write/conduct any type of research, even if they wanted to.

Furthermore, teachers were sent to seminars, trainings, and other relevant programs in order to improve individuals' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in order for them to accomplish their tasks at school.

Attendance and appearance at seminars, conferences, and training are heavily influenced by the kind of special duties that a teacher has. There were various organizations or particular tasks that were active when it came to trainings, as noticed.

Teachers are frequently counselors, mentors, and coaches to their students. Instructors also show their concern for each child by making home visits. Students who had a history of poor attendance, poor performance, and misbehavior were typically subjected to house visits.

According to them, they spent the majority of their time overseeing their students on what they needed to do within their classroom before the day began and following up on them at the conclusion of the day. In some cases, their two-hour extra time was spent resolving concerns with children in the classroom rather than doing other extra work. If their students participate in school competitions, they spend time coaching and accompanying them to practice. Teachers also stated that their role as advisers does not end at school. Most of the time, their function as a counselor, mentor, and coach extends even while they are at home, via chat or text messaging. Their families' time was even divided and shared with the majority of their students who contacted them.

Teachers were responsible for informing parents/guardians about their students' academic, co-curricular, and behavioral success at school. Teachers submit in-depth reports on student development to parents and other authorities three or four times a year, but there is evidence that these periods are particularly intense and stressful for instructors. They also said that they dedicate considerable time to meeting with parents concerning evaluation

and concerns like children' behavior within the classroom and other relevant matters and they said the time need was increasing each year.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are recommended:

1. The administration of the schools should provide personal and professional development opportunities (such seminars, trainings, workshops, and team-building exercises) available to the instructors.
2. The administrators of the school need to take into consideration the remuneration and wage standardization policies, as well as the promotional strategies. In the same vein, tenure should be reconsidered. Consideration should also be given to offering attractive compensation packages in addition to allowances.
3. The administrators of the school ought to examine the school's incentive systems, which should include procedures and processes, to determine whether or not they need to be revisited, improved, and then firmly applied in order to make them more employee friendly. Regarding this topic, the policies and procedures of the relevant institutions need to be taken into consideration.
4. It is the responsibility of the allocated department heads to conduct faculty performance evaluations, and the feedbacking instrument used by students ought to be carefully watched in order to ascertain the nature of the interaction between the instructor and the pupil.
5. To reestablish a cordial connection between teachers and school administrators, the heads of each department should be responsible for organizing Professional Learning Communities that include mentorship programs for new teachers. These programs should be emphasized.

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