



# ACCOUNTS OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON INVOLUNTARY TRANSFER OF STATION: A PHENOMENOLOGY

Joash G. Gementiza<sup>1</sup>, Felvic B. Pernito<sup>2</sup>

Master of Arts in Elementary Education, St. Mary's College of Tagum, Inc.  
Graduate School Department, Tagum City, Philippines

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra15570>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra15570

## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this qualitative study, adopting the phenomenological approach, is to discover and understand the lived experiences of public elementary school teachers who were involuntarily transferred to a different station or school in the Division of Davao del Norte. In the data collection procedure, fourteen (14) teachers were selected through purposive sampling and they participated in the study. The participants were divided equally between in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from each of them. More importantly, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were applied in the data collection procedures, ensuring the total well-being of all participating teachers. From the participants, it was identified that they experienced struggling with financial strains, lack of school facilities and resources, challenges linked to long distance of school, predicaments relative to transitioning to multigrade classes, and electrical and internet connectivity challenges. They also revealed the different ways of coping that they had such as exhibiting positive traits and behaviors, fostering positive relationships and connections, highlighting support systems, and drawing inspiration from recognition and validation. They also realized the following insights which are namely fair and systematic approach in teacher transfers, see change as a constant thing that must be accepted, pursue personal and professional goals, and emphasize positive relationships. While most of the participants were able to adapt to the situation, the Department of Education may also reflect upon the findings of this study and may always seek to prioritize the well-being of all public-school teachers who breathe life into the basic education system that we are having today.*

**KEYWORDS:** *involuntary transfer, public schools, elementary teachers, phenomenological research, Davao del Norte*

## INTRODUCTION

Many school districts are dealing with a wide range of concerns about elementary teachers who have been assigned to a workstation and transferred to another. One of the issues that beset the public elementary school teachers is the involuntary transfer of station. When a teacher's reassignment emanates from the school or district rather than the teachers themselves, this is referred to as involuntary teacher transfer. This results in hardships or difficulties, challenges, negative feelings, and their new students' understanding and adjustment in the classroom, as well as the working environment of public elementary school teachers. The situation is enraged when teachers are promoted in the middle of the school year and take a long time to replace. Teachers can experience stress that prevents them from teaching at a new school or station.

In China, local governments sometimes use teacher transfers to reward or punish teachers. The frequent use of teacher reassignment as a form of reward and punishment tends to widen disparities in teacher quality among schools that are otherwise underserved (Wei et al., 2020). In Sri Lanka, when public school teachers are transferred after 10 years of continuous service, the educational performance of the transferred individual may decline, which may stress the teachers in service (Wijayatunga, 2018). Moreover, in Kenya,

a study by Waseka et al. (2016) agreed that teacher absenteeism due to transfer significantly contributes to poor learner performance because school curricula are not covered. They argue that when a school's curriculum is poorly covered, students may look up content they do not cover or do not understand, leading to poor performance.

In the Philippines, particularly in the Philippine Normal University Manila, changing your work environment is one of the most difficult decisions a teacher can make in their career. School teachers have an emotional bond with their former colleagues, which makes it difficult to leave them before deciding to move to another institution. When teachers move from private to public schools, they often encounter threatening and gossipy co-workers (Gonzales, 2021).

Meanwhile, in the Division of Davao del Norte, particularly in Talaingod District, several schools are experiencing a decrease in enrolment, which results in excess teachers. The excess teachers at the school could be transferred against his will. Superintendents can transfer teachers from one school to another. School teachers who are reassigned or transferred must adjust to their new working environment and the section or learners that they manage. In resonance, DepEd Order No. 22, s. 2013 if there are certain conditions "in the exigency of service" that state that transfers can also be made without



teacher consent. This can happen if the ratio of elementary school is below 35:1 and 27:1 for secondary school. Schools may be forced to split into multiple levels when enrollment in a particular school drops significantly due to displacement due to armed conflict, landslides, family relocations, or the closure of large private businesses in the area, except when introducing a class. A similar situation where a teacher is declared redundant by the Principal/School Head (SH) and their expertise is needed by another school/district/department may call for involuntary transfer. If a teacher is transferred due to service needs, one of the decisions is to hire the teacher last (last in, first out) (Department of Education, 2013).

During my research, I discovered that similar studies on involuntary station transfers were conducted. Conferring to the findings of Salifu (2020), alternatively, pointed out that there exists a difficulty in transferring teachers into rural schools due to the following factors: It deals with teacher accommodation perceptions and conditions, the need for professional development, and the ignorance of the rural population. These include branding rural teachers as village teachers and teachers' desire to live in urban areas. Additionally, other studies have emerged as a key issue affecting teacher retention, academic performance, and student performance (Komakech, 2017). However, these studies are different from my study primarily because my study concept tackles the lived experiences of teachers on the involuntary transfer of stations in my local setting which is by far less explored.

Working in an unfamiliar and faraway setting may have consequences on the overall performance of teachers and their students' academic performance if this problem is left unattended. Thus, the need to conduct the study is apparent. It also influences the quality of the learning experience achieved by students taught by the same teacher. As such, this study merits importance, as this can be beneficial to promote better teaching conditions among many teachers in my locality. This study is also anticipated to improve not only the organization but also the learners, and society because it would lead to promoting the welfare of its members who happened to be teachers who are involuntarily assigned in places which they may yet find unfamiliar. This study is also anticipated to help students experience better quality of learning in schools. Findings of the study are intended and anticipated to be shared in various research conferences, and published in an online international journal which will serve as related literature and a means to communicate the results of this study. Thus, this study was conceptualized and anchored on the preceding claims.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover and understand the lived experiences of public elementary school teachers who were involuntarily transferred to a different station or school in the Division of Davao del Norte. At this stage of the study, involuntary transfer of station is defined as the movement of teachers from one station to another station initiated by the school principal or district administrator to conduct a teacher needs analysis.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the lived experiences of elementary school teachers regarding the involuntary transfer of station?
2. How did elementary school teachers cope with the challenges encountered on the involuntary transfer of station?
3. What are the insights drawn from the experiences of elementary school teachers on the involuntary transfer of station that can be shared with others?

## METHODS

This qualitative research adopted the phenomenological approach which is a systematic endeavor that inquires the essence of experience of those who had firsthand encounters with a phenomenon by interviews and focus group discussions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019; Giorgi, 2010). There were fourteen (14) participants in this study who were public elementary school teachers from selected districts in the Division of Davao del Norte.

Of the fourteen (14) participants, seven (7) participated in in-depth interviews (IDI) and the remaining seven (7) participated in the focus group discussion (FGD). In terms of recruiting my desired participants, I used the following inclusion criteria as a guide: (a) they must be a public elementary school teacher working in the Department of Education within the Division of Davao del Norte; (b) they must have at least three (3) years of teaching experience before the involuntary transfer from the previous school to the present school of assignment; and (c) they must have any of the following teaching positions: Teacher I, Teacher II, Teacher III, Master Teacher I or Master Teacher II. For the exclusion criteria, the study did not include teachers coming from private schools and those who were teaching in institutions of higher learning.

Prior to the conduct of the study, I submitted first the protocol to the Research Ethics Committee of Saint Mary's College of Tagum, Inc. to review the study to ensure that it met the requirements of accepted practice and ethical guidelines. Then, I sought endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School for permission to conduct this research. Finally, I ensured that the data obtained from my participants' responses was exact for this study to be successful. After I completed my thematic analysis, I formulated the various core ideas. Following the extraction and formulation of the various core ideas, clustering of essential ideas was followed to arrive at a theme. The themes with core ideas then became the study's findings.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Involuntary Transfers of Teachers

A transfer is defined as a district, intrastate, or quick change of assignment from one school to another. On the other hand, public school teachers who are reassigned must accept wholeheartedly. Thus, a change of position inside a school is referred to as relocating. Voluntarily or involuntarily transferred public school teachers often have an advantage over newly hired staff occupying the position. A public-school teacher transfer policy should, ideally, balance the interests and demands of both teachers and administrators.



Teams that work together and pursue a common goal are more efficient, and qualified teachers typically enjoy their work and therefore stay in the profession longer. By empowering school leaders with respect to staffing, school leaders can create a collegial environment that ensures teachers are satisfied and successful in the professional community (Oribhabor et al., 2018).

**Challenges of Teachers on Involuntary Transfers**

Transferring public school teachers is a fundamental component of centralized education systems that may be exploited intentionally or inadvertently. Frequent teacher transfers during the school year, whether voluntary or involuntary, are considered detrimental to the school system. This is due to differences in the methods and approaches used by each teacher, which complicates management when teachers teach the same subject to the same group of students. Worse yet, failure to quickly replace a transferred teacher, especially during a session, can result in the inability to complete topics already planned for the semester, which can have a negative impact on student performance on external exams (Olorunsola & Belo, 2018).

**Adjustments of Reassigned Teachers Due to Involuntary Transfers**

Being a teacher transferred involuntarily to another station entails another set of adjustments. One is adjusting to the multigrade teaching setup that is utilized heavily in this context. In a study conducted by Donitsa-Schmidt and Zuzovsky (2014) amidst transitioning to multigrade classes, public school teachers grapple with diverse learning levels, constrained methods, and inadequate training, fostering frustration and strain in managing reassignment and classroom dynamics. For public school teachers who have walked this path, navigating the complexities of multigrade classrooms unveils their remarkable resilience and adaptability in ensuring quality education.

**Coping Strategies of Teachers Who Encountered Involuntary Transfers**

Maintaining an optimistic mindset proved instrumental in the involuntary adjustment of public school teachers, enabling

them to conquer the obstacles they encountered with resilience. The cheerful of participants outlook leads them to continue their passion and dedication to teaching despite the challenges they had experienced under the existing phenomena faced by public elementary school teachers (Cherkowski, 2018).

**Insights of Teachers on Involuntary Transfers**

Correspondingly, the higher rates of public-school teacher transfer requests show that teachers are dissatisfied with their schools. Thus, teacher satisfaction may vary depending on the community, environment, individual characteristics of teachers, and beliefs they hold of their profession, as well as the relative benefits and drawbacks of teaching in different schools, as well as the economic and organizational conditions of the schools where they work (Oribhabor et al., 2018).

**Emphasize Positive Relationships**

The arrival of new, supportive colleagues has transformed the experience at the new station, replacing toxicity with positivity. The introduction of new colleagues has proven to be a valuable addition, offering support in dealing with personal challenges and serving as a positive influences. These new companions, despite differing experiences, foster a sense of harmony among the group. For them, harmony emerges as the key element, embodying love, understanding, compassion, and sympathy within the team, whether comprised of colleagues, students, or family members. Such harmony is seen as the linchpin for smoother work dynamics, as it prevents chaos and conflicts, emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding in achieving collective success. As gleaned by Komakech (2017), teachers faced unexpected reassignments to undesirable areas, disrupting established connections and positive relationships with colleagues and the community. Additionally, empowering school teachers to manage staffing cultivates a collegial atmosphere, fostering teacher satisfaction and success within the professional community (Oribhabor et al., 20

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Table 1**  
**Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Lived Experiences of Elementary School Teachers Regarding The Involuntary Transfer of Station**

Major Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Struggling with Financial Strains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>doubling of one’s expenses because of supporting one's own food consumption and that of one’s family</li> <li>shouldering huge expenses for riding transportation when going to work</li> <li>spending huge money on gassing up one’s motorcycle</li> <li>traveling everyday to a distant workstation which entails financial burden</li> <li>having to take on debts to manage the current situation</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of School Facilities and Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiencing heat and discomfort from overcrowding</li> <li>accommodating learners in tight spaces in the classroom</li> <li>using rooms as makeshift for teachers’ quarters at night and classroom at day</li> <li>lacking television for instruction</li> <li>struggling with accessing distant water source</li> </ul>



<b>Challenges Linked to Long Distance of School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being unable to go back home frequently because of the distance of new workstation</li> <li>• feeling fatigue due to lengthy travel</li> <li>• walking a considerable distance for hours to reach the school which is not accessible through motorcycle</li> <li>• being assigned in a faraway school which can be worrisome in times of emergency</li> </ul>
<b>Predicaments Relative to the Transitioning to Multigrade Classes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expressing frustration and coping with reassignment and in handling multigrade classes</li> <li>• being clueless and confused on how to handle multigrade classes</li> <li>• having inadequate teacher training and teachers to handle multigrade classes</li> <li>• adjusting on alternating discussion and activities between two grades to make all students preoccupied and not bored</li> </ul>
<b>Electrical and Internet Connectivity Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using solar energy devices because of the absence of electricity</li> <li>• failing to meet urgent reports due to signal, power, and internet issues</li> <li>• lacking a dependable signal for communication</li> </ul>

**Struggling with Financial Strains**

*Well, it is difficult financially on my part because I must go every day and the workplace is quite far. IDI-04*

*I incurred debts because of what happened currently. There were really debts. FGD-07*

Chang and Chiung-Haoli (2019) asserted family finances notably shape public servants' transfer choices, highlighting their focus on stability and incentives. This was also the concern of Quejada and Orale (2018) that teachers nobly invest in education via personal funds for supplies and food, motivated by fulfillment and prospects in demanding environments. Thus, in the context of the study, there is an urgency to address their needs regarding financial challenges.

The findings of this study were also in resonance to the results of the study of Plaza and Jamito (2021). It revealed that the financial status of public-school teachers in the Philippines were mostly unstable. They had to deal with household expenses and had no investments and savings for emergencies. They also had to resort to loans. All these financial burdens eventually affected the teachers' enthusiasm, focus towards work, and overall performance in teaching.

**Lack of School Facilities and Resources**

*Another thing is the weather. It is like there are 60 inside the classroom and it is too hot. IDI-02*

*The water source is still distant from ours. It is also not easy to descend because I be afraid of heights. FGD-06*

In one study conducted by Komakech (2017), teachers' relocations to unfavorable regions, attributed to language barriers, distance from family, security issues, and inadequate social amenities, underscore the multifaceted challenges they face beyond educational demands. In the face of daunting relocations driven by language barriers, family separation, security uncertainties, and limited amenities, teachers exemplify an extraordinary commitment that extends beyond academics, showcasing their resilience as they shape lives amidst adversity.

In connection, Okongo et al. (2015) emphasized that school facilities, textbooks, and other resources are essential components of the educational process because they give students access to a well-organized and thorough source of knowledge. Effective teaching and learning are hampered when these items are either missing or insufficient. Once

deemed inadequate, teachers may tend to present the lesson in an abstract and uninteresting way, which makes it harder for students to understand and value the subject matter. This may lead to a belief that the material is dull and uninteresting, which eventually impedes learning and lowers student motivation.

**Challenges Linked to Long Distance of School**

*The most challenging part is the distance. Of course, I cannot go back and forth. It is tough because distance affects everything. It would be okay if I was relocated nearby. IDI-01*

*The negative thing is that our school is really among the last mile schools, so it is that far. Therefore, the negative thing here is when there are emergencies and people could not easily descend. FGD-06*

Similarly, in a study conducted by Hussein (2016) the transfer of an employee to a new school significantly impacts individual performance due to challenges encompassing distance, transportation, and commuting fatigue. For educators navigating such transfers, proactive support systems addressing the complexities of distance, transportation, and fatigue are imperative to sustain optimal teaching performance.

In support, Quejada and Orale (2018) noted that teachers transferred in remote areas often face perilous journeys, risking their safety by using less secure modes of transportation, and endure lengthy walks, particularly challenging in inclement weather when the path to the school becomes treacherously muddy and slippery. In the face of these scary challenges, teachers in remote areas exhibit remarkable dedication and resilience, embodying the true spirit of education despite the adversities posed by their daily journeys.

**Predicaments Relative to the Transitioning to Multigrade Classes**

*It is difficult to accept but as days go by, I was able to cope gradually because in my previous one, I had monograde teaching and suddenly I was transferred to a far-flung station, and it is multigrade. This is just too much. IDI-01*

*When I arrived, there was lack of teachers, so that was one of my struggles. I wondered how I could teach without proper training on multigrade. FGD-01*



In a study conducted by Donitsa-Schmidt and Zuzovsky (2014) amidst transitioning to multigrade classes, teachers grapple with diverse learning levels, constrained methods, and inadequate training, fostering frustration and strain in managing reassignment and classroom dynamics. For teachers who have walked this path, navigating the complexities of multigrade classrooms unveils their remarkable resilience and adaptability in ensuring quality education despite the challenges posed by varying learning levels, limited resources, and insufficient training. Moreover, Mortazavizadeh et al. (2017) claimed that multigrade classes encompass a myriad of challenges, from time constraints and teacher limitations to diverse student populations and resource scarcity, which collectively necessitate innovative solutions and comprehensive support systems for effective and inclusive education. These experienced teachers stand as beacons of adaptability and

creativity, shaping a transformative educational landscape even amidst the intricate web of challenges posed by multigrade classrooms, limited resources, and diverse learners.

**Electrical and Internet Connectivity Challenges**

*There is no electricity here, although there is solar, but it is not something that can be used every now and then. IDI-02*  
*Communication is truly inaccessible because there is literally no signal there. I cannot communicate with my family. IDI-07*

This is supported by Oribhabor et al. (2018) that teacher transfer requests primarily stem from factors such as poor accessibility, lack of electricity, and absence of internet connectivity. As such, Redding (2018) added that understanding teachers' work conditions, including factors like lack of internet connectivity and electricity, is pivotal in comprehending their impressions of their workstations.

**Table 2**  
**Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Coping Mechanisms of Public Elementary School Teachers with the Challenges Encountered on the Involuntary Transfer of Station**

Major Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Exhibiting Positive Traits and Behaviors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having a positive mindset to avoid stress</li> <li>• having a strong mindset to surpass the challenges</li> <li>• practicing punctuality and self-discipline even when there are no visitations</li> <li>• putting God first in everything as important</li> <li>• accepting and embracing the change and calling for learners</li> <li>• looking for the positive side of things amidst challenges and difficulties</li> </ul>
<b>Fostering Positive Relationships and Connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seeking help from friends on one's weaknesses</li> <li>• having an environment in the new station that is not stressful and toxic</li> <li>• collaborating with supportive parents</li> <li>• treating co-workers as one's own siblings and establishing harmonious relationship</li> <li>• connecting and seeking advice from people</li> <li>• receiving comfort, caring words and encouragement from colleagues</li> </ul>
<b>Highlighting Support System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having a supportive family that says no negative things to you</li> <li>• having the company and support of others whom one can talk to</li> <li>• telling and crying out one's heartaches to one's husband</li> <li>• having a partner that supports and helps out in household chores</li> </ul>
<b>Drawing Inspiration from Recognition and Validation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being motivated extrinsically by the certificates and recognitions received as recognition of her efforts in the new station</li> <li>• relishing the rewarding feeling of seeing one's learners excel in the district festival of talents</li> <li>• receiving appreciation from parents, colleagues, and superiors</li> </ul>

**Exhibiting Positive Traits and Behaviors**

*I will just take it as a positive one. I will just stay positive and believe that I can do it. Because if I am emotionally weak, I can easily be carried away by stress. IDI-01*  
*Being prayerful in everything is essential. In everything I do, I prioritize God, as He is the most important aspect of my life. FGD-01*

Cherkowski (2018) stated that the power of positive thinking enabled involuntarily reassigned teachers to surmount challenges, as their optimistic outlook propelled them to persist in their passion for teaching, undeterred by the difficulties posed by prevailing educational circumstances. In the journey of reassignment, the victorious embrace of positivity amidst challenges highlights the profound

influence of a resilient mindset on unwavering commitment to teaching.

Likewise, Salifu (2020), the same can be said during the challenging times in teacher transfers due to the lack of amenities, health reasons, bad road network, and many more challenges. Teachers may be able to overcome these constraints and problems by harnessing optimism amidst the difficult situation they are in.

**Fostering Positive Relationships and Connections**

*The parents are very supportive, and they always come together to help. That is what I have experienced, and they are incredibly supportive. IDI-04*



*And secondly, my colleagues and companions, their words of encouragement and sincere care, have helped me feel at ease and comfortable in my new station. IDI-07*

Study shows that a positive working environment is essential, as gleaned from the study of Oribhabor et al. (2018). In the symphony of united teams and fulfilled educators, the harmonious melody of efficiency and lasting educational impact resonates for the betterment of teachers and students alike. Also, the challenges faced by teachers reassigned due to various factors underscore the delicate equilibrium between professional duties and personal bonds, highlighting the profound impact of such changes on their lives (Komakech, 2017).

**Highlighting Support System**

*Having companions in my work, family, and friends is a significant factor and a great help. IDI-02*

*Especially my husband because I do not have anyone else to talk to. He is the only one I can cry to. IDI-03*

This was in concurrence with the claim of American University (2023) which emphasized the importance of collaboration and support among teachers. Accordingly, it was stated that teachers need to band together to make difficult tasks lighter by working together. Isolation and loneliness in teaching, as mentioned also in the study of Salifu (2020) on his study about teachers who serve in far-flung schools, may be replaced with simple joys and laughter with the teachers encouraging, motivating, and empowering one

another. Difficult situations may become a little easier for teachers to deal with by supporting one another.

**Drawing Inspiration from Recognition and Validation**

*I have really learned a lot from extrinsic motivation. I have proven adequately to myself that I can achieve this. It feels that the certificates given to me were in fact achievable on my end. Perhaps, I deserve this because I did not expect this one. IDI-03*

*Appreciation is indeed the most satisfying reward for a teacher, being appreciated by parents, valued by colleagues, and recognized by those in higher positions. FGD-04*

To understand how teachers view and value teaching excellence awards selected by the students, Madriaga and Morley (2016) created an online poll for teaching staff across all universities in the UK. Students' responses to assessment surveys and instructional observations are used to determine the winners of student-led awards. The recipients expressed gratitude for the award based on the findings of their investigation. However, several respondents expressed concern that the award would cause conflict, was unreliable, and would foster unfavorable conditions.

For Ravago and Mapa (2020), teacher recognitions are a significant mechanism that the educational system in the Philippines must adapt and improve. These recognitions serve as signals for validating the teachers' exemplary efforts and achievements as well as a motivation to contribute positive impact in the lives of the learners.

**Table 3**

**Major Themes and Core Ideas on the Insights of Public Elementary School Teachers on the Involuntary Transfer of Station that can be Shared with Others**

Major Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Fair and Systematic Approach in Teacher Transfers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider the assignment of newly hired teachers in the station instead of transferring other teachers who are already in service</li> <li>follow DepEd orders to ensure that no one is at a disadvantage in the process</li> <li>urge DepEd to double check the recommendations of school heads as their decisions are affected by those they favored</li> <li>ensure fairness in the redistribution of excess teachers across schools</li> <li>consider the proximity of the teachers' residence when assigning them to their station</li> <li>conduct orientations on teacher transfer</li> </ul>
<b>See Change as a Constant Thing That Must Be Accepted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoid complacency as change is said to be constant</li> <li>embrace changes which are beyond control with an open heart</li> <li>accept changes as an antecedent to understanding one's purpose of being assigned in a different station</li> <li>go beyond one's comfort zone and adjust to certain changes</li> <li>adapt change while serving one's purpose</li> </ul>
<b>Pursue Personal and Professional Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasize continuous learning for career advancement</li> <li>make a positive impact on others by getting promoted</li> <li>have commitment to improve and to give justice to one's position</li> </ul>
<b>Emphasize Positive Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meet amiable colleagues who helped in one's coping and adjustment</li> <li>manage to get along with another in a new station</li> <li>highlighting harmony that promotes optimism and avoid conflict</li> </ul>



### Fair and Systematic Approach in Teacher Transfers

*They should first consider the residency of the teacher, whether it is near or far to the new assigned station. IDI-07*  
Precisely, as lay emphasis on Hoppe (2022), navigating necessary involuntary transfers requires a fair process with advance notice, application opportunities, and priority for eligible vacancies, giving precedence to temporary teachers over new hires for a just and thoughtful transition. Aligned with this principle, the Teachers Service Commission's policy outlines teacher promotion goals that prioritize teachers' interests, allowing educators to request transfers between schools (Kanyiri et al., 2020).

### See Change as a Constant Thing That Must Be Accepted

*Accept it wholeheartedly because change is always present. In other words, I do not have control over things. There are certain things that I cannot control, so I must accept it wholeheartedly. IDI-02*

*I have realized that we should not stay in our comfort zone because there really are changes that will happen. It is because we can learn everything, just like changes. IDI-06*

Quejada and Orale (2018) supported the above-stated finding as their study suggested that the teacher-participants exemplify a strong sense of responsibility by striving to provide top-quality education, leading them to develop resourcefulness and adaptability in utilizing available resources to meet the evolving educational landscape's demands. Furthermore, it was opined in another study that teachers realized upon reflecting on their experiences after the teacher transfer that they had to adapt constantly, primarily because they recognized in the field of teaching that change is nothing but inevitable (Oribhabor et al., 2018).

### Pursue Personal and Professional Goals

*Perhaps, if given a chance in the future, I must pursue further studies, aiming for a master's degree, which would greatly assist in my quest for promotion. It can also contribute significantly to my professional development. IDI-02*

Indeed, it was revealed in the results of the study of Sevim and Akin (2021) that teachers pursued graduate education mostly to achieve personal and professional development and to build an academic career. They stated that graduate education provided them with the skills of scientific thinking and research, communication, teaching and evaluation, and establishing theory-practice relationships, as well as knowledge of the profession and the field.

### Emphasize Positive Relationships

*Perhaps, because I have also met new colleagues who are not difficult to work with. They are also individuals who can help me cope with my negative aspects. They have been a positive influence as well. IDI-01*

*We were also given a good companion. Despite our different experiences, we get along well with them. IDI-05*

As gleaned by Komakech (2017), teachers faced unexpected reassignments to undesirable areas, disrupting established connections and positive relationships with colleagues and the community. Additionally, empowering school teachers to manage staffing cultivates a collegial atmosphere, fostering

teacher satisfaction and success within the professional community (Oribhabor et al., 2018).

### IMPLICATION FOR TEACHING PRACTICE

The study was pursued under the premise that it would improve the teaching conditions and performance of teachers who participated in this study. At this point, it is already time to provide the implications of the results to improving teaching practice among elementary teachers who are reassigned involuntarily in far-flung schools. Discussions of the implications would revolve around the teachers, learners, school heads, DepEd officials, and future researchers. Moreover, it is also encouraged that other scholars would expand this scholarly topic through more research endeavors to spur action among the concerned entities and agencies.

It was found in the study that being in the situation of the participants would mean facing great obstacles along the journey. The combined ordeals of financial strains in allowances and travels, electrical and internet connectivity challenges, inconvenience caused by the long distance of schools where teachers were stationed, and the predicaments related to inadequate school facilities and resources as well as their sudden transition to multigrade classes would imply that teachers under this situation did never have an easy way. One can only imagine the adjustments needed to embrace these limitations and inadequacies encountered in the field. More so, these problems speak heavily about the aspects that DepEd must resolve and improve to empower the affected teachers to fully provide quality education, even in their new areas of assignment which are far from the lowlands.

It was also implied in the results of the study that these inadequacies became a disadvantage in terms of the delivery of instruction or teaching performance of the concerned teachers. The absence of stable electricity and internet connection heavily hindered the teachers in their timely submission of the necessary school reports which could have been helpful in minimizing their time spent for administrative tasks, and in return, maximizing their preparation and teaching time. More importantly, the lack of school facilities and resources coupled with the confusions on sudden transition to multigrade teaching and limited internet signal as well as electricity have left teachers with limited options in shaping the manner on how they proceed with their lessons. While these limitations were an apparent reality to the teachers in service, these have also enabled teachers to come out of their comfort zones and use their creativity and resourcefulness in finding alternatives to deliver lessons albeit the limitations stated above.

In terms of the ways of coping exhibited by the participants, most of the mechanisms were focused on the internal states such as maintaining optimism that they adopted as well as concentrated on the support and inspiration that they can draw from others such as their friends, co-teachers, and family. Indirectly, these had impacted the performance of teachers in teaching as they became more driven to teach the learners, and at the same time, more passionate to embrace all the corresponding hardships in doing so. This only highlights the importance of optimism in teaching amidst harsh conditions



such as those stated in the lived experiences of the participants. With positivity, there are almost no limits on what teachers can do to fulfill their roles and duties for their learners who need them the most. Hopefully, those teachers and school heads who are reading this manuscript will find a treasure trove of lessons from the ways of coping of the participants and they may be able to emulate from the examples displayed by the participants. In the same way, learners will also be able to appreciate more the untold and unspoken efforts of their teachers to bring quality education onto everyone's table.

As to the insights expressed by the participants, it was necessary to emphasize fairness and impartiality in teacher transfers. It was worthy for the Department of Education officials to take note of this and to continue exploring ways, programs, and policies to enhance fairness in teacher redistribution or reassignment. Moreover, it would be more beneficial for teachers with similar situations to receive technical, material, and moral support from the department in their intention and pursuit of professional development in their chosen field. More importantly, while being adaptive is part of the realizations obtained by the participants, it is also appreciated if the department will make efforts to provide more perks such as increased salary and other benefits and amenities such as free lodging, giving of monthly provisions and the like to our teachers in the far-flung areas in order for them to lessen the burdens that they are shouldering because of their situation. Likewise, this will indirectly help teachers to give their undivided attention in preparing for lessons, adjusting themselves to the ropes of multigrade teaching, achieving professional development in the field, and attaining happiness in the profession that they have chosen for themselves.

## CONCLUSION

In general, the participants shared an array of colorful experiences pertaining to being a public-school elementary teacher who was transferred to another station involuntarily. So, to speak, their experiences were not that easy as they had to face various challenges in their journey such as the inadequacies in facilities and resources, constrained electricity and internet connectivity, financial strains, and exhaustion due to lengthy travel back and forth to their new station. More so, many teacher-participants were left confused on how they could manage their sudden transition to multigrade classes from monograde teaching.

In response to these difficulties, the teachers developed varying ways of coping which focused majorly on their internal states and relationships with people surrounding them while they are working. They recognized that optimism and positive behaviors could help them gain mileage in facing the battles that they are having as they serve in their far-flung workstation. More so, the recognition and validation from their peers, learners' parents, and superiors could add fuel to their lit passion to contribute more to their chosen profession. Positive relationships and support systems were also seen as integral by the participants in managing one's difficult experiences in teaching in their new place of assignment.

Overall, certain realizations struck many of the participants as they ruminated on their experiences in the field. One important aspect of this is their urge to the department to be fair in reassigning teachers, stating that there could be rooms for improvement in deciding to transfer a teacher which include the assignment of new teachers in the far-flung stations and the consideration of the teacher's proximity of residence in the teacher transfers. The pursuit of personal and professional goals was also one of the major themes which spelled the desire of teachers to improve and grow in the field and help other teachers and learners in this way. Moreover, they have also seen the permanence of change which made them accept it and be prepared for it constantly.

## REFERENCES

1. American University. (2023). *The importance of teacher collaboration*. <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/teacher-collaboration-importance/>
2. Chang, H., & Chiung-Haoli, C. (2019). *Public servants transfer factor analysis and discussion - a case study of a city hall in Miaoli Country*. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*, 7(7), 1-6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2349-0349.0707001>
3. Cherkowski, S. (2018). *Positive teacher leadership: building mindsets and capacities to grow wellbeing*. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership*, 9(1), 63-78. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1182707.pdf>
4. Creswell, J., & Poth, C. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed)*. Sage Publications.
5. Department of Education. (2013, April 17). *DepEd Order No. 22 Series of 2013: Revised guidelines on the transfer of teachers from one station to another*. Republic of the Philippines - Department of Education. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2013/04/17/do-22-s-2013-revised-guidelines-on-the-transfer-of-teachers-from-one-station-to-another/>
6. Donitsa-Schmidt, S., & Zuzovsky, R. (2014). *Teacher supply and demand: The school level perspective*. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 2(6), 420-429. <https://doi.org/10.12691/education-2-6-14>
7. Giorgi, A. (2010). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. *Choice Reviews Online*, 47(05), 47-2874. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.47-2874>
8. Gonzales, N.J. (2021). *Migration from private to public institutions: A phenomenological study on transitional challenges from teachers' viewpoints*. *International Research Journal of Science, Technology, Education, and Management*, 1(2), 50-64. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5726283>
9. Hoppe F., Schofield D.J., Bibeault, A., LaCascio, M., & Rowland, D. (2022). *Collective bargaining agreement between the Lincoln teachers' association local 1461 American federation of teachers, AFL-CIO and the school committee of the town of Lincoln, Rhode Island*. Lincoln Public Schools. <https://www.lincolnps.org/cms/lib/RI50000681/Centricity/Domain/44/LTA%202019-2022%20CBA.pdf>
10. Hussein, H. (2016). *The effects of employees transfer on secondary schools' performance in Zanzibar: a case study at south district, Unguja*. Unguja. Open University of Tanzania. <http://repository.out.ac.tz/id/eprint/1580>
11. Kanyiri, W., Kibui, A., & Keter, K. (2020). *TSC policy on teacher transfers in public secondary schools in Kenya: impact*





- on school management and academic performance. *International Journal of Creative Research and Studies*, 4(5), 30-41. [http://www.ijcrs.org/issue\\_image/IJCRS-4.05.03.pdf](http://www.ijcrs.org/issue_image/IJCRS-4.05.03.pdf)
12. Komakech, R. A. (2017). Using zero money to tackle the challenges of universal education in Africa: A case of universal secondary education in Uganda. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 4(5), 29-42. <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0405004>
  13. Madriaga, M., & Morley, K. (2016). Awarding teaching excellence: "What is it supposed to achieve?" teacher perceptions of student-led awards. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 21(2), 166-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2015.1136277>
  14. Mortazavizadeh, S. H., Nili, M. R., Isfahani, A. R. N., & Hassani, M. R. (2017). Teachers' Lived Experiences about Teaching-Learning Process in Multi-Grade Classes. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(4), 354. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n4p354>
  15. Neubauer, E., Witkop, T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *A Qualitative Space*, 8, 90-97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-0190509-2>
  16. Olorunsola, E. O., & Belo, F. A. (2018). Administrative challenges and principal's managerial effectiveness in Ogun State public secondary schools. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 10(5), 48-55. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ijeaps2017.0546>
  17. Quejada, A. B., & Orale, R. L. (2018). Lived experiences of elementary teachers in a remote school in Samar, Philippines. *Journal of Academic Research*, 3(3), 1-13. <http://jar.ssu.edu.ph/index.php/JAR/article/view/7>
  18. Okongo, R. B., Ngao, G., Rop, N., & Nyongesa, W. J. (2015). Effect of Availability of Teaching and learning resources on the implementation of inclusive education in pre-school centers in Nyamira North Sub-County, Nyamira County, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 35(6), 132-141. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1086389.pdf>
  19. Oribhabor A.C, James, T.R. & Omo-Osa, S.A. (2018). Effects of teachers' transfer on school system and the implication for restructuring in Nigeria. *International Journal of Progressive and Alternative Education*, 5(1), 135-142. <https://www.globalacademicgroup.com/journals/asproedu/EFFECTS%20OF%20TEACHERS%E2%80%99%20TRANSFER%20ON%20SCHOOL%20SYSTEM.pdf>
  20. Plaza, R. C., & Jamito, K. (2021). Financial conditions and challenges among public school teachers: Its implication to their personal and professional lives. *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, 9(4), 178-186. <https://doi.org/10.24940/theijhss/2021/v9/i4/HS2104-049>
  21. Ravago, M-L., & Mapa, C. D. (2020). Awards and recognition: Do they matter in teachers' income trajectory? *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 66, 100901. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100901>
  22. Redding, C. (2018). Teacher turnover is a problem – here's how to fix it. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/teacher-turnover-is-a-problem-heres-how-to-fix-it-101584>
  23. Salifu, M. (2020). Challenges in the posting and transfer of teachers to rural community schools in the Sissala East Municipality. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(36), 115-126. <https://doi.org/10.7176/jep/11-36-13>
  24. Sevim, F. O. M., & Akin, U. (2021). The role of graduate education in professional development of teachers: Is graduation enough? *Education and Science*, 46(207), 483-510. <https://doi.org/10.15390/EB.2021.9593>
  25. Wei, Y., Zhou, S., & Liu, Y. (2020). The draw of home: How does teacher's initial job placement relate to teacher mobility in rural China? *PLOS ONE*, 15(1), e0227137. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0227137>
  26. Wijayatunga, A. R. (2018). Overstay teacher transfers in public schools in Sri-Lanka: Impact on school management and performance. *International Conference on Education*, 4(1), 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.17501/icedu.2018.4105>
  27. Waseka, E. L., Simatwa, E. M., & Okwach, T. (2016). Influence of teacher factors on students' academic performance in secondary school education: A Case Study of Kakamega County, Kenya. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 6(4), 151-169. <https://doi.org/10.15580/gjer.2016.4.060216102>