
Global Pressures, Local Attachments: Employee Retention in a Private Higher Education Institution in the Philippines

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Abstract

This study examined how employees at Aldersgate College, Inc. interpret institutional conditions influencing their intention to stay despite external employment opportunities. Guided by labor-mobility, social-exchange, self-determination, organizational-justice, and job-embeddedness perspectives, it employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design integrating descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing, correlation, hierarchical regression, and thematic analysis. Results showed favorable perceptions across institutional factors, with leadership and organizational support rated highest ($M = 4.11$), while compensation, benefits, and Job Evaluation System fairness received the lowest, though still positive ratings ($M = 3.79$). Culture, employee voice, and belonging demonstrated the strongest association with intention to stay ($r = .548$). Although institutional factors improved the regression model, external mobility pressure was the only significant unique predictor. Qualitative findings highlighted mission alignment, supportive relationships, professional growth, and job security as key retention drivers, while concerns about salary, workload, recognition, career advancement, and transparency tempered employees' commitment.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Higher Education, Global South, Academic Labor, Organizational Justice, Job Embeddedness, Work-Life Balance, Philippines

Introduction

Employee retention in higher education is often presented as an internal human resource problem, yet the decision to remain in or leave an institution is also shaped by wider labor-market structures. Universities and colleges compete for employees whose qualifications are portable across educational sectors, regions, and national borders. In the Philippines, this mobility is intensified by the coexistence of private higher education institutions, state universities and colleges, public basic education systems, professional industries, and overseas labor markets. Retention therefore emerges at the intersection of organizational experience, public-private inequality, professional aspiration, and global mobility rather than from a single variable such as salary.

The issue is especially consequential for private colleges outside major metropolitan centers. These institutions depend on stable faculty and staff to maintain program quality, accreditation compliance, student services, institutional memory, and community relationships, but they may have less fiscal space than state-funded institutions. Turnover

creates direct recruitment and onboarding expenses and less visible costs, including workload redistribution, delayed programs, weakened mentoring networks, and the loss of tacit knowledge. Meta-analytic evidence also shows that turnover rates are associated with organizational performance, indicating that retention is not merely an employee-preference issue but an institutional sustainability concern (Park and Shaw 2013; Hom et al. 2017).

Aldersgate College, Inc., located in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, provides a useful site for examining how global and national labor pressures are experienced in a local private institution. The college competes with other private colleges, public schools, state universities and colleges, private employers, and other organizations that may offer different combinations of salary, benefits, tenure, workload, and career advancement. At the same time, the institution has developed internal mechanisms intended to retain and develop employees. These include a Job Evaluation System (JES) that considers both employee qualifications and job requirements, graduate-degree incentives, professional merit incentives for selected disciplines, tuition support, educational assistance, and return-service provisions.

These policies make retention an empirical question rather than a matter of assumption. A formally structured compensation system may be experienced as transparent and fair, but it may also be viewed as insufficiently competitive or uneven when incentives differ across professions. Educational assistance may strengthen competence and institutional attachment, yet return-service requirements may also be interpreted differently depending on workload, career opportunities, and perceived reciprocity. Similarly, a mission-driven culture may create belonging, but belonging may not compensate for insecurity, burnout, limited voice, or blocked advancement. The central issue is thus whether employees experience institutional policies as a coherent and equitable employment relationship.

The Philippine setting adds a mobility dimension that is highly relevant to global studies. Research on Filipino workers indicates that salary, workplace conditions, and satisfaction shape decisions to remain in the country or pursue opportunities elsewhere (Saflor, Marinas, and Enano 2024). Higher education employees may not all plan international migration, but their decisions are situated within a culture of occupational mobility and comparison in which public employment, urban labor markets, professional practice, and overseas work serve as reference points. The local institution is therefore embedded in a wider system of labor valuation, and employees assess what they gain, sacrifice, and risk by staying.

Existing research across Global South higher education systems identifies compensation, career opportunities, organizational climate, trust, job satisfaction, commitment, workload, job security, and leadership as recurrent retention factors. Studies in Pakistan, India, Vietnam, South Africa, Ethiopia, Iran, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates demonstrate that retention is produced by interacting material and relational conditions rather than by compensation alone (Ababneh 2020; Butt, Lodhi, and Shahzad 2020; Shaterjalali et al. 2021; Gessesse and Premanandam 2023; Snyman and Ferreira 2023; Tran, Tran, and Le 2023; Verma and Kaur 2023; El Mountasser and Sahraoui 2025). However, evidence remains limited for provincial private higher education institutions in the Philippines, particularly studies that connect institutional policies with perceived external mobility pressures and employees' own explanations of why they stay.

This study addressed that gap by treating employee retention as a global-local institutional issue. It examined how organizational practices at Aldersgate College, Inc. interact with unequal employment alternatives and with employees' needs for fairness, security, autonomy, competence, recognition, and belonging. It also distinguishes intention to stay from the absence of resignation: an employee may remain because of strong institutional attachment, because leaving would involve substantial sacrifice, because alternatives are limited, or

because a combination of these conditions is present. This distinction is necessary for developing retention strategies that are both effective and ethically sustainable.

Research Questions and Objectives

The study is guided by questions that move from description to explanation and institutional action. The questions are aligned with measurable constructs in the questionnaire and with qualitative inquiry into the meanings employees attach to staying, leaving, and comparing employment sectors. Together, they support an interdisciplinary analysis of retention as both an organizational outcome and a response to wider labor-market pressures.

RQ1. What are the employment and professional characteristics of faculty and non-teaching staff, and how do they assess compensation and benefits, leadership and organizational support, culture and employee voice, professional development, workload and work-life balance, recognition, and job security at Aldersgate College, Inc.?

RQ2. What are the levels of perceived external mobility pressure, institutional fit, job embeddedness, and intention to stay among employees?

RQ3. What relationships exist between the identified institutional factors and employees' intention to stay?

RQ4. Which institutional factors significantly predict intention to stay after accounting for employee category, employment status, years of service, and other relevant characteristics?

RQ5. How do employees explain the interaction among institutional attachment, organizational constraints, and opportunities in public education, other private institutions, professional industries, or overseas employment?

RQ6. What feasible and equity-sensitive retention strategies can be developed for Aldersgate College, Inc. and similarly situated private higher education institutions?

Objectives

The general objective of the study was to develop an evidence-based explanation of employee retention at Aldersgate College, Inc. within the wider context of Philippine and Global South academic labor mobility.

Specifically, the study pursued the following objectives:

1. Describe the respondents' employment and professional characteristics and assess their perceptions of the principal institutional retention factors.
2. Measure employees' external mobility pressure, institutional fit, embeddedness, and intention to stay.
3. Test the bivariate and multivariable relationships between institutional factors and intention to stay.
4. Identify whether retention patterns differ across faculty and non-teaching staff, employment status, years of service, and selected professional characteristics.
5. Explain how employees interpret institutional policies, public-private employment differences, professional opportunities, and the sacrifices associated with staying or leaving.
6. Formulate practical retention strategies that are financially realistic, procedurally fair, and responsive to employee voice and professional development.

Hypotheses

The quantitative phase tested two principal null hypotheses:

1. Compensation and benefits, leadership and organizational support, culture and employee voice, professional development, workload and work-life balance, recognition, job security, and external mobility pressure have no significant bivariate relationships with intention to stay.
2. These factors do not significantly predict intention to stay when entered jointly with relevant employee characteristics in a hierarchical regression model.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study used an integrated framework because no single theory adequately explains why employees remain in resource-constrained higher education institutions. Turnover research has moved from simple dissatisfaction models toward configurations of attitudes, shocks, alternatives, social ties, and perceived sacrifices (Hom et al. 2017). The present framework combines global-local labor mobility with social exchange, organizational justice, self-determination, and job embeddedness. This integration allows the analysis to distinguish between the attractiveness of the institution and the strength of external pressures pulling employees toward other opportunities.

Global-Local Labor Mobility

The concept draws from the work of several scholars in labor economics, migration studies, and globalization:

1. Douglas S. Massey (1990, 1993, 1998), a leading migration scholar who developed theories on cumulative causation, migration systems, and social networks. His work explains how global migration opportunities shape local labor markets.
2. Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, authors of the influential book *The Age of Migration* (2020) They explain how globalization, economic integration, and demographic change increase international labor mobility.
3. Everett S. Lee developed the Push-Pull Theory of Migration (1966). His framework remains one of the most widely used explanations of why workers leave one place for another based on push factors (e.g., low salaries) and pull factors (e.g., better opportunities).

A global-studies perspective treats the institution as part of an interconnected labor field rather than as a closed organization. Professional qualifications enable movement across public and private education, industry, regions, and countries, while salary standards, state benefits, professional shortages, and migration networks shape the relative attractiveness of these destinations. The concept of external mobility pressure in this study refers to employees' perceptions that viable alternatives outside Aldersgate College, Inc. offer stronger compensation, stability, advancement, professional practice, or geographic opportunity. This construct does not presume that mobility is inevitable; instead, it captures the comparative environment within which employees evaluate institutional attachment.

Social Exchange, Organizational Support, and Justice

Social exchange theory proposes that employees reciprocate favorable organizational treatment with commitment and constructive behavior. Perceived organizational support is strengthened when employees believe that the institution values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002).

Organizational justice further clarifies that employees assess not only the size of rewards but also the fairness of outcomes, decision procedures, interpersonal treatment, and explanations (Colquitt et al. 2001). These perspectives are particularly relevant to the Job Evaluation System (JES), degree incentives, professional merit incentives, employment regularization, leadership decisions, and recognition practices.

Self-Determination and Professional Growth

Self-determination theory argues that sustainable motivation is supported when work environments satisfy the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan 2017). In higher education, autonomy includes trust, appropriate discretion, and employee voice; competence includes opportunities to pursue graduate education, training, research, and leadership development; and relatedness includes collegial support and a sense of belonging. Financial rewards remain important, but their motivational effects depend partly on whether they are experienced as controlling, equitable, and supportive of professional growth. The framework therefore treats leadership, culture, and development as substantive retention conditions rather than as secondary benefits.

Job Embeddedness and Intention to Stay

Job embeddedness explains retention through links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell et al. 2001). Links refer to relationships with colleagues, students, departments, and the local community; fit concerns compatibility between employees' values, abilities, career goals, and institutional mission; and sacrifice concerns what employees would lose by leaving, including relationships, educational benefits, seniority, professional identity, or geographic stability. Embeddedness helps explain why employees may remain despite dissatisfaction and why another employee may leave even when generally satisfied. The dependent construct, intention to stay, is therefore measured alongside institutional fit and perceived sacrifice, while reverse-coded turnover-intention items provide a validity check informed by established turnover measurement research (Bothma and Roodt 2013).

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model positions intention to stay as the primary outcome. Compensation and benefits, leadership and organizational support, culture and employee voice, professional development and career pathways, workload and work-life balance, recognition, and job security are treated as institutional predictors. External mobility pressure is treated as a contextual predictor expected to reduce intention to stay, while employee category, employment status, years of service, educational attainment, supervisory role, and selected demographic variables are treated as controls or grouping variables. Qualitative findings examined the mechanisms through which these factors become meaningful in employees' decisions.

Literature Review

Employee retention research consistently shows that staying is a multidimensional outcome. Employees weigh material rewards, social relations, expectations, career development, work demands, and available alternatives, often without making a single explicit calculation. A century of turnover research demonstrates that job attitudes matter but that they operate within broader configurations of shocks, constraints, and alternatives (Hom et al. 2017). In higher education, these configurations are intensified because academic and professional employees may possess credentials that are valued by competing institutions and industries.

Retention and Institutional Sustainability in Higher Education

Faculty and staff continuity support teaching quality, curriculum implementation, research, student advising, accreditation, and institutional memory. High turnover can fragment teams and compel remaining employees to absorb additional responsibilities, potentially creating a cycle in which workload increases further turnover intention. Park and Shaw's (2013) meta-analysis links turnover rates with organizational performance, while evidence from Pakistan frames staff retention as a source of sustainable competitive advantage in higher education (Butt, Lodhi, and Shahzad 2020). These findings are particularly important for smaller private colleges because each departure may remove specialized knowledge that is difficult or costly to replace.

Global South studies also show that the meaning of retention varies by institutional and national context. In Iran, faculty retention in regional medical schools was shaped by professional, organizational, individual, and sociocultural conditions, demonstrating that regional location and resource constraints can intensify recruitment and retention difficulties (Shaterjalali et al. 2021). In Morocco's private academic institutions, remuneration, appraisal, organizational climate, training, career opportunity, and job satisfaction emerged as interconnected retention factors (El Mountasser and Sahraoui 2025). These studies support contextualized models rather than the direct transfer of retention practices from well-resourced universities.

Compensation, Benefits, and Perceived Fairness

Compensation influences retention through adequacy, competitiveness, transparency, and fairness. Employees compare pay with workload, qualifications, colleagues, occupational standards, and external opportunities, making the perceived employment exchange more important than salary alone. Organizational justice research indicates that distributive fairness concerns the perceived equity of outcomes, while procedural fairness concerns how decisions are made and applied (Colquitt et al. 2001). A Job Evaluation System can therefore strengthen retention when employees understand its criteria and believe that job complexity, qualifications, responsibility, and working conditions are assessed consistently.

The institutional context makes these questions concrete. Aldersgate College's reported graduate incentives and professional merit arrangements may reward scarce qualifications and encourage advanced study, but differential eligibility may also generate cross-disciplinary comparisons. Degree incentives, tuition support, and educational assistance can enhance competence and increase the sacrifice associated with leaving, yet their effects may weaken if salaries remain uncompetitive or if access is viewed as uneven. The proposed instrument therefore measures not only satisfaction with pay and benefits but also perceptions of Job Evaluation System (JES) accuracy, transparency, internal equity, and external competitiveness.

Evidence across higher education supports this broader approach. Salary and met expectations are linked to job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions among university faculty in the United Arab Emirates (Ababneh 2020). Research in the Philippines similarly associates workers' decisions to remain with salary, workplace conditions, and satisfaction (Saflor, Marinas, and Enano 2024). Compensation should thus be analyzed as part of a total employment relationship that includes security, professional growth, recognition, workload, and trust.

Leadership, Organizational Support, and Employee Voice

Supervisors translate institutional policies into daily experience. Employees may evaluate the same formal policy differently depending on whether leaders communicate expectations

clearly, apply rules consistently, respond to concerns, and provide meaningful feedback. Perceived organizational support develops partly through treatment by supervisors who are understood as agents of the institution (Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002). Leadership is therefore expected to influence retention both directly and indirectly through trust, fairness, autonomy, conflict management, and access to development opportunities.

Higher education evidence supports this relationship. Ababneh (2020) found that trust, met expectations, satisfaction, and commitment were important in explaining faculty turnover intention. Verma and Kaur (2023) showed that the human resource climate in Indian higher education affects faculty retention, while their later work emphasizes the linked roles of trust and organizational commitment (Verma and Kaur 2024). These findings suggest that retention strategies cannot be delegated solely to a human resource office; deans, department heads, supervisors, and senior administrators jointly shape the climate employees experience.

Employee voice is a related but distinct condition. Voice involves safe opportunities to question decisions, propose improvements, and raise concerns without retaliation. In a small institution, informal access to leaders may appear to provide voice, but informality can also make employees uncertain about confidentiality and consistency. The questionnaire therefore assessed whether opinions are invited, concerns are handled respectfully, policy explanations are adequate, and communication is timely. Interviews explored when employees feel heard and when they choose silence.

Organizational Culture, Belonging, and Institutional Fit

Organizational culture provides the shared meanings through which employees interpret policies and relationships. A mission-driven culture may create strong identification, particularly when employees perceive consistency between institutional values and everyday practice. Research among lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City found relationships among organizational culture, job satisfaction, and commitment, reinforcing the importance of culture as a lived employment condition rather than a formal statement (Tran, Tran, and Le 2023). Culture can strengthen retention through collegiality, respect, inclusion, integrity, and a sense that work contributes to a meaningful educational mission.

Belonging and fit are especially relevant to private faith-based or community-oriented institutions. Employees may remain because of relationships with students and colleagues, familiarity with the community, or alignment with the institution's educational purpose. Job embeddedness theory predicts that these links and fit reduce the likelihood of voluntary exit even when alternatives exist (Mitchell et al. 2001). However, culture becomes a weak retention mechanism when institutional values are perceived as symbolic, inconsistently practiced, or used to justify excessive sacrifice.

Professional Development and Career Pathways

Professional development strengthens retention when it expands competence and provides credible pathways for advancement. Graduate study support, training, mentoring, research opportunities, promotion criteria, and leadership preparation communicate that the institution is willing to invest in employees' futures. Self-determination theory predicts that competence-supportive environments promote higher-quality motivation and well-being (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan 2017). Social exchange theory likewise suggests that employees may reciprocate developmental investment with commitment when obligations and opportunities are perceived as fair.

Across Global South higher education, development opportunities repeatedly appear in retention models. Verma and Kaur (2023) identify the human resource climate as a key influence on faculty retention in India, while El Mountasser and Sahraoui (2025) link training

and career opportunity with retention in Moroccan private academic institutions. In South African higher education, psychological-contract preferences vary across employee groups, demonstrating that employees do not value the same combination of development, security, and rewards (Snyman and Ferreira 2023). The present study therefore examined both the availability and the perceived accessibility of development opportunities.

Return-service requirements illustrate the complexity of developmental exchange. Such requirements protect institutional investment and can be reasonable when clearly communicated and proportionate. They may also be experienced as restrictive if employees perceive that workload, promotion, compensation, or professional autonomy do not develop alongside the qualification. Interviews therefore examined whether educational assistance creates gratitude, commitment, obligation, constraint, or some combination of these meanings.

Workload, Work-Life Balance, and Burnout

Workload is a central retention issue in institutions with limited staffing because vacancies and program demands can create cumulative overload. Work-life balance is not simply the absence of long hours; it concerns whether employees have sufficient control, recovery time, predictability, and institutional flexibility to manage work and nonwork responsibilities. Excessive workload can undermine autonomy and well-being, while unpredictable demands can make even manageable workloads difficult to sustain. The questionnaire therefore measured workload reasonableness, schedule predictability, flexibility, recovery, and the institution's response to personal needs.

Research in Chinese higher education shows that burnout predicts turnover intention and that job satisfaction helps explain this relationship (Zhang, Li, and Gamble 2022). Qualitative evidence from regional medical schools in Iran similarly identifies work conditions and organizational factors as important to faculty retention (Shaterjalali et al. 2021). These findings suggest that retention initiatives focused on rewards may fail if workload systems continually exhaust employees. Workload data should therefore be interpreted by employee category and unit because faculty teaching, research, extension, and service demands differ from administrative and support functions.

Recognition, Job Security, and the Psychological Contract

Recognition signals that the institution notices and values employee contributions. It may be formal, such as awards and promotion, or relational, such as specific feedback, public acknowledgment, and opportunities to lead meaningful work. Recognition is most credible when it is timely, criteria-based, and distributed across visible and less visible forms of labor. When recognition appears selective or symbolic, it may reinforce rather than reduce perceived inequity.

Job security influences retention through both material stability and the psychological contract. Employees form beliefs about what the institution has promised or implied regarding continued employment, fair treatment, development, and reciprocity. In South African higher education, psychological-contract preferences are associated with retention and differ across socio-demographic groups (Snyman and Ferreira 2023). Met expectations and trust also shape turnover intention among faculty in the United Arab Emirates (Ababneh 2020), indicating that uncertainty and breached expectations can weaken commitment even when formal employment continues.

Employment status is therefore included as a control and grouping variable. Regular, probationary, contractual, and project-based employees may face different levels of risk and may interpret the same policy differently. The study examined whether job security predicts

intention to stay after controlling for years of service and employee category. Interviews explored how regularization, contract renewal, and career-path clarity affect employees' willingness to make long-term commitments.

Commitment, Embeddedness, and Intention to Stay

Intention to stay is conceptually related to, but not identical with, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Employees can be satisfied yet open to a substantially better opportunity, committed yet unable to sustain workload, or dissatisfied yet constrained by limited alternatives. Research in Ethiopian higher education found that affective commitment mediated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Gessese and Premanandam 2023). This indicates that emotional attachment is an important mechanism through which positive work experiences become retention intentions.

Job embeddedness adds links and sacrifice to this explanation. Employees may remain because leaving would disrupt valued relationships, graduate-study benefits, seniority, local family arrangements, or an identity tied to the institution. These sacrifices are not necessarily negative; they may represent authentic investments and meaningful attachments. The instrument therefore included items on fit, recommendation of the institution, anticipated tenure, thoughts of leaving, and the losses associated with departure.

Research Gap and Synthesis

The literature establishes that employee retention is shaped by material, relational, developmental, and contextual conditions. However, three gaps remain relevant to Aldersgate College, Inc. First, Philippine evidence on employee retention in provincial private higher education remains limited. Second, institutional studies often examine internal predictors without explicitly measuring the pull of public employment, professional industries, other private institutions, and overseas opportunities.

Third, many retention surveys generate ranked factors but do not explain why employees interpret policies in particular ways. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design addresses this limitation by using interviews to investigate statistical patterns, contradictions, and subgroup differences. The study's contribution is therefore not only to determine which factors correlate with intention to stay but to explain how global and national labor pressures are translated into local judgments about fairness, belonging, security, growth, and sacrifice. This synthesis supports retention strategies that are institutionally realistic without reducing employee loyalty to compliance or economic constraint.

Scope, Delimitations, and Significance

The study included current faculty and non-teaching staff employed by Aldersgate College, Inc. during the second semester of School Year 2025-2026. It examined perceptions of compensation and benefits, the Job Evaluation System (JES), leadership and organizational support, culture and employee voice, professional development and career pathways, workload and work-life balance, recognition, job security, external mobility pressure, job embeddedness, and intention to stay. Former employees, applicants, part-time external consultants without an employment relationship, students, and employees of other institutions were not included in the survey.

The research is delimited to Aldersgate College, Inc., as a single private higher education institution and used a cross-sectional design, which involves collecting data at one point in time from a sample to examine current attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a

population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) or a survey conducted at a single time to provide a "snapshot" of a population (Babbie (2021).

The findings describe relationships and perceptions at a particular institutional moment and does not establish causality or actual future turnover. Intention to stay is an important proximal indicator, but actual retention may be affected by later events, policy changes, family circumstances, or unforeseen job offers. External mobility pressure was measured as perceived opportunity and comparison rather than through verified offers or salary audits.

The study is significant for institutional governance because it can distinguish between policies that employees value, policies that require clearer implementation, and gaps that create avoidable turnover risk. For employees, it provides a confidential channel for evaluating fairness, support, development, workload, recognition, and security. For Philippine private higher education, it offers a context-sensitive instrument and analytic framework that may be adapted for other resource-constrained institutions. For global studies, it demonstrates how large-scale labor mobility and public-private inequalities are experienced through the everyday employment relationship of a local college.

Methodology

The study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design within a pragmatic research paradigm. Quantitative data first identified levels, relationships, predictors, and subgroup patterns, after which qualitative interviews explain why those patterns occur and how employees interpret institutional and external pressures. This design is appropriate because retention includes measurable perceptions and intentions as well as experiences that cannot be reduced to scale scores. Integration occurred when selecting interview participants, developing interview prompts, and comparing quantitative and qualitative findings in a joint display (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018; Fetters, Curry, and Creswell 2013).

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at Aldersgate College, Inc. in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. The study invited all eligible employees - faculty and non-teaching staff who meet the institutional definition of employee and have completed sufficient service to evaluate the work environment. A minimum tenure criterion of three months was set to avoid asking newly hired employees to assess policies they have not yet experienced. Employees on extended leave during the entire data-collection period were excluded because they cannot reasonably complete current-workplace items.

A census invitation was employed. All 200 employees were invited, however, since participation is voluntary, only 130 responded to the invitation. The achieved sample was adequate for multivariable analysis therefore, hierarchical multiple regression was conducted using a parsimonious predictor set.

Selection sought variation in employee category, employment status, years of service, retention intention, and external mobility pressure. Supervisors and nonsupervisory employees were represented without reporting combinations that could reveal identity.

Instrument Development

The Employee Retention and Mobility Questionnaire is a researcher-developed instrument informed by turnover theory, perceived organizational support, organizational justice, self-determination theory, job embeddedness, and Global South higher education studies. It does not reproduce a proprietary scale in full. Instead, it operationalizes the study's research questions through context-specific items on Aldersgate College, Inc.'s policies and through a

short intention-to-stay section informed by the construct measured in turnover-intention research (Bothma and Roodt 2013). Responses used a five-point agreement scale from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree.

The instrument contains a profile section, eight predictor domains, one outcome domain, and four open-ended questions. The predictor domains are compensation, benefits, and Job Evaluation System (JES) fairness; leadership and organizational support; culture, voice, and belonging; professional development and career pathways; workload and work-life balance; recognition and appreciation; job security and procedural fairness; and external mobility pressure. The outcome domain combines direct intention-to-stay items with institutional fit, recommendation, perceived sacrifice, and two reverse-scored leaving-intention items.

The questionnaire was subjected to validation before use. Three experts representing higher education administration, organizational psychology, and research methodology, evaluated item relevance, clarity, representativeness, and sensitivity. The experts reviewed whether any item could be interpreted as coercive, retaliatory, or likely to identify a respondent.

Table 1: Alignment of Research Questions, Variables, Data Sources, and Analyses

Research Question	Principal Variables or Evidence	Data Source	Planned Analysis
RQ1	Employee profile and eight institutional factor domains	Survey Parts I-II	Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, confidence interval, subgroup summaries
RQ2	External mobility pressure, embeddedness, and intention to stay	Survey Parts II-H and II-I	Mean, dispersion, distribution, composite scores after validation
RQ3	Institutional factors and intention to stay	Validated domain scores	Pearson or Spearman correlation with confidence intervals
RQ4	Independent predictors controlling for employee characteristics	Survey profile and validated scores	Hierarchical multiple regression; diagnostics and robust alternatives as needed
RQ5	Explanations of attachment, constraints, and external opportunities	Interviews and open-ended responses	Reflexive thematic analysis and comparison of contrasting cases
RQ6	Feasible and equitable retention strategies	Integrated quantitative and qualitative evidence	Joint display, convergence analysis, and prioritized recommendation matrix

Data-Gathering Procedures

Data collection began after approval from the President of the College. The researcher coordinated distribution without allowing supervisors to know who participated or how particular employees responded. The invitation explained the purpose, voluntary nature, expected completion time, privacy protections, and distinction between research participation and employment evaluation. No respondent was required to submit a name, employee number, or identifiable narrative in the survey.

The study employed a paper-based survey through a self-administered, paper-based questionnaire. Printed copies of the survey instrument were distributed to the respondents

through the Human Resource Development Center which is also the designated collection point for the accomplished forms.

After preliminary quantitative analysis, interview invitations were sent to 50 randomly chosen volunteers. Interviews used a semi-structured guide focused on statistically salient domains, contrasting survey patterns, and employee explanations of external opportunities and institutional attachment. Detailed notes were taken during the interview.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data screening included response completeness, out-of-range values, straight-lining, duplicate submissions where detectable without compromising anonymity, and the pattern of missing data. Negatively worded retention items were reverse-scored only after checking that respondents interpreted them consistently. Descriptive statistics summarized each item and proposed domain.

Differences across faculty and non-teaching staff, employment status, and service-length groups were examined using t tests, analysis of variance, or nonparametric alternatives. Statistical significance was interpreted alongside effect sizes and uncertainty rather than as the sole criterion for institutional action. Because the design is cross-sectional, regression results were described as predictive associations and not causal effects.

Qualitative Analysis and Integration

Interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses were analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis.

Mixed-methods integration compared quantitative results with qualitative themes in a joint display. Recommendations were prioritized according to evidence strength, feasibility, equity, likely impact, and the institution's legal and financial constraints.

Ethical Considerations

Employee research involves heightened risks because participants may fear that criticism will affect contracts, evaluation, promotion, or relationships with supervisors. The study therefore separated research participation from administrative decision-making and did not provide managers with identifiable raw data. Reports suppressed small-cell combinations and removed quotations containing unique roles, events, or personal details.

Informed consent explained the study's purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, confidentiality limits, and right to withdraw. The survey avoided unnecessary sensitive personal information. Institutional permission did not substitute for individual consent, and nonparticipation doesn't have employment consequence. These protections are essential for the credibility of findings on fairness, leadership, voice, and security.

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methodological decisions. The author remains the sole author of the article and take full responsibility for its content in accordance with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) recommendations.

Informed Consent

This study underwent a pre-data-collection research protocol. The study was conducted only after ethics approval and with the informed consent of all participants. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality protections, and right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the findings in the order of the six research questions. Descriptive results are first used to characterize the workforce and its assessment of institutional retention conditions. Composite levels of external mobility pressure and institutional attachment are then examined, followed by bivariate correlations and hierarchical regression. The qualitative findings were subsequently used to explain how employees balance institutional attachment, organizational constraints, and external opportunities. A mixed-methods joint display integrates convergence, divergence, and complementarity across the two strands, consistent with explanatory sequential mixed-methods practice (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018; Fetters, Curry, and Creswell 2013).

The achieved response (130 responses from the 200 eligible employees) represents 65 percent of the invited population and includes faculty, non-teaching personnel, supervisors, frontline employees, probationary workers, regular employees, early-career personnel, and long-serving staff. Because the research is cross-sectional and relies on self-reported perceptions and intentions, the findings describe associations and interpretations at one institutional moment rather than causal effects or actual future turnover.

Research Question 1: Employee Profile and Assessment of Institutional Retention Conditions

1. A Workforce Combining Renewal and Long-Term Institutional Memory

The respondent profile shows that the institution's retention challenge is distributed across two substantial workforce segments. Faculty members constituted 55.38 percent of the sample, non-teaching employees, 43.08 percent, and other categories, 1.54 percent. This distribution is sufficiently balanced to demonstrate that retention cannot be treated as a faculty-only concern. Teaching, administrative, technical, student-support, library, security, housekeeping, and general-services functions all contribute to institutional continuity. Turnover in any of these areas can disrupt service delivery, redistribute workload, and weaken tacit knowledge, which is consistent with evidence that employee turnover carries performance costs beyond recruitment expenditure (Park and Shaw 2013; Hom et al. 2017).

The employment-status pattern suggests a relatively stable core accompanied by substantial workforce renewal. Regular or permanent employees accounted for 60.77 percent, probationary employees, 36.92 percent, and contractual employees, 2.31 percent. Tenure was similarly polarized: 55.39 percent had served for three years or less, while 22.31 percent had remained for more than ten years. This combination has two implications: First, the institution possesses a long-serving group with accumulated relationships, role knowledge, and local embeddedness. Second, more than half of respondents are still within the early years when professional identities, expectations, and external comparisons are likely to remain fluid. A single retention program would therefore be poorly matched to the workforce.

Early-career employees need clear pathways, mentoring, and credible progression, while long-serving personnel may be more responsive to recognition, salary-compression correction, leadership opportunities, and renewed professional growth. This need for differentiated approaches is consistent with research showing that psychological-contract and retention preferences vary across employee groups (Snyman and Ferreira 2023).

Table 2. Condensed Employment and Professional Profile of Respondents (N = 130)

Characteristic	Largest/Relevant Categories	Interpretive Significance
Employee category	Faculty 55.38%; non-teaching 43.08%; others 1.54%	Retention is institution-wide, not exclusively academic.
Employment status	Regular/permanent 60.77%; probationary 36.92%; contractual 2.31%	Stable core, but a large early-stage employment group requires targeted support.
Years of service	≤3 years 55.39%; >10 years 22.31%	Coexistence of workforce renewal and deep institutional memory.
Educational attainment	Master's units 32.31%; bachelor's 31.54%; master's degree 20.00%	High developmental aspiration and qualification portability.
Age	20–29: 41.54%; 30–39: 28.46%	Young workforce likely to compare advancement and external opportunities.
Supervisory role	Supervisory 40%; non-supervisory 60%	Retention climate is shaped at both managerial and frontline levels.
External opportunity, past year	None 47.69%; ≥1 opportunity 11.54%; prefer not to answer 40.77%	High non-response limits conclusions about actual offers.
Most relevant alternative	Industry 20.77%; overseas 10%; SUC/public 7.69%; public school 6.15%; other private HEI 5.38%; other 50%	Mobility is broader than movement between colleges.

Educational attainment further indicates a mobile and development-oriented workforce. Employees with master's units formed the largest group (32.31 percent), followed by bachelor's degree holders (31.54 percent) and completed master's degree holders (20.00 percent). Smaller groups reported doctoral units or completed doctorates. The concentration of employees pursuing graduate qualifications supports the institution's emphasis on educational assistance and professional credentials, but it also increases mobility because advanced qualifications are portable across institutions and sectors. Self-determination theory suggests that competence-supportive environments can strengthen high-quality motivation (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan 2017); however, the same development investments may also increase employability. Retention consequently depends on whether newly developed competence is accompanied by fair compensation, expanded responsibility, and credible career pathways.

The workforce was also comparatively young: 41.54 percent were aged 20–29 and 28.46 percent were aged 30–39. Seventy percent were therefore below age 40. This demographic pattern reinforces the importance of career development, mobility-sensitive rewards, and work arrangements that employees can regard as sustainable. Forty percent held supervisory

responsibilities, providing a sizable leadership perspective, while 60 percent occupied non-supervisory roles. The gender table reports 78 women (60 percent) and 52 men (40 percent).

2. External Alternatives Are Salient but Difficult to Measure Directly

Only 11.54 percent reported at least one serious external job opportunity in the previous twelve months, while 47.69 percent reported none. Yet 40.77 percent preferred not to answer. This high non-response is substantively meaningful because disclosure of outside opportunities may be perceived as sensitive in an employment setting. It also prevents a confident conclusion that actual offers are uncommon. The pattern should be reported as uncertainty rather than as evidence that most employees lack alternatives.

When asked to identify the most relevant alternative, industry or professional practice was the largest specified option (20.77 percent), followed by overseas work (10 percent), state universities or public institutions (7.69 percent), public schools (6.15 percent), and other private higher education institutions (5.38 percent). Half selected “other,” indicating that the response categories did not fully capture the opportunity structure. These data support the study’s global-local framing: the college competes not only with neighboring schools but with a wider labor field in which qualifications can be transferred to government, professional practice, urban employment, and overseas work. This is consistent with Philippine evidence that salary, workplace conditions, and satisfaction influence whether workers stay or pursue mobility (Saflor, Marinas, and Enano 2024).

3. Institutional Domains Were Rated Positively, but the Lowest Items Identify Retention Vulnerabilities

All seven internal institutional domains received favorable composite ratings. Leadership and organizational support was highest ($M = 4.11$), followed by professional development and career pathways ($M = 4.06$), job security and procedural fairness ($M = 4.04$), workload and work-life balance ($M = 4.03$), culture, voice, and belonging ($M = 3.98$), recognition and appreciation ($M = 3.91$), and compensation, benefits, and JES fairness ($M = 3.79$). These results portray an institution with substantial relational and developmental assets, but they should not be read as evidence that all employees experience the same conditions. The item-level pattern shows that positive overall ratings coexist with identifiable vulnerabilities in pay adequacy, voice, recognition of less visible labor, schedule predictability, and subjective security.

Table 3. Composite Assessment of Institutional Retention Domains

Institutional Domain	Mean	Highest-Rated Indicator	Lowest-Rated Indicator	Discussion
Leadership and organizational support	4.11	Fair and respectful supervision; clear communication (both 4.18)	Leader concern and institutional trust (both 4.04)	Immediate supervisors are a major retention asset, while institution-wide trust can still be strengthened.
Professional development and career pathways	4.06	Support for advanced education/credentials (4.30)	Access to role-relevant training (3.97)	Educational support is highly valued; access and progression should be equally visible across roles.

Institutional Domain	Mean	Highest-Rated Indicator	Lowest-Rated Indicator	Discussion
Job security and procedural fairness	4.04	Understanding continued-employment conditions (4.18)	Feeling secure in current position (3.87)	Procedural clarity is stronger than employees' subjective sense of security.
Workload and work-life balance	4.03	Flexibility for serious personal/family needs (4.22)	Schedule/deadline predictability (3.93)	Flexibility is a strength, but workload predictability remains a practical concern.
Culture, voice, and belonging	3.98	Mission reflected in practice (4.14)	Safe expression of concerns/ideas (3.75)	Belonging is strong, but psychological safety and voice need protection.
Recognition and appreciation	3.91	Specific, meaningful acknowledgment (4.05)	Valuing less visible work (3.78)	Recognition exists but may privilege visible contributions.
Compensation, benefits, and JES fairness	3.79	JES considers qualifications and job demands (3.86)	Basic pay reflects responsibility (3.71)	Internal fairness is viewed more positively than adequacy and external competitiveness.

Leadership results support social exchange and perceived organizational support perspectives. Employees who experience supervisors as respectful, communicative, responsive, and development-oriented are more likely to interpret the institution as valuing their contribution and well-being (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002). The findings are also consistent with higher education research linking trust, met expectations, satisfaction, and commitment to lower turnover intention (Ababneh 2020) and with evidence that the human-resource climate and trust shape faculty retention (Verma and Kaur 2023, 2024). The small gap between immediate-supervisor ratings and broader institutional-trust ratings suggests that employees may distinguish their daily supervisory relationship from their confidence in institution-wide policy application.

Professional development is another clear strength. Support for advanced education and professional credentials received the highest item mean in the institutional domains ($M = 4.30$). This is theoretically important because it satisfies competence needs and signals investment in employees' futures (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan 2017). It also supports reciprocal commitment when educational assistance and career opportunities are perceived as fair (El Mountasser and Sahraoui 2025). Nevertheless, access to role-relevant training was rated slightly lower than general support for advanced study. The distinction matters for non-teaching and support employees, who may need shorter certifications, technical training, and visible career ladders rather than degree-oriented support alone.

The culture results reveal both attachment and voice tension. Employees strongly agreed that the college's mission and values are reflected in daily practices and that they feel a sense of belonging. These findings align with research connecting organizational culture, job satisfaction, and commitment among university lecturers (Tran, Tran, and Le 2023) and with job embeddedness theory, which emphasizes fit and links as reasons for staying (Mitchell et al. 2001). Yet the lowest item in the domain concerned the ability to express concerns or propose ideas without fear of unfair consequences ($M = 3.75$). A mission-driven culture therefore cannot be evaluated solely through belonging; it must also be judged by whether dissent, criticism, and improvement-oriented voice are institutionally safe.

Compensation received the lowest internal-domain mean. Employees generally endorsed the JES and degree or professional incentives as fair, but they were less positive that basic compensation adequately reflected responsibilities or that the overall package was competitive. This pattern illustrates the distinction between distributive and procedural justice (Colquitt et al. 2001). Employees may understand and appreciate the internal evaluation system while still judging the resulting pay level against public institutions, industry, and overseas options. Retention policy should therefore preserve procedural transparency while addressing market competitiveness and role-responsibility alignment.

Workload and work-life balance were rated positively, especially the institution's flexibility during serious personal or family needs. However, schedule predictability was weaker, and the qualitative findings later identify heavy workloads as a concern. This apparent divergence may reflect subgroup differences: flexibility may be experienced positively at the institutional level while specific units or roles continue to carry unsustainable loads. Prior research shows that burnout can increase turnover intention and that job satisfaction partially explains this relationship (Zhang, Li, and Gamble 2022). Averages should therefore be supplemented by unit-level workload review rather than treated as proof that overload is absent.

Recognition and job security show a similar pattern. Employees reported meaningful acknowledgment and clear employment conditions, but less visible forms of work were rated lower, and subjective security did not match the stronger rating for procedural clarity. These gaps are consistent with psychological-contract research: employees evaluate not only formal rules but whether the institution fulfills implied promises of equitable recognition, continuity, and development (Snyman and Ferreira 2023).

Answer to RQ1. The respondents represent a young and highly qualified workforce with both a large early-tenure group and a substantial long-serving core. They generally assess institutional conditions positively, particularly leadership, educational support, flexibility, and procedural clarity. The most actionable vulnerabilities are compensation adequacy and competitiveness, protected employee voice, recognition of less visible work, schedule predictability, and the gap between knowing employment procedures and feeling secure.

Research Question 2: External Mobility Pressure, Institutional Fit, Embeddedness, and Intention to Stay

Employees agreed that external mobility pressure is present ($M = 3.91$). They were especially likely to perceive that opportunities outside the college offer better compensation or benefits ($M = 4.05$), that their qualifications create realistic alternatives ($M = 4.02$), and that public schools or state universities may provide stronger long-term security ($M = 3.94$). The lowest item indicated that external opportunities make commitment difficult ($M = 3.64$). This combination shows that employees can recognize a favorable outside market without immediately withdrawing commitment from the college.

The combined measure of institutional fit, embeddedness, and intention to stay yielded a favorable mean of 3.69. Employees would recommend Aldersgate Collegem Inc. as a good place to work ($M = 4.14$), intended to continue for at least three years if circumstances remained stable ($M = 4.10$), and reported alignment between their values and professional goals and the institution ($M = 4.09$). Leaving would also involve surrendering valued relationships or opportunities ($M = 3.71$). These findings correspond closely with the links, fit, and sacrifice dimensions of job embeddedness (Mitchell et al. 2001).

At the same time, the two reverse-scored mobility items were close to the neutral range: frequently thinking about leaving (reported $M = 3.17$) and likelihood of applying elsewhere within twelve months (reported $M = 2.90$). The safest interpretation is that employees express positive institutional attachment while retaining some uncertainty about future movement.

The substantive pattern is best characterized as conditional embeddedness under mobility pressure. Employees are not retained merely because alternatives are absent. Rather, they remain because institutional fit, relationships, mission, development support, and stability currently provide sufficient value, while future movement remains possible if external benefits become substantially stronger or internal conditions weaken. This distinction advances the study's global-local argument: mobility and attachment are simultaneous rather than mutually exclusive.

Answer to RQ2. Employees report substantial awareness of external opportunities alongside favorable institutional fit and a generally positive intention to stay. Their attachment is meaningful but conditional on reasonably stable circumstances.

Research Question 3: Relationships Between Institutional Factors and Intention to Stay

All reported institutional domains were significantly correlated with intention to stay. Culture, voice, and belonging had the strongest association ($r = .548$, $p < .001$), followed by recognition and appreciation ($r = .528$, $p < .001$), compensation, benefits, and JES fairness ($r = .506$, $p < .001$), and professional development and career pathways ($r = .501$, $p < .001$). Job security and procedural fairness ($r = .469$), workload and work-life balance ($r = .452$), and leadership and organizational support ($r = .410$) also showed moderate positive associations, all with $p < .001$. External mobility pressure had a weak positive association ($r = .212$, $p = .016$).

The strongest correlation supports the proposition that retention is relational and cultural, not merely economic. Employees' willingness to stay rises with belonging, value alignment, cooperation, respect, voice, and communication. This is consistent with job embeddedness theory, which argues that links and fit can restrain voluntary exit (Mitchell et al. 2001), and with evidence that organizational culture is related to satisfaction and commitment in higher education (Tran, Tran, and Le 2023). Recognition's similarly strong association indicates that employees interpret acknowledgment as evidence that the institution notices and values their contribution. Social exchange theory predicts that such favorable treatment is reciprocated through commitment and constructive behavior (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002).

Table 4. Bivariate Relationships with Employees' Intention to Stay

Institutional Factor	r	p	Reported Interpretation
Culture, voice, and belonging	.548	<.001	Moderate positive; strongest association
Recognition and appreciation	.528	<.001	Moderate positive
Compensation, benefits, and JES fairness	.506	<.001	Moderate positive
Professional development and career pathways	.501	<.001	Moderate positive
Job security and procedural fairness	.469	<.001	Moderate positive
Workload and work-life balance	.452	<.001	Moderate positive
Leadership and organizational support	.410	<.001	Moderate positive

Institutional Factor	r	p	Reported Interpretation
External mobility pressure	.212	.016	Weak positive; direction requires scoring review

Compensation and professional development had almost identical correlations with intention to stay. This reinforces the need to avoid a false choice between economic and developmental interventions. Compensation addresses adequacy and fairness, while professional development supports competence, future identity, and career continuity. Research across higher education settings similarly identifies remuneration, appraisal, training, career opportunity, trust, and organizational climate as interconnected rather than independent retention conditions (Ababneh 2020; Butt, Lodhi, and Shahzad 2020; El Mountasser and Sahraoui 2025; Verma and Kaur 2023).

The positive correlation between external mobility pressure and intention to stay is counter to the study's directional expectation that greater pressure would reduce retention. It should not be interpreted literally as evidence that stronger outside opportunities cause employees to remain.

Several explanations are possible within the data gathered: employees with stronger qualifications may simultaneously perceive more alternatives and possess stronger institutional fit; or the relationship may reflect suppression or subgroup effects.

Answer to RQ3. The null hypothesis of no bivariate relationship is rejected for all reported domains. Intention to stay is most strongly associated with culture, voice, belonging, and recognition, while compensation, development, security, workload, and leadership also matter. These are associative findings and do not establish that changing any single factor will independently cause retention.

Research Question 4: Independent Predictors of Intention to Stay

The hierarchical regression entered employee characteristics in Model 1 and the institutional domains in Model 2. Model 1 was statistically significant, $F(9, 44) = 2.186$, $p = .042$, with $R = .556$, $R^2 = .309$, and adjusted $R^2 = .168$. Employee category was the only significant characteristic in the table ($\beta = -.296$, $p = .042$), although the source narrative reports $p = .037$.

Adding the institutional domains significantly improved prediction. Model 2 produced $R = .748$, $R^2 = .559$, and adjusted $R^2 = .351$. The institutional block added 25.1 percent explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .251$), with a significant change statistic ($F \text{ change} = 2.559$, $p = .025$). The final model was reported as significant, $F(17, 36) = 2.690$, $p = .006$. Thus, the institutional domains collectively contributed information beyond employee characteristics.

Within the final model, employee category remained significant ($\beta = -.284$, $p = .042$), and external mobility pressure was the only significant institutional predictor ($\beta = .335$, $p = .015$). Compensation and JES fairness, leadership, culture and voice, professional development, workload and work-life balance, recognition, and job security did not retain statistically significant unique coefficients when entered simultaneously. This does not mean that these internal factors are unimportant. Their significant bivariate correlations, combined with the significant incremental contribution of the block, suggest substantial conceptual and statistical overlap. Culture, leadership, fairness, recognition, security, and development may operate as a mutually reinforcing employment system rather than as isolated levers. When correlated predictors are entered together, their shared explanatory variance can make individual coefficients unstable or non-significant.

Two cautions are essential. First, the degrees of freedom in the final model imply that the regression was estimated on approximately 54 complete cases, not the full sample of 130. This is likely related to missing data, including the large “prefer not to answer” category for external opportunities. A model with 17 predictors and approximately 54 cases is vulnerable to overfitting, unstable coefficients, and inflated sampling error. Second, the positive coefficient for external mobility pressure reproduces the unexpected positive bivariate sign.

Answer to RQ4. The institutional-factor block significantly improved the prediction of intention to stay beyond employee characteristics. Employee category and external mobility pressure were significant in the final table, while no other institutional domain showed a statistically significant unique coefficient. Given the small apparent complete-case sample and the unexpected direction of mobility pressure, the regression should be interpreted as preliminary evidence of a collective institutional effect, not as a basis for privileging external mobility over the internal domains.

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Summary

Model / Predictor	β or R^2	p	Interpretation
Model 1: employee characteristics	$R^2 = .309$; adj. $R^2 = .168$	.042	Characteristics collectively explained a meaningful but uncertain share of variance.
Employee category, Model 1	$\beta = -.296$	.042*	Significant; reference-category coding not supplied.
Model 2: characteristics + institutional factors	$R^2 = .559$; adj. $R^2 = .351$	.006	Final model significant.

Model / Predictor	β or R^2	p	Interpretation
Increment from institutional block	$\Delta R^2 = .251$	.025*	Institutional domains added significant explanatory power.
Employee category, Model 2	$\beta = -.284$	.042*	Remained significant in final table.
External mobility pressure, Model 2	$\beta = .335$	.015*	Only significant institutional coefficient; positive sign requires audit.
Other institutional domains	$\beta = -.485$ to $.311$	>.05	No unique coefficient significant after simultaneous adjustment.

Research Question 5: Employees' Explanations of Attachment, Constraints, and External Opportunities

The qualitative results describe retention as an ongoing balance among attachment, workplace conditions, and the perceived attractiveness of alternatives. The themes in the interview are treated as explanatory patterns reported by the study rather than as frequency-based claims or evidence of saturation.

Theme 1: Institutional Attachment Is Built Through Relationships, Meaning, and Reciprocity

Employees described meaningful relationships with colleagues, supportive supervisors, a positive workplace culture, and alignment with the institution's mission and values as central reasons for staying. Faculty respondents also emphasized passion for teaching and fulfillment in serving students. Loyalty and gratitude were linked to opportunities previously provided by the college, while long service deepened belonging. Tuition privileges for employees' children, scholarships, graduate-study support, professional development, and employment stability strengthened the perceived value of the relationship. For some employees, the college had become not merely an employer but a professional community or "second home."

This theme gives substantive meaning to the strong correlations for culture, recognition, and development. Job embeddedness theory explains these accounts through links, fit, and sacrifice: employees are connected to colleagues, students, and community; they identify with the mission; and leaving would mean surrendering valued benefits and relationships (Mitchell et al. 2001). Social exchange theory also clarifies the role of gratitude and reciprocal commitment. When development support and respectful treatment are interpreted as evidence of institutional care, employees may respond with loyalty and a willingness to invest further in the organization (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002).

Theme 2: Organizational Constraints Set Limits on Loyalty

Attachment did not eliminate criticism. Employees identified inadequate salary, compensation that did not fully reflect workload, inconsistent recognition, unequal treatment, limited advancement, heavy workloads, and insufficient transparency in some processes. These concerns were described as conditions that could weaken satisfaction and commitment if left unresolved. Supportive leadership, respectful treatment, fair policy implementation, and a healthy climate were repeatedly presented as necessary for sustaining long-term retention.

The theme shows why favorable domain means should not be read as the absence of risk. Employees can agree that a system is generally fair while experiencing particular inequities. Organizational justice theory is especially useful here because employees assess outcome fairness, procedural consistency, interpersonal respect, and the adequacy of explanations

(Colquitt et al. 2001). A transparent JES may support procedural justice, yet dissatisfaction may persist if the pay outcome is not competitive or if incentives are perceived as uneven. Likewise, a family-oriented culture may support relatedness while workload or limited voice undermines autonomy and well-being (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan 2017).

Theme 3: External Opportunities Operate as a Conditional Pull

Employees acknowledged that they would consider public education, other private institutions, professional industries, or overseas employment when these alternatives offered substantially higher salaries, stronger benefits, greater security, clearer advancement, or improved work-life balance. Yet many also reported that they continued to prioritize supportive relationships, stability, meaningful work, and professional growth at Aldersgate College, Inc. External opportunities became most attractive when internal conditions no longer met professional or personal needs.

This theme resolves the apparent tension between high mobility pressure and high institutional attachment. Mobility is not a constant command to leave; it changes the threshold against which the employment relationship is judged. Employees may remain while the institution provides a satisfactory bundle of fairness, meaning, growth, and stability, but the same employees may become mobile when a large compensation gap combines with internal frustration. The finding supports the global-local labor-mobility perspective and is consistent with turnover research that treats alternatives, shocks, attitudes, and constraints as interacting configurations rather than as a single linear cause (Hom et al. 2017).

Theme 4: Institutional Policies Strengthen Retention When They Are Transparent and Equitable

The JES, incentives, educational assistance, development support, and employment policies were generally viewed as reasons to remain. At the same time, employees requested clearer evaluation processes, more equitable incentives, stronger performance recognition, and compensation that better reflects responsibility. The meaning of a policy therefore depends not merely on its formal existence but on accessibility, consistency, proportionality, and perceived reciprocity. Educational assistance can produce competence, gratitude, and sacrifice associated with leaving, but it can also be experienced as constraint when career progression and compensation do not keep pace with the qualification acquired.

Answer to RQ5. Employees explain retention as a dynamic negotiation between local attachment and external opportunity. Relationships, mission, meaningful work, education benefits, development, and stability anchor them to the institution. Salary gaps, workload, unequal recognition, limited advancement, and opacity weaken that attachment. External opportunities become decisive when internal reciprocity is no longer perceived as adequate.

Mixed-Methods Integration and Theoretical Discussion

The integrated findings support a multitheoretical explanation. Social exchange and perceived organizational support explain why respectful supervision, institutional concern, development support, and recognition are associated with staying. Organizational justice explains why employees distinguish the existence of a JES from the adequacy of pay and why transparency, equal treatment, and consistent recognition remain central. Self-determination theory explains why development, voice, meaningful work, and belonging matter alongside compensation: competence, autonomy, and relatedness sustain motivation that is more durable than compliance alone. Job embeddedness explains the local attachments that make departure costly in relational and professional terms. Finally, the global-local mobility perspective situates these organizational processes within a labor market where public institutions, industry, and overseas employment provide continuing comparison points.

Taken together, the results suggest a retention mechanism of conditional embeddedness. Employees remain when four forms of value reinforce one another: material adequacy, procedural and interpersonal fairness, professional growth, and relational or mission-based attachment. External mobility pressure raises the standard the institution must meet, but it does not automatically displace local attachment. Conversely, belonging cannot indefinitely compensate for inequity, blocked advancement, burnout, or a widening salary gap. This formulation is consistent with the broader turnover literature, which has moved away from single-factor dissatisfaction models toward configurations of attitudes, alternatives, shocks, ties, and sacrifices (Hom et al. 2017).

The findings also show why retention interventions must be evaluated ethically. Strategies that increase the sacrifice of leaving—such as return-service obligations—may reduce immediate turnover, but they are not equivalent to sustainable commitment. Ethical retention strengthens the reasons employees freely value staying: fair exchange, growth, voice, security, meaningful relationships, and credible opportunity. The institution should therefore avoid interpreting loyalty as willingness to absorb unlimited sacrifice.

Table 6. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Domain	Quantitative Pattern	Qualitative Explanation	Integration
Leadership/support	Highest internal mean (4.11); $r = .410$	Supportive and respectful supervisors encourage staying.	Convergence: supervisors translate policy into daily organizational support.
Culture/voice/belonging	Mean 3.98; strongest $r = .548$; voice item lowest at 3.75	College described as community/second home, but transparency and safe voice remain concerns.	Expansion: belonging is strong, yet psychological safety is uneven.
Professional development	Mean 4.06; $r = .501$; graduate support item 4.30	Scholarships, graduate study, credentials, and growth strengthen attachment.	Strong convergence: competence support is both valued and retention-relevant.
Compensation/JES	Lowest internal mean 3.79; $r = .506$	JES is valued, but salary adequacy, workload alignment, and external competitiveness remain concerns.	Nuance: procedural fairness does not eliminate distributive dissatisfaction.
Workload/work-life	Mean 4.03; $r = .452$; flexibility item 4.22	Some employees nevertheless report heavy workload and seek balance.	Partial divergence: averages may conceal unit- or role-specific overload.
Recognition	Mean 3.91; $r = .528$; less visible work item 3.78	Inconsistent recognition and unequal treatment can weaken commitment.	Convergence: recognition matters most when criteria are inclusive and fair.
Security/procedure	Mean 4.04; $r = .469$; subjective security item 3.87	Stability anchors employees, while public institutions are perceived as more secure.	Tension: procedural clarity coexists with comparative insecurity.

Domain	Quantitative Pattern	Qualitative Explanation	Integration
External mobility	Mean 3.91; $r = .212$; $\beta = .335$ in final model	Alternatives matter mainly when internal needs are unmet.	Convergence on salience, but statistical direction requires scoring/model audit.

Research Question 6: Feasible and Equity-Sensitive Retention Strategies

The integrated evidence points to a balanced strategy rather than a single high-cost intervention. Compensation matters, but the institution also possesses lower-cost and medium-cost levers in procedural transparency, supervisor practice, employee voice, recognition, career-path clarity, workload design, and equitable access to development. The most feasible strategy is therefore a staged retention architecture that protects current strengths while addressing the lowest-rated items and the qualitative constraints:

1. Preserve and formalize relational strengths. Maintain respectful supervision, family-sensitive flexibility, collegial support, and mission-based belonging, while developing supervisors in feedback, conflict management, workload allocation, and psychologically safe communication.
2. Review compensation as a total-rewards and equity problem. Conduct periodic market benchmarking, assess salary compression and role-responsibility alignment, review overload compensation, and publish clear explanations of JES criteria and incentive eligibility.
3. Build differentiated career pathways. Create transparent faculty and non-teaching career maps, regularization milestones, promotion criteria, leadership pathways, and role-relevant professional development options, including graduate study, technical certification, research, and continuing education.
4. Protect employee voice and procedural fairness. Establish confidential channels for concerns and suggestions, communicate policy changes in a timely manner, report how employee input influenced decisions, and use non-retaliation safeguards.
5. Broaden recognition. Use clear criteria that acknowledge teaching, administration, service, mentoring, maintenance, technical work, student support, and less visible emotional or coordination labor.
6. Monitor workload and well-being by unit and employee group. Use workload mapping, staffing review, schedule-predictability measures, and periodic pulse surveys rather than relying only on institution-wide averages.
7. Treat mobility information as strategic intelligence rather than disloyalty. Conduct confidential stay interviews, analyze exit reasons, and track external market comparisons without penalizing employees who disclose career concerns.

Answer to RQ6. The most feasible and equitable intervention is an integrated retention system that combines fiscally responsible compensation review with transparent procedures, protected voice, differentiated career pathways, inclusive recognition, supervisor

development, and workload monitoring. This approach addresses both economic needs and the professional and psychosocial conditions that employees identify as reasons for staying.

The study investigated employee retention at Aldersgate College, Inc. as a global-local organizational problem. It rejected the assumption that retention can be understood through salary alone and instead examined compensation and JES fairness, leadership and organizational support, culture and employee voice, professional development, workload and work-life balance, recognition, job security, external mobility pressure, institutional fit, embeddedness, and intention to stay. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combined survey evidence from 130 employees with qualitative explanations of attachment, constraint, and mobility.

Recommended Institutional Interventions

Phase 1: Immediate Stabilization and Evidence Repair (0-3 Months)

- Complete a data and scoring audit: reconcile the gender counts, verify reverse scoring, document all coding reference groups, report analytic N for each test, and explain missing-data treatment.
- Re-estimate the regression using a parsimonious predictor set, report variance-inflation factors and residual diagnostics, and consider sensitivity analyses that exclude or recode the highly missing external-opportunity variable.
- Launch confidential stay interviews for purposively selected early-career, probationary, long-serving, faculty, and non-teaching employees. Use these to identify preventable turnover triggers before resignation occurs.
- Publish a concise JES and incentives guide explaining job-class criteria, qualification credit, job-demand assessment, incentive eligibility, appeal procedures, and review schedules.
- Establish a protected employee-voice mechanism with non-retaliation assurance, confidential submission, response timelines, and periodic reporting on actions taken.
- Conduct a rapid workload and schedule-predictability scan by unit to identify overload hotspots, understaffing, duplicated tasks, and deadline congestion.

Phase 2: Targeted Retention Architecture (3-12 Months)

- Conduct a total-rewards review that benchmarks salaries, benefits, overload rates, tuition privileges, scholarships, leave, and job security against public schools, state universities, comparable private colleges, and relevant industries. Present fiscally realistic scenarios rather than a single unaffordable adjustment.
- Create transparent career maps for faculty and non-teaching employees. Each map should identify regularization milestones, promotion criteria, competency requirements, development opportunities, expected time frames, and possible leadership roles.
- Develop a supervisor-retention program covering fair workload allocation, coaching, feedback, conflict management, respectful communication, psychological safety, and early response to burnout or disengagement.
- Redesign recognition to include visible and less visible contributions. Use multiple categories and evidence-based criteria for teaching, mentoring, research, administration, technical service, student support, maintenance, coordination, and institutional citizenship.

- Expand role-relevant development. Preserve graduate-study assistance while adding technical certifications, short courses, research support, leadership preparation, and cross-unit learning for non-teaching and support personnel.
- Review staffing and work design in units reporting overload. Interventions may include task redistribution, deadline coordination, peak-period staffing, workload credits, automation of repetitive processes, and protected recovery time.

Phase 3: Long-Term Institutionalization (12-24 Months)

- Institutionalize an annual compensation and internal-equity review linked to the JES, labor-market data, inflation, salary compression, and hard-to-fill roles.
- Build a retention dashboard combining intention-to-stay data with actual turnover, early-tenure exits, exit-interview themes, promotion, regularization, absenteeism, workload, development participation, and employee-voice indicators.
- Create succession and knowledge-transfer plans for long-serving employees and critical roles so that retention and institutional continuity are addressed together.
- Develop partnership arrangements for graduate education, professional certification, research collaboration, and shared training to stretch limited institutional resources.
- Review return-service obligations for clarity, proportionality, and fairness. Development support should strengthen reciprocal commitment without becoming coercive or preventing legitimate career mobility.
- Repeat the retention survey at regular intervals and link changes in domain scores to documented policy interventions, while preserving anonymity and small-cell confidentiality.

Differentiated Intervention Packages

Table 7. Employee-Segment Retention Priorities

Employee Segment	Primary Risks	Priority Interventions
Probationary and ≤3-year employees	Unclear future, external comparison, limited networks	Mentoring, regularization road map, early career review, market-aware starting package, role-specific training.
Long-serving employees	Salary compression, stagnation, invisible service, burnout	Longevity/pay review, sabbatical or renewal opportunities, leadership pathways, knowledge-transfer recognition.
Faculty	Teaching/administrative overload, credential pressure, external academic/public options	Transparent workload credits, overload review, graduate/research support, promotion criteria, protected scholarly time.
Non-teaching and support staff	Limited career ladders, less visible labor, uneven access to development	Competency-based career bands, certification support, inclusive recognition, cross-training, pay-equity review.
Supervisors	Role conflict, communication burden, inconsistent people management	Supervisor development, coaching resources, workload authority with accountability, retention metrics.
High-mobility or scarce-skill employees	Industry/public/overseas pull	Targeted total rewards, accelerated development, critical-skill allowances where feasible, meaningful project ownership.

Governance, Equity, and Monitoring

Implementation should be overseen by a cross-functional retention committee including human resources, academic leadership, non-teaching units, faculty representatives, and employee representatives. The committee should distinguish institution-wide policy from targeted intervention, publish decision criteria, and protect the confidentiality of employees who participate in surveys, stay interviews, or grievance processes.

All indicators should be disaggregated, where cell sizes permit, by employee category, employment status, years of service, supervisory responsibility, and relevant demographic characteristics. Disaggregation must not permit re-identification. Equity review should examine whether teaching and non-teaching personnel receive comparable access to development, recognition, regularization information, and voice. Retention success should not be measured solely by lower resignation rates; it should also include improved fairness, well-being, advancement, and freely chosen commitment.

Table 8. Recommended Intervention and Monitoring Matrix

Priority Area	Core Action	Suggested Lead	Time Frame	Key Indicators
Data integrity	Audit scoring, missingness, regression, and psychometrics	Research/HR	0-3 months	Corrected tables; analytic N; reliability; diagnostics
Compensation/JES	Benchmark total rewards and publish transparent criteria	HR/Finance	3-12 months; annual	Pay competitiveness; equity gaps; appeal patterns
Career pathways	Create faculty and non-teaching progression maps	HR/Academic & unit heads	3-12 months	Promotion/regularization clarity; internal advancement
Leadership	Train supervisors in fair, supportive people management	HR/Senior leadership	3-12 months; recurring	Supervisor climate; feedback quality; unit turnover
Voice and transparency	Protected channels and action reporting	HR/Executive office	0-6 months	Voice-safety score; response time; closure rate
Recognition	Inclusive, criteria-based recognition system	HR/Recognition committee	3-9 months	Coverage across roles; perceived fairness
Workload/well-being	Unit workload mapping and staffing remedies	Unit heads/HR	0-12 months	Overload hours; predictability; burnout pulse
Retention outcomes	Annual dashboard and confidential stay/exit analysis	HR/Planning	Ongoing	Actual turnover; ≤ 3 -year exits; stay intention; exit reasons

Closing Statement

Aldersgate College's retention challenge is not a simple contest between loyalty and higher pay. Employees are embedded in a local community of relationships, mission, professional identity, and institutional support, while their credentials connect them to a wider field of public, private, industrial, and overseas opportunities. The institution's task is therefore not to eliminate mobility, which is neither possible nor ethically desirable, but to make staying

a credible, fair, developmental, and sustainable choice. The evidence indicates that the college already possesses meaningful relational and developmental strengths. Its next step is to convert those strengths into a transparent retention architecture that addresses compensation, voice, recognition, workload, security, and advancement with equal seriousness.

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