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The Effectiveness of the School Heads' Leadership Practices in Enhancing the Organizational Commitment of the Public Elementary School Teachers in Ragay Districts I And II, Division of Camarines Sur

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ABSTRACT

School leadership is consequential for instructional quality, school climate, and teacher retention, yet local evidence is needed to identify the leadership functions most consistently experienced across districts. This descriptive-comparative study examined respondent-rated leadership practices of school heads and the organizational commitment of public elementary teachers in Ragay Districts I and II, Division of Camarines Sur, Philippines, during School Year 2025-2026. The participants were 66 respondents drawn from all 33 public elementary schools: 33 school heads and one teacher-representative per school. A researcher-developed five-point survey covered seven leadership domains and five commitment dimensions. Weighted means summarized ratings. Standardized Mann-Whitney Z statistics reported in the study were retained, but two-tailed probabilities were recalculated because the hypotheses were nondirectional. Leadership-domain means ranged from 4.48 to 4.60, with effective relationships rated highest (M=4.60) and operations and resources lowest (M=4.48). Commitment means ranged from 4.03 to 4.46; alignment with school mission and vision ranked highest (M=4.46), whereas continuance commitment ranked lowest (M=4.03). No leadership-domain contrast reached $p<.05$ after two-tailed correction. Normative commitment differed between districts ($Z=-2.08$, $p=.038$, $r=.47$), with District I reporting the higher mean. Results support sustained relational and instructional leadership, strengthened resource-management systems, comparable professional learning structures across districts, and deeper investigation of the normative-commitment gap. Because the design was cross-sectional and used perception ratings, findings indicate patterns of association and comparison rather than causal effects.

1. Introduction

School heads occupy a pivotal position between education policy and classroom practice. Under the Philippine Governance of Basic Education Act, a school head is both instructional leader and administrative manager, with responsibility for the school's mission, teaching and learning environment, personnel, physical and fiscal resources, staff development, and community networks.[1] The Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads similarly organize effective leadership around strategic leadership, operations and resources, teaching and learning, people, and stakeholder relationships.[2] These responsibilities make school leadership a plausible organizational condition shaping how teachers experience their work and identify with their schools.

International evidence supports a multidimensional view of principal practice. A synthesis of 219 studies identified four recurring practices of effective principals: focusing interactions with teachers on instruction, building a productive climate, promoting collaboration and professional learning, and managing personnel and resources well.[3] Successful leadership is also context-responsive rather than reducible to a single style; leaders combine instructional, transformational, and distributed practices as school needs change.[4,5] Meta-analytic evidence further indicates that leadership centered on teacher learning and instructional quality tends to be more closely related to educational outcomes than broad inspirational leadership alone.[6]

Relational conditions are central to this process. Trust enables professional risk-taking, cooperation, and sustained improvement, while faculty trust in the principal is linked with collegial leadership, instructional leadership, academic press, and community engagement.[7,8] Teacher collaboration can improve professional learning and collective problem solving when it is structured, purposeful, and supported by school conditions.[9] Professional learning communities similarly depend on shared purpose, reflective inquiry, and organizational support rather than on meetings in name only.[10]

The outcome examined in this study was organizational commitment. The three-component model distinguishes affective commitment, or desire to remain; continuance commitment, or perceived cost of leaving; and normative commitment, or felt obligation to remain.[11] These components are related but not interchangeable. Affective commitment generally has the most favorable relationships with performance, attendance, citizenship behavior, and lower withdrawal, whereas continuance commitment often shows weaker or less favorable relationships with those outcomes.[12] In schools, organizational and professional commitment can also be supported by participation in decision-making, role clarity, collegial relations, and opportunities to contribute beyond the classroom.[13]

Ragay is a geographically extensive municipality in Camarines Sur served by two public-school districts. The study documented 17 public elementary schools in District I and 16 in District II. District I reported 3,729 pupils and District II 4,498 pupils for School Year 2025-2026. The two districts operate within the same national and division policy architecture, yet their organizational routines, professional-learning arrangements, resources, and leadership enactments may differ. Comparing them can identify practices that appear consistently strong and domains that warrant district-specific support.

1.1 Study purpose and research questions

The study examined the reported extent of seven school-head leadership practices and five dimensions of teachers' organizational commitment. It also compared the rank distributions used in the study analysis across Ragay Districts I and II and translated the findings into policy and management priorities. Specifically, it addressed the following questions:

How strongly were the seven leadership domains evident across the two districts?

Did the district rank distributions differ across the leadership domains?

How strongly were the five dimensions of teacher organizational commitment manifested?

Did the district rank distributions differ across the commitment dimensions?

What leadership and policy actions were supported by the resulting pattern of strengths and gaps?

Because the data were cross-sectional ratings and no predictor-outcome model was estimated, the article does not interpret the findings as evidence that leadership practices caused organizational commitment. The term effectiveness is used only when describing the response scale inherited from the instrument.

2. Methods

2.1 Research design

The study used a descriptive-evaluative-inferential survey design. For the journal version, this is described more precisely as cross-sectional descriptive-comparative research. No variables were manipulated, no comparison group was exposed to a distinct intervention, and data were collected at one period during School Year 2025-2026. The design supported estimation of respondent ratings and exploratory district contrasts, but not causal inference.

2.2 Setting and participants

The study was conducted in all 33 public elementary schools in Ragay Districts I and II, Division of Camarines Sur. The locale was purposively selected. All 33 school heads were included through total enumeration, and one teacher-representative from each school was selected purposively. The resulting 66 respondents comprised 34 participants from District I and 32 from District II. The study reported complete questionnaire retrieval.

Table 1. Distribution of schools and respondents

District	Schools	School heads	Teacher-representatives	Total respondents	Share
Ragay District I	17	17	17	34	51.5%
Ragay District II	16	16	16	32	48.5%
Total	33	33	33	66	100.0%

2.3 Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire used a five-point response scale. Leadership items were interpreted as Very Much Evident (4.50-5.00), Much Evident (3.50-4.49), Evident (2.50-3.49), Fairly Evident (1.50-2.49), or Not at All (1.00-1.49). Commitment items used parallel labels from Very Much Effective to Not at All. The instrument underwent adviser and school-head review, revision, and a dry run. The study reported a KR-21 coefficient of .89; however, the underlying item-level dry-run dataset was not supplied, and KR-21 is designed for dichotomous items rather than five-point Likert responses. The coefficient is therefore treated as study -reported rather than independently validated in this article.

Table 2. Domains represented in the appended questionnaire and results tables

Construct	Domain/dimension	Scored items
Leadership practices	Fostering effective relationships	11
	Embodying visionary leadership	10
	Leading a learning community	11
	Providing instructional leadership	10
	Developing and facilitating leadership	12
	Managing school operations and resources	9
	Understanding and responding to societal context	9
Organizational commitment	Affective commitment	9
	Normative commitment	10
	Continuance commitment	9
	Professional involvement	10
	Alignment with school mission and vision	10

2.4 Statistical analysis

Frequency counts and percentages described respondent distribution. Weighted means summarized each item, domain, and district on the original 1-to-5 scale. The study compared district rank distributions with the Mann-Whitney U procedure and reported

standardized Z values. Because the hypotheses asked whether a difference existed and did not specify a direction, this article recalculated two-tailed probabilities as p=2[1-Phi(|Z|)]. Effect-size estimates were computed as r=|Z|/sqrt(N), where N was the combined number of item-level observations represented in each study comparison. Statistical significance was evaluated at alpha=.05. Effect sizes were interpreted cautiously because the study tests used item-level district summaries, not raw respondent-level scores.

3. Results

3.1 Leadership practices of school heads

All seven leadership domains received high ratings. Fostering effective relationships ranked first (M=4.60), followed by instructional leadership (M=4.57) and developing and facilitating leadership (M=4.56). Managing school operations and resources ranked lowest (M=4.48) and was the only domain below the study threshold for Very Much Evident. District I reported slightly higher means in every domain, but absolute differences were small, ranging from .01 for instructional leadership to .07 for societal context.

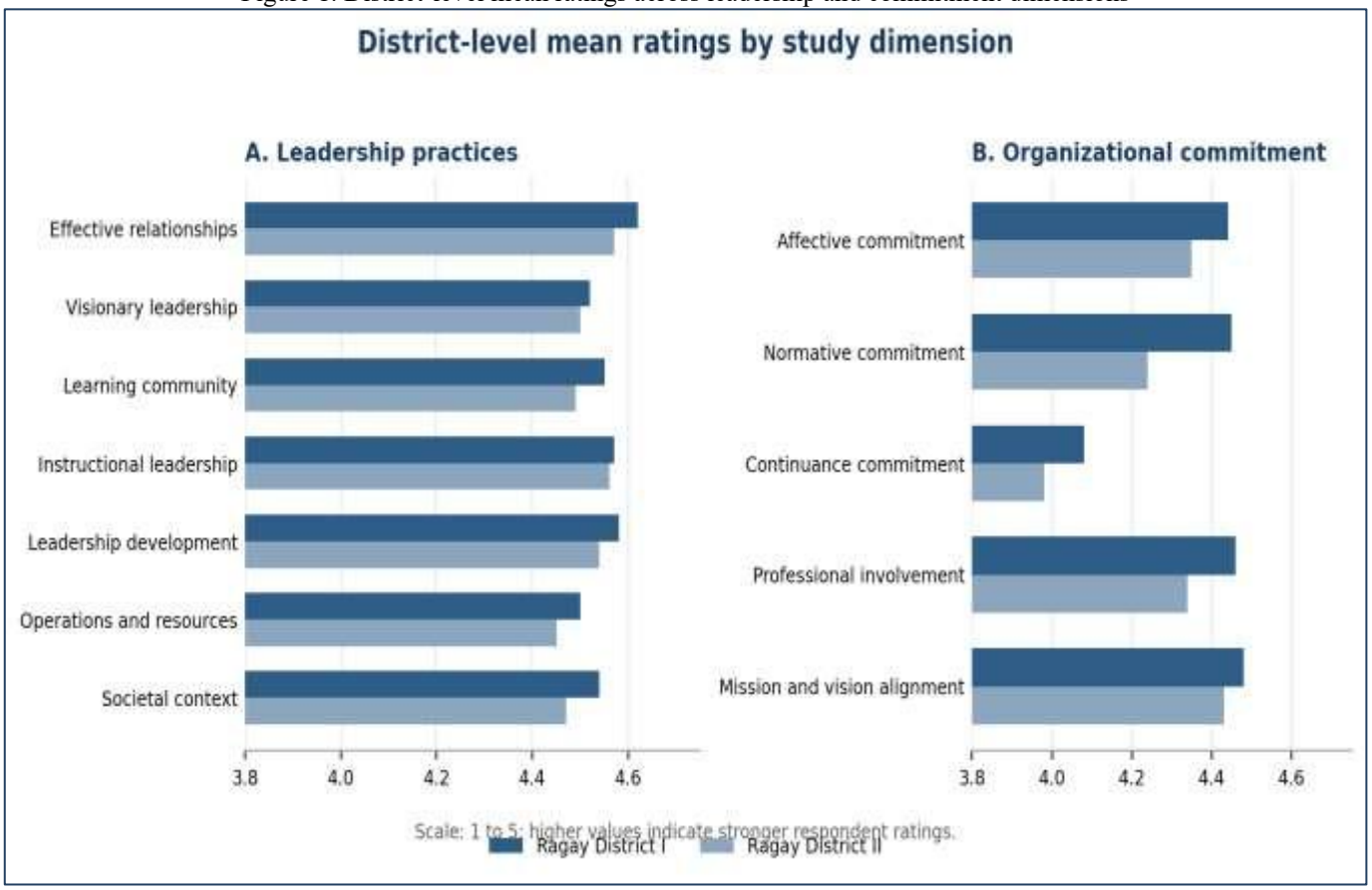
Table 3. District and pooled mean ratings for leadership practices

Leadership domain	District I	District II	Pooled M	Interpretation	Mean gap
Effective relationships	4.62	4.57	4.60	Very Much Evident	0.05
Visionary leadership	4.52	4.50	4.51	Very Much Evident	0.02
Learning community	4.55	4.49	4.52	Very Much Evident	0.06
Instructional leadership	4.57	4.56	4.57	Very Much Evident	0.01
Leadership development	4.58	4.54	4.56	Very Much Evident	0.04
Operations and resources	4.50	4.45	4.48	Much Evident	0.05
Societal context	4.54	4.47	4.50	Very Much Evident	0.07

Item-level patterns clarified the domain rankings. Within effective relationships, resolving conflicts fairly and promptly and building trust within the school community shared the highest mean (M=4.79), while encouraging teamwork and treating teachers with fairness and equality shared the lowest (M=4.39). In instructional leadership, supporting effective teaching strategies, promoting student-centered learning, and evaluating teaching performance objectively each reached M=4.60. Classroom monitoring and feedback were also highly rated (both M=4.52) but ranked below the other instructional items. These patterns suggest that respondents recognized the relational and evaluative foundations of leadership while identifying room to make teamwork, equity, observation, and feedback more systematic.

The operations-and-resources domain showed the clearest improvement need. Accountability in resource use and provision of necessary teaching resources were each rated M=4.60, yet efficient resource management, facility maintenance, consistent policy implementation, and effective administrative processes each received M=4.36. Thus, respondents distinguished the visible provision and accountability of resources from the broader systems required to maintain facilities and streamline operations.

Figure 1. District-level mean ratings across leadership and commitment dimensions



3.2 District contrasts in leadership-practice ranks

The study treated the reported probabilities as one-tailed and concluded that leading a learning community differed significantly. Under the nondirectional hypothesis, the corresponding two-tailed probability was .066, which did not meet alpha=.05. None of the seven leadership-domain contrasts reached statistical significance after correction. The largest standardized effects were observed for leading a learning community (r=.39), societal context (r=.33), and leadership development (r=.32); these are exploratory signals rather than confirmatory evidence.

Table 4. District contrasts for leadership-practice rank distributions

Domain	Z	Two-tailed p	r	Significant at .05
Effective relationships	-0.92	.358	.20	No
Visionary leadership	-0.34	.734	.08	No
Learning community	-1.84	.066	.39	No
Instructional leadership	-0.72	.472	.16	No
Leadership development	-1.59	.112	.32	No
Operations and resources	-0.88	.379	.21	No
Societal context	-1.41	.159	.33	No

3.3 Organizational commitment of teachers

Alignment with the school mission and vision received the highest pooled rating (M=4.46), followed by professional involvement (M=4.40) and affective commitment (item-traceable M=4.39). Continuance commitment was lowest (M=4.03). This ordering is substantively important: respondents rated identification with institutional direction and active professional participation more strongly than staying because leaving would be difficult or costly. Such a profile is more consistent with value alignment and engagement than with necessity-based attachment.[11,12]

Table 5. District and pooled mean ratings for organizational commitment

Commitment dimension	District I	District II	Pooled M	Interpretation	Mean gap
Affective commitment	4.44	4.35	4.39	Much Effective	0.09
Normative commitment	4.45	4.24	4.35	Much Effective	0.21
Continuance commitment	4.08	3.98	4.03	Much Effective	0.10
Professional involvement	4.46	4.34	4.40	Much Effective	0.12
Mission and vision alignment	4.48	4.43	4.46	Much Effective	0.05

At item level, teachers' support for school policies and programs was the strongest mission-alignment indicator (M=4.73). Understanding the mission and vision and contributing to school objectives each reached M=4.54. Working toward long-term school goals was lower (M=4.21), suggesting that immediate policy support was more visible than sustained engagement with long-range strategy. In affective commitment, pride in school membership and enjoyment of work each reached M=4.54, while emotional attachment to the school was lowest (M=4.21).

Within continuance commitment, respondents most strongly endorsed the idea that teachers had invested substantially in the school (M=4.33). Staying because of job insecurity was the lowest-rated commitment item in the entire study (M=3.30). This low score should not be treated as a deficit: continuance commitment captures perceived cost or necessity, and prior meta-analysis shows that it has weaker relationships with favorable work outcomes than affective commitment.[12] Leadership policy should therefore strengthen meaningful work, professional growth, and recognition rather than attempt to increase dependency on the organization.

3.4 District contrasts in commitment ranks

Normative commitment was the only commitment dimension with a statistically significant district contrast after two-tailed correction (Z=-2.08, p=.038, r=.47). District I reported the higher mean (4.45 versus 4.24). The result indicates a difference in the study item-rank distributions associated with loyalty, duty, and moral obligation to remain. It does not establish why the difference occurred. Affective commitment, continuance commitment, professional involvement, and mission/vision alignment did not differ significantly.

Table 6. District contrasts for commitment rank distributions

Dimension	Z	Two-tailed p	r	Significant at .05
Affective commitment	-1.15	0.25	0.27	No
Normative commitment	-2.08	0.038	0.47	Yes
Continuance commitment	-0.97	0.332	0.23	No
Professional involvement	-1.55	0.121	0.35	No
Mission/vision alignment	-0.64	0.522	0.14	No

4. Discussion

4.1 Relational leadership as the strongest shared practice

The prominence of effective relationships is consistent with evidence that trust, respect, communication, and fair conflict resolution are organizational resources for school improvement.[7,8] Relational leadership can make other leadership functions possible: teachers are more likely to participate in shared decisions, discuss instructional problems, and respond constructively to feedback when interactions are experienced as respectful and dependable. The very high conflict-resolution and trust ratings are therefore credible strengths. At the same time, the lower teamwork and fairness items show that trust at the leader-teacher level does not automatically

create equitable team structures. School heads should translate interpersonal goodwill into transparent committee assignments, inclusive consultation, and recurring collaborative routines.

4.2 Instructional leadership and professional learning

Instructional leadership ranked second and showed minimal district separation. This pattern aligns with research emphasizing the value of leader attention to curriculum, teaching quality, assessment information, and teacher learning.[5,6,14] The study item results nonetheless distinguish broad support for teaching from the more demanding routines of observation and feedback. A school can endorse effective and student-centered strategies without consistently conducting developmental classroom observations. A stronger supervision cycle would combine pre-observation goal setting, evidence-based observation, timely feedback, coaching, and follow-up.

Leading a learning community produced the largest leadership contrast, although its corrected p value did not cross .05. The moderate effect estimate warrants practical attention because professional learning communities depend on protected time, facilitation, data use, and norms of collective inquiry.[9,10] District-wide minimum standards for learning-action-cell or professional-learning-community cycles could reduce variation while allowing schools to adapt topics to their needs. The result should be treated as a signal for monitoring, not proof of a district effect.

4.3 Operations and resources as the principal improvement domain

Operations and resources ranked lowest even though accountability and material provision were rated highly. The gap between these visible outputs and the lower ratings for facility maintenance, policy consistency, resource efficiency, and administrative processes suggests a systems issue. National law and professional standards assign school heads explicit responsibility for physical and fiscal resources, personnel, and school operations.[1,2] Improvement should therefore focus on recurring management controls: resource inventories, preventive-maintenance schedules, transparent allocation criteria, process maps, service standards, and quarterly reviews tied to school-improvement priorities.

4.4 A commitment profile centered on purpose rather than necessity

The ordering of the commitment dimensions is theoretically coherent. Mission and vision alignment, professional involvement, and affective commitment were stronger than continuance commitment. In the three-component model, desire-based and value-based attachment are distinct from remaining because of the perceived cost of leaving.[11,12] The low job-insecurity item is therefore not evidence of weak leadership. A healthier retention strategy would increase professional meaning, recognition, autonomy, growth, and participation rather than cultivate fear of loss.

Mission alignment was strong at the level of supporting current policies and programs, but working toward long-term goals received a lower item mean. This suggests a translation gap between knowing institutional direction and using it to guide sustained action. Leaders can address this through participatory school-improvement planning, short progress dashboards, recurring strategy conversations, and explicit links between teacher-led projects and longer-term outcomes. Shared vision becomes organizational commitment when teachers can see their role in producing measurable progress.[4,15]

4.5 Interpreting the normative-commitment difference

The District I advantage in normative commitment may reflect differences in socialization, leadership communication, recognition, local norms, stability, or the way duty-oriented items were understood. Normative commitment is culturally and contextually sensitive because it concerns felt obligation rather than enjoyment or economic necessity.[11,12] The observed difference should prompt qualitative follow-up with teachers, not immediate judgment that one district is better led. Interviews or focus groups could examine how loyalty, obligation, reciprocity, and professional duty are constructed in each district and whether these meanings support or constrain healthy commitment.

4.6 Methodological implications

The study offers complete coverage of the 33 school heads and one teacher-representative per school, but the purposive teacher selection limits representativeness. Combining school-head and teacher ratings also obscures whether the two respondent groups perceive leadership and commitment differently. Future analysis should retain respondent role, school, and district identifiers; evaluate internal consistency with ordinal alpha or omega; test the factor structure; and use multilevel models or cluster-robust methods. Such refinements would distinguish individual perceptions from school- and district-level patterns and allow direct estimation of the relationship between leadership practices and commitment.

5. Conclusion and Practice Implications

Respondents rated school-head leadership practices highly, especially relationships, instructional leadership, and teacher leadership development; operations and resources remained the clearest improvement area. Commitment was strongest in mission/vision alignment and professional involvement and weakest in continuance commitment. Two-tailed correction removed the claimed leadership-domain significance; only normative commitment retained a significant district contrast. The findings support focused management improvement and district learning, but not causal claims.

Table 7. Evidence-linked action priorities

Priority	Evidence	Recommended mechanism	Primary responsibility
1. Operations and resources	Lowest domain (M=4.48); four systems items M=4.36	Quarterly dashboard, maintenance calendar, and compliance review	School heads; supervisors

Priority	Evidence	Recommended mechanism	Primary responsibility
2. Professional learning communities	Largest leadership contrast: Z=-1.84, p=.066	Common PLC/LAC cycle with protected time, inquiry protocol, and coaching	District supervisors; school heads
3. Normative commitment	District I=4.45; District II=4.24; p=.038, r=.47	Teacher focus groups; review recognition, induction, consultation, and values practices	Division HRD; supervisors
4. Long-term mission alignment	Long-term-goal item M=4.21	Link teacher projects to school-improvement milestones; review quarterly	School heads; planning teams
5. Healthy retention	Continuance M=4.03; job-insecurity item M=3.30	Career pathways, mentoring, recognition, autonomy, and development access	Division HRD; school heads

6. Limitations

The findings are subject to six limitations. First, the cross-sectional design does not support causal claims. Second, one purposively selected teacher represented each school. Third, school-head and teacher ratings were combined in the available summaries. Fourth, the instrument was researcher-developed and its item count and reliability documentation were internally inconsistent. Fifth, source inferential tests used item-level summary ranks and did not account for matched items or nesting within schools. Sixth, raw respondent-level data were not available for independent verification, factor analysis, reliability estimation, or corrected multilevel testing. Results should therefore be treated as a descriptive baseline and an agenda for stronger follow-up research.

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