

The Human Relation Strategies and the Collaborative Practices of the Public Elementary School Heads in Enhancing the Teaching Performance in the Division of Camarines Norte

Nestor T. Ramirez¹ & Jay Ar Recto, Ph.D²

¹University of Northeastern Philippines, School of Graduate Studies

²Southern Luzon State University; University of Northeastern Philippines

ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article history: Published: August 2026 Keywords: Human Relations Collaborative Leadership School Heads Teaching Performance Camarines Norte	This study examined human-relation strategies and collaborative practices employed by public elementary school heads to enhance teaching performance in the Division of Camarines Norte during School Year 2025–2026. A descriptive-correlational survey involved 220 respondents representing the First Congressional District/Tagalog-speaking group (n=117) and Second Congressional District/Bicol-speaking group (n=103). A validated researcher-made rating scale was analyzed through weighted means, ranks, and Wilcoxon–Mann–Whitney tests at $\alpha=.05$. Human-relation strategies were Very Much Employed overall (M=4.59), led by promoting teamwork (M=4.61). Collaborative practices were also Very Much Employed (M=4.61), with supportive organizational culture highest (M=4.63). Relational and collaborative practices were perceived to enhance school climate and learner achievement (both M=4.62), teacher commitment (M=4.61), and professional growth (M=4.61). Between-group differences were significant for all collaborative and performance domains and for all human-relation domains except prioritizing concern. Challenges were Much Serious, led by limited professional-development budgets (M=3.83), inadequate instructional resources (M=3.80), and insufficient coaching time (M=3.76); challenge rankings also differed ($z=2.46$, $p=.0069$). Findings support calibrated relational-leadership standards, district-responsive coaching, protected mentoring time, resource mobilization, and outcome-based evaluation.

1. Introduction

School leadership is a central organizational condition for translating educational policy into coherent classroom practice. Although school heads influence learning indirectly, they shape the goals, routines, professional relationships, resource decisions, and accountability structures through which teachers work. Leadership is therefore most consequential when administrative competence is joined with instructional purpose and when improvement priorities are understood by staff and stakeholders (Leithwood et al., 2020).

The Governance of Basic Education Act locates substantial responsibility for school-level management within a decentralized system. This responsibility requires school heads to interpret national directives, organize human and material resources, maintain transparent processes, and respond to local needs. The Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads further organizes effective practice around strategic leadership, operations, teaching and learning, people development, and stakeholder relationships (Department of Education, 2020; Republic Act No. 9155, 2001).

Competence in school management is not reducible to procedural compliance. Effective leaders diagnose conditions, set priorities, use evidence, mobilize collective expertise, and communicate a credible direction. They also create the relational conditions under which teachers can take professional risks, share problems, and sustain improvement. Relational trust is thus an operational resource: it lowers coordination costs, supports candid dialogue, and increases the likelihood that organizational decisions will be implemented (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Distributed leadership provides a complementary lens because the work of school improvement is stretched across people, routines, and situations. Principals remain accountable, but effective governance depends on purposeful participation by teachers, coordinators, parents, local officials, and community partners. Collaboration becomes productive when roles are clear, decision processes are transparent, and participation is linked to defined learning goals rather than treated as consultation for its own sake (Spillane, 2006). Leadership learning is especially important when responsibilities change, local conditions differ, or administrative demands compete with instructional work. Formal training can build conceptual knowledge, yet transfer to practice depends on coaching, deliberate rehearsal, feedback, peer learning, and opportunities to solve authentic school problems. Professional capital develops through the interaction of individual expertise, social relationships, and sound professional judgment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Time, attention, and organizational capacity are finite. School heads who spend disproportionate effort on routine reporting, interruptions, and fragmented transactions may have less opportunity to observe instruction, coach teachers, engage families, and monitor improvement. Evidence on principal time use suggests that management skill is associated not only with productivity but also with perceived effectiveness and occupational stress (Grissom et al., 2015).

Stakeholder engagement adds another layer of complexity. Community participation can extend resources and legitimacy, but it requires leaders to manage expectations, protect fairness, and maintain alignment with educational purposes. Communication must

therefore be reciprocal and evidence-informed. It should clarify why a decision is necessary, whose needs are affected, how implementation will be monitored, and what evidence will indicate improvement.

Within this policy and organizational context, particular attention is required for human-relation strategies and collaborative practices used by public elementary school heads to support teaching performance.

Survey ratings can establish a useful implementation baseline by identifying domains perceived as strong, comparatively weak, or uneven across groups. However, high self-reported or respondent-reported ratings do not by themselves demonstrate improved teaching or learner achievement. Ratings describe perceived practice; they should be triangulated with observations, administrative records, professional-learning outputs, and outcome indicators before causal claims are made.

Rank-based inferential procedures are appropriate when the analysis concerns ordered assessments or non-normal data. Their interpretation nevertheless requires care. A difference between groups indicates variation in rank distributions, while concordance indicates similarity in ordering; neither statistic estimates the causal effect of a leadership practice. This distinction is essential when translating findings into policy and training priorities.

Against this background, the study provides locally grounded evidence on human-relation strategies and collaborative practices used by public elementary school heads to support teaching performance. Its value lies in connecting descriptive profiles with implementable leadership-development priorities while preserving the limits of cross-sectional perception data.

1.1 Research Purpose and Analytical Focus

The study profiled five human-relation strategies, five collaborative-practice domains, four perceived teaching-performance outcomes, and the challenges faced by school heads. It also tested whether the two congressional-district/language groups differed in their rank distributions.

The analytical focus was implementation rather than causal impact. Mean ratings describe perceived practice and contribution, while Wilcoxon–Mann–Whitney results indicate whether the two independent groups displayed different rank distributions.

1.2 Conceptual and Empirical Synthesis

Relational leadership is treated as the interpersonal infrastructure of school improvement. Concern, trust, teamwork, participation, and support affect whether teachers share problems, accept feedback, and contribute to collective decisions.

Collaborative leadership translates interpersonal conditions into organizational routines through shared governance, joint decision-making, transparent communication, professional learning, and a supportive culture. These routines are expected to strengthen commitment, professional growth, school climate, and the conditions for learner achievement.

The model recognizes contextual variation. Language grouping, geography, district support, resource access, and local organizational histories may produce different implementation patterns even under a common national policy framework.

2. Methodology

A descriptive-correlational survey design summarized current leadership practices and tested between-group differences in rank distributions. The study involved 220 respondents across two congressional-district groupings in the Division of Camarines Norte. The First District/Tagalog-speaking group contributed 117 respondents and the Second District/Bicol-speaking group contributed 103.

A researcher-made rating scale measured human-relation strategies, collaborative practices, perceived enhancement of teaching performance, and leadership challenges. The table of specifications allocated ten items to each principal domain. Experts in supervision, administration, teaching, and graduate education reviewed the instrument before administration.

Five-point scales described extent and effectiveness. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and rank summarized responses. The Wilcoxon–Mann–Whitney procedure compared the two independent groups at $\alpha=.05$.

Significant z statistics indicate different rank distributions, not which contextual mechanism produced the difference. Interpretation therefore integrates domain means, comparative results, and the organizational meaning of the constructs.

Table 1. Research Design, Participants, Measures, and Analysis

Component	Specification
Design	Descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional survey
Participants	220 respondents in two district/language groups
Group distribution	First District/Tagalog=117; Second District/Bicol=103
Instrument	Validated researcher-made rating scale
Human relations	Concern; trust; teamwork; participation; teacher support
Collaboration	Governance; joint decisions; transparency; empowerment; culture
Outcomes	Learner achievement; commitment; growth; school climate
Analysis	Weighted means, ranks, Wilcoxon–Mann–Whitney; $\alpha=.05$

2.1 Analytical Rigor and Boundaries

The two groups were relatively balanced in size and represented all listed districts. The survey design nevertheless requires careful separation of respondent perceptions from independently observed leadership behavior and teaching performance.

The nonparametric comparison is appropriate for ordinal or non-normal score distributions. Exact group medians, rank sums, effect sizes, and confidence intervals would strengthen interpretation beyond statistical significance.

Because leadership practices and perceived outcomes were obtained through the same instrument, common-method variance may inflate their apparent coherence. Direct teacher-performance evidence and learner outcomes should be analyzed in subsequent validation.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondent Distribution

The sample was distributed across two congressional-district and language groupings.

Table 2. Respondent Distribution by Group

Group	Frequency	Percent
First District / Tagalog-speaking	117	53%
Second District / Bicol-speaking	103	47%
Total	220	100%

The near-balanced distribution supports comparative analysis while preserving the actual population structure. Language is an administrative descriptor in the study and should not be interpreted as a causal explanation for leadership differences.

Observed differences may reflect a combination of geography, district support, school conditions, resource access, and local organizational routines. Follow-up inquiry is needed to identify the operative mechanisms.

3.2 Human-Relation Strategies

Table 3. Human-Relation Strategies Employed by School Heads

Strategy	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Promoting teamwork	4.61	Very Much Employed	1
Staff participation in decisions	4.59	Very Much Employed	2
Building trust	4.59	Very Much Employed	3
Teacher support	4.58	Very Much Employed	4
Prioritizing concern	4.56	Very Much Employed	5
Grand mean	4.59	Very Much Employed	—

Teamwork ranked first, indicating that collective task accomplishment and coordination were the most visible relational practices. Participation and trust followed closely, suggesting that school heads generally valued inclusion and credible interpersonal conduct. Prioritizing concern ranked last but remained very highly employed. Its relative position may indicate that individualized attention competes with administrative workload or is less visible than school-wide teamwork. Protected consultation and coaching time can translate general support into responsive assistance.

The .05 range reflects a consistently favorable profile. Development should deepen the quality and instructional focus of relationships rather than simply increase the number of meetings or activities.

3.3 Between-Group Differences in Human Relations

Table 4. Wilcoxon–Mann–Whitney Results for Human-Relation Strategies

Domain	z	p	Decision
Prioritizing concern	1.70	.4460	Not significant
Building trust	3.18	.0007	Significant
Promoting teamwork	3.67	.0016	Significant
Participation in decisions	3.74	.00011	Significant
Teacher support	3.48	.0003	Significant

Four of five domains differed significantly between groups, while prioritizing concern did not. The common result for concern may reflect a shared ethical expectation, whereas trust, teamwork, participation, and support depend more heavily on organizational routines and local context.

The practical response is calibration rather than forced uniformity. Districts should compare how consultation, team processes, decision rights, feedback, and teacher support are actually enacted, then identify practices that can be adapted across settings.

3.4 Collaborative Practices

Table 5. Collaborative Practices Employed by School Heads

Collaborative Domain	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Supportive organizational culture	4.63	Very Much Employed	1
Transparent communication	4.62	Very Much Employed	2
Shared governance	4.60	Very Much Employed	3
Collaborative decision-making	4.60	Very Much Employed	4
Teacher empowerment and PD	4.60	Very Much Employed	5
Grand mean	4.61	Very Much Employed	—

Supportive culture and transparent communication led the collaborative profile. These conditions help teachers understand expectations, voice concerns, and coordinate work without excessive uncertainty.

All five domains differed significantly between the two groups ($z=3.78$, $p=.00011$). The identical test statistics suggest strongly systematic group separation and merit verification through rank sums and effect-size reporting. Substantively, they justify district-responsive support rather than an assumption of uniform implementation.

Teacher empowerment should be evaluated through access to meaningful professional learning, decision authority, collaborative inquiry, and evidence that teacher expertise shapes improvement work.

3.5 Perceived Enhancement of Teaching Performance

Table 6. Perceived Outcomes of Relational and Collaborative Leadership

Outcome Domain	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
School climate	4.62	Very Much Enhanced	1
Improved learner achievement	4.62	Very Much Enhanced	1
Teacher commitment	4.61	Very Much Enhanced	3
Professional growth	4.61	Very Much Enhanced	3

Respondents perceived relational and collaborative leadership as strongly supportive of all four outcome domains. School climate is the most proximal outcome because trust, communication, and participation directly shape daily working conditions.

Learner achievement is more distal and should be interpreted cautiously. The rating reflects perceived contribution, not a measured change in achievement attributable to leadership. Future evaluation should link leadership implementation with teacher practice and learner data over time.

All four outcome domains differed significantly between groups ($z=3.78$, $p=.00011$), reinforcing the need to understand contextual implementation rather than relying only on the favorable pooled mean.

3.6 Leadership Challenges

Table 7. Highest-Rated Challenges in Enhancing Teaching Performance

Challenge	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Limited budget for continuous professional development	3.83	Much Serious	1
Limited instructional resources and materials	3.80	Much Serious	2
Insufficient time for one-to-one coaching	3.76	Much Serious	3
Limited external training aligned with teacher needs	3.71	Much Serious	4
Resistance to new methods or innovations	3.66	Much Serious	5

The leading challenges concern the resources and time needed to convert relational intentions into professional support. Trust and collaboration cannot compensate indefinitely for inadequate materials, limited development budgets, or insufficient coaching time. Challenge rankings differed significantly between groups ($z=2.46$, $p=.0069$). Resource and workload remedies should therefore be informed by district-specific needs assessments and not distributed solely through uniform allocations.

A sustainable response combines resource mobilization with workload redesign, protected coaching time, needs-based professional development, and monitoring of whether support reaches classroom practice.

3.7 Integrated Interpretation of the Findings

The leadership profile is highly favorable, with teamwork, supportive culture, transparent communication, and perceived teaching-performance enhancement all receiving very high means. These strengths establish a strong relational platform for improvement.

Significant differences across most domains show that pooled means conceal contextual variation. Common standards remain important, but implementation support must be differentiated according to district routines, resource conditions, and professional-learning access. Challenges reveal a conversion problem: leaders value collaboration, yet limited budgets, resources, and time constrain sustained coaching and teacher learning. Policy should therefore align relational leadership with concrete organizational capacity. The most defensible implementation model combines a common relational-leadership framework, district calibration, protected coaching routines, resource support, and evidence-based evaluation of teacher and learner outcomes.

4. Conclusions and Implications

4.1 Conclusions

School heads very highly employed human-relation and collaborative practices. Teamwork and supportive culture were the strongest domains, and all four teaching-performance outcomes were perceived as very highly enhanced.

Between-group differences were widespread. Prioritizing concern was the only human-relation domain without a significant difference; all collaborative and perceived-outcome domains differed.

Leadership challenges were Much Serious and varied significantly between groups. Limited professional-development budgets, instructional resources, and coaching time were the most pressing constraints.

4.2 Study Limitations

The cross-sectional design captures perceptions at one point in time and cannot establish temporal order or causal influence. High ratings should therefore be interpreted as evidence of perceived implementation or effectiveness, not as proof that the practices caused improved organizational or learner outcomes.

The measures rely on structured questionnaire responses and may be affected by social desirability, recall, common-method variance, and differences in how respondents interpreted scale anchors. Observation, document review, interviews, and performance records were not integrated into the principal statistical estimates.

Rank-based comparisons summarize ordering among indicators or groups but do not quantify the practical size of an intervention effect. Generalization is bounded by the specified locale, participant selection, school year, and organizational conditions represented in the study. Future applications should retain item-level data, document missing-data procedures, report reliability coefficients for every multi-item scale, and publish reproducible test statistics with degrees of freedom and exact probability values.

The reported outcome domains were perceptions of enhancement rather than independently measured teacher performance or learner achievement; the repeated identical *z* statistics should be verified with rank sums and effect sizes.

4.3 Implications for Practice and Policy

The Division Office should define observable relational-leadership practices and use cross-district calibration to develop a shared standard without erasing contextual differences.

School heads need protected time for coaching, consultation, and collaborative inquiry. Reporting and meeting routines should be reviewed so that relational leadership is not displaced by avoidable administrative friction.

Professional development should be needs-based, job-embedded, and connected to learner evidence. Budgets and materials should prioritize sustained cycles of learning rather than isolated seminars.

Monitoring should triangulate surveys with meeting records, coaching artifacts, classroom evidence, teacher retention and engagement indicators, and learner outcomes.

5. Policy and Implementation Priorities

Table 8. Relational and Collaborative Leadership Matrix

Priority Area	Recommended Direction	Expected Evidence
Relational standards	Define observable practices for concern, trust, teamwork, participation, and support.	Leadership rubric; feedback evidence
District calibration	Compare routines and adapt effective practices across groups.	Calibration reports; contextual action plans
Coaching time	Protect scheduled mentoring and instructional-coaching periods.	Coaching logs; teacher goals; follow-up evidence
Professional learning	Fund job-embedded, needs-based collaborative development.	PD plans; lesson inquiry; classroom application
Resource support	Target materials and mobilization support using local needs data.	Needs profiles; allocation and utilization records
Outcome evaluation	Link leadership practice with teacher and learner indicators.	Longitudinal dashboard; mixed evidence review

6. Directions for Future Research

- Future studies should report group medians, rank sums, effect sizes, and confidence intervals and verify repeated test statistics from item-level data.
- Longitudinal designs should examine whether relational and collaborative practices predict changes in teacher practice, retention, professional growth, school climate, and learner achievement.
- Qualitative inquiry should investigate why districts differ and how language, geography, workload, resources, and supervision shape implementation.
- The proposed training program should be pilot-tested using baseline, fidelity, follow-up, and comparison evidence.

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