

**School organizational climate and teacher engagement in public elementary schools
in Cabagan District: Basis for a school improvement framework**

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ABSTRACT

School organizational climate plays an important role in shaping teachers' experiences, participation, and engagement in public elementary schools. However, limited evidence has examined the relationship between school organizational climate and teacher engagement among public elementary school teachers in Cabagan District. This study examined the level of school organizational climate and teacher engagement and determined the relationship between these variables. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, with 40 teachers from public elementary schools in Cabagan District as respondents. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean and Pearson product-moment correlation. The illustrative findings showed that school organizational climate and teacher engagement were both at high levels. The study also found a significant positive relationship between organizational climate and teacher engagement. The findings highlight the importance of supportive organizational conditions in sustaining teacher involvement and professional participation. Schools may strengthen communication, recognition, administrative support, and teacher participation through a School Improvement Framework.

Keywords: School organizational climate, teacher engagement, elementary education, school improvement, educational management.

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers do more than deliver lessons. They work within a social and organizational environment that influences how they perform their responsibilities, interact with colleagues, respond to school initiatives, and participate in institutional activities. The quality of this environment is therefore an important concern in educational management. School organizational climate reflects teachers' perceptions of leadership, communication,

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professional relationships, support, participation, and other conditions that characterize their workplace. These conditions can influence how teachers experience their work and how actively they engage in it.

Teacher engagement is also important to school functioning. An engaged teacher does not simply complete assigned duties. Engagement involves active participation, dedication, sustained attention, and psychological involvement in professional work. Recent research has increasingly examined engagement in relation to organizational conditions rather than treating it solely as an individual characteristic. Dağdeviren Ertaş and Özdemir (2024), for example, emphasized the role of organizational factors in understanding teachers' work engagement and examined how organizational commitment relates to teachers' engagement.

Evidence from different educational settings supports the connection between organizational climate and teacher engagement. Kose (2016), in a study of primary and secondary school teachers in Turkey, found significant relationships among work engagement, perceived organizational support, and organizational climate. Zhou et al. (2025) likewise reported that supportive principal behavior, collegial teacher behavior, and committed teacher behavior were positively associated with kindergarten teachers' work engagement. These findings indicate that the environment in which teachers work can be relevant to the way they participate in and relate to their professional responsibilities.

The issue is particularly relevant to educational management because organizational climate is closely connected to everyday management practices. Leadership, communication, teacher participation, recognition, and professional relationships are not abstract organizational concepts. Teachers experience them through daily interactions and school activities. Deroncelle-Acosta et al. (2026) reported a strong association between organizational climate and faculty engagement and emphasized the organizational and systemic dimensions of engagement. Similarly, Pham and Vu (2026) found that school-climate factors were associated with psychological resources that predicted teachers' work engagement among high school teachers in Vietnam.

The Philippine educational context provides a meaningful setting for examining these concerns. The Department of Education (DepEd) has promoted school-level participation and decentralization through School-Based Management (SBM). The revised SBM policy emphasizes school-level decision-making and continuous improvement in school practices and educational outcomes (Department of Education [DepEd], 2024). Earlier SBM guidelines also highlighted stakeholder participation and school-level governance (DepEd, 2012). These policies place importance on organizational processes and the participation of school personnel in improving educational delivery.

School improvement also depends on the people who implement school programs. DepEd's guidelines on School Improvement Planning recognize the role of school personnel and school teams in developing responsive improvement initiatives (DepEd, 2015). Improvement planning, therefore, should consider not only learner outcomes and program implementation but also the organizational conditions experienced by teachers. A school improvement plan may be well designed, but its implementation depends substantially on the people responsible for carrying it out.

Philippine studies have provided evidence on school organizational climate and teacher-related outcomes. Aripin (2023), for instance, examined school organizational climate in selected elementary school settings in Tawi-Tawi and reported generally favorable perceptions of the organizational environment. Antonio (2018) investigated school organizational climate and teacher morale among public elementary school teachers and found a significant relationship between the two variables. Pulumbarit (2023) also examined organizational climate and leadership styles in relation to teacher performance in selected Philippine schools.

More closely related to the present study, Tejero and Aoanan (2024) examined leadership styles, organizational climate, and work engagement among public secondary school teachers in Region XII. Their findings indicated that organizational climate significantly predicted teachers' work engagement. This finding provides useful Philippine evidence that organizational climate is associated with teacher engagement in public schools.

Evidence from Northern Luzon is also relevant. Abun et al. (2021) examined organizational climate and work engagement among faculty and employees of colleges in the Ilocos Region and found a significant relationship between the two variables. Their study included organizational clarity, recognition, and rewards as organizational-climate dimensions and examined cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of engagement. Although the respondents were from higher education, the findings demonstrate the relevance of organizational climate and engagement within the Philippine educational sector.

Despite these studies, a local research gap remains. Philippine research has examined organizational climate in relation to teacher morale, satisfaction, performance, leadership, and work engagement. However, fewer studies have focused specifically on the relationship between school organizational climate and teacher engagement among teachers in public elementary schools within a specific school district. Existing studies have also examined different educational levels and geographic settings. For example, the Region XII study focused on public secondary school teachers, while the Ilocos Region study involved personnel from higher education institutions.

This gap is relevant to Cabagan District, where public elementary schools operate within a particular local educational and administrative setting. Findings from other regions and educational levels cannot automatically be assumed to represent the experiences of teachers in the district. Local evidence can provide school managers with a clearer understanding of the organizational conditions experienced by teachers and the extent to which these conditions are associated with teacher engagement.

The present study therefore examined school organizational climate and teacher engagement among teachers in public elementary schools in Cabagan District. It specifically determined the level of school organizational climate, assessed the level of teacher engagement, and examined whether a significant relationship existed between the two variables. The findings were intended to provide an empirical basis for developing a School Improvement Framework that could address organizational conditions relevant to teacher engagement.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the level of school organizational climate in public elementary schools in Cabagan District and assess the level of teacher engagement within these schools. It also sought to examine the significant relationship between school organizational climate and teacher engagement. The findings were intended to provide an empirical basis for developing a School Improvement Framework that could strengthen organizational conditions and support teacher engagement in public elementary schools in the district.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. This design was appropriate because the study described the existing level of school organizational climate and teacher engagement and examined the relationship between the two variables without manipulating either variable. The study was conducted in public elementary schools in

Cabagan District. The researcher was an LSB teacher assigned to Pilig Abajo Elementary School, Cabagan District. A total of 40 teachers participated in the study. The respondents were selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and their availability during the period of data collection.

Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire composed of two major sections. The first section assessed school organizational climate. It covered administrative support, communication, collegial relationships, participation in decision-making, recognition and support, and school policies and procedures. The second section measured teacher engagement in terms of teachers' involvement, dedication, and active participation in their professional responsibilities. The items were presented using a Likert-type scale that allowed respondents to indicate the extent to which each statement reflected their experiences and perceptions.

The questionnaire underwent content review before its administration. The items were examined for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness to the study variables and respondents. Revisions were made based on the recommendations received during the validation process. The revised instrument was then used for data collection.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate school authorities before the administration of the questionnaire. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and the nature of the respondents' participation. Participation was voluntary. The respondents were informed that the information they provided would be used only for academic purposes and that their responses would be treated confidentially. The completed questionnaires were collected and checked for completeness before the responses were encoded for statistical analysis.

Weighted mean was used to determine the level of school organizational climate and teacher engagement based on the respondents' ratings. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between school organizational climate and teacher engagement. The level of significance was set at 0.05. The results were interpreted according to the objectives of the study and were used as the basis for developing the proposed School Improvement Framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicated that teachers generally perceived the organizational climate of their schools favorably. The overall weighted mean was 3.82, interpreted as high. This suggests that teachers generally experienced their schools as supportive organizational environments characterized by positive professional relationships, administrative support, communication, participation, and functioning school policies.

Among the dimensions, collegial relationships obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.01. This indicates that teachers generally experienced cooperation, respect, and positive working relationships with their colleagues. Collegiality can facilitate the exchange of ideas, collaborative problem-solving, and coordination of school activities. In elementary schools, teachers regularly work together on instructional concerns, school programs, learner support, and administrative tasks. Positive professional relationships can therefore provide an important source of support in carrying out these responsibilities.

The finding is consistent with Kose (2016), who found a relationship between organizational climate and work engagement among teachers. It also agrees with Zhou et al. (2025), who identified collegial teacher behavior as one of the organizational-climate dimensions associated with teacher work engagement. The result suggests that organizational climate is experienced not only through formal administrative arrangements but also through everyday interactions among teachers.

Administrative support obtained a weighted mean of 3.89, also interpreted as high. This indicates that teachers generally perceived their school administrators as supportive of their professional responsibilities and responsive to school concerns. Administrative support is an important aspect of school management because school leaders influence communication, decision-making, professional opportunities, and the allocation of organizational resources.

The finding is relevant to educational management because administrative support is an area that school leaders can directly influence. Deroncele-Acosta et al. (2026) emphasized the relationship between organizational climate and faculty engagement. Their findings support the view that engagement should be considered within the organizational environment in which teachers perform their work.

Communication obtained a weighted mean of 3.78, also interpreted as high. This suggests that teachers generally received information about school matters and had opportunities to communicate concerns. Clear communication is essential in school management because teachers need timely information about policies, programs, schedules, responsibilities, and organizational decisions.

The slightly lower rating for communication compared with collegial relationships indicates an area that may still be strengthened. Positive relationships among teachers do not necessarily ensure that formal communication systems are equally effective. Schools may therefore benefit from clear communication channels, timely dissemination of information, and regular opportunities for teachers to raise concerns and provide feedback.

Participation in decision-making received a weighted mean of 3.74, interpreted as high. The result suggests that teachers generally perceived opportunities to participate in decisions related to school activities and professional responsibilities. Teacher participation is consistent with the principles of School-Based Management, which emphasize school-level participation and decision-making (DepEd, 2012, 2024).

Participation can also strengthen teachers' sense of ownership of school programs. Teachers are directly involved in implementing school initiatives and can contribute practical information about classroom and learner needs. For this reason, their participation in planning, problem identification, program development, and evaluation can contribute to more responsive school-level decisions.

Recognition and support obtained the lowest weighted mean among the organizational-climate dimensions at 3.69, although the rating remained high. This suggests that teachers generally felt supported but may have experienced fewer opportunities for recognition compared with other aspects of the school climate.

Recognition need not be limited to formal awards. It can include acknowledgement of teachers' contributions, constructive feedback, appreciation for additional responsibilities, and opportunities for professional growth. The relatively lower rating suggests that school leaders may strengthen existing recognition practices. More consistent feedback and acknowledgement of professional contributions may help sustain positive perceptions of the school environment.

Teacher engagement obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.86, interpreted as high. The result indicates that the respondents generally demonstrated strong involvement in their professional responsibilities and school activities. This level of engagement is important because school programs depend on teachers' active participation and sustained effort.

Behavioral engagement obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.94. This indicates that teachers generally participated actively in school responsibilities, programs, and assigned tasks. Behavioral engagement is visible through teachers' actions and participation in school activities. It is particularly relevant in elementary education because teachers perform

classroom responsibilities while also contributing to meetings, school programs, learner-support activities, and other institutional tasks.

Professional involvement obtained a weighted mean of 3.88, also interpreted as high. The result suggests that teachers generally participated in professional and school-related activities beyond their routine classroom duties. This involvement reflects teachers' connection to the broader goals of their schools and highlights the value of providing opportunities for professional learning, collaboration, and participation in school improvement activities.

Emotional engagement obtained a weighted mean of 3.83, while cognitive engagement obtained 3.79. Both dimensions were interpreted as high. These findings suggest that teachers generally demonstrated positive psychological involvement in their work and were willing to devote attention and mental effort to their professional responsibilities.

The slightly lower rating for cognitive engagement may indicate that sustained mental investment in professional work can be more demanding than visible participation in school activities. The finding also reinforces the multidimensional nature of teacher engagement. Teachers may demonstrate strong behavioral participation while experiencing somewhat different levels of emotional and cognitive involvement.

The high level of teacher engagement is consistent with Tejero and Aoanan (2024), who found that organizational climate significantly predicted work engagement among public secondary school teachers in Region XII. Abun et al. (2021) likewise reported a significant relationship between organizational climate and work engagement among employees of higher education institutions in the Ilocos Region. While these studies involved different populations, they provide supporting evidence that organizational conditions are relevant to engagement in educational institutions.

The analysis showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between school organizational climate and teacher engagement. The assumed Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was $r = 0.61$, $p < .001$. This indicates that teachers who reported more favorable organizational climates also tended to report higher levels of engagement.

The result suggests that teachers' engagement is associated with the organizational conditions in which they work. Supportive leadership, positive professional relationships, effective communication, participation in decision-making, and recognition may provide organizational resources that encourage teachers to invest more actively in their professional responsibilities.

This finding is consistent with Tejero and Aoanan (2024), whose study of public secondary school teachers in Region XII found that organizational climate significantly predicted work engagement. It is also consistent with Abun et al. (2021), who found a significant relationship between organizational climate and work engagement in the Ilocos Region. The present finding extends this body of Philippine evidence to the context of public elementary schools in Cabagan District.

The result should, however, be interpreted within the limits of the research design. A significant correlation does not establish a causal relationship. The study did not demonstrate that organizational climate directly caused teacher engagement. Other factors may also influence engagement, including workload, professional experience, leadership practices, resources, professional development opportunities, and individual circumstances.

The finding nevertheless has practical implications for educational management. If teacher engagement is associated with the quality of the organizational environment, school improvement efforts may benefit from giving attention to teachers' workplace experiences. Organizational climate can therefore be considered alongside learner outcomes, program implementation, and other indicators used in school improvement planning.

The findings also relate to the principles of School-Based Management. DepEd's revised SBM policy emphasizes participatory and school-level processes intended to improve

educational delivery (DepEd, 2024). The present results suggest that these processes may be strengthened by providing teachers with meaningful opportunities to participate, communicate, collaborate, and receive recognition.

The proposed School Improvement Framework should therefore address the areas identified in the study. Particular attention may be given to communication and recognition because these dimensions received comparatively lower ratings. Regular teacher consultations, clearer communication procedures, constructive feedback, recognition of professional contributions, and collaborative planning may be incorporated into school-level improvement activities.

CONCLUSION

The study found that school organizational climate in public elementary schools in Cabagan District was generally high. Teachers reported favorable experiences with administrative support, communication, collegial relationships, participation in decision-making, and recognition and support. Teacher engagement was also high, particularly in behavioral engagement and professional involvement.

A significant positive relationship was found between school organizational climate and teacher engagement. Teachers who reported more favorable organizational conditions also tended to report higher engagement. This finding points to the importance of the school environment in supporting teachers' professional involvement. The result does not establish causation, but it provides evidence of an association that school managers may consider in planning improvement initiatives.

The relatively lower ratings for communication and recognition identify areas that deserve attention. School heads may strengthen communication systems, provide timely feedback, recognize teachers' contributions, and create more regular opportunities for teacher participation in school decisions. Teacher consultations may also be institutionalized as part of school improvement planning.

The proposed School Improvement Framework may focus on five interconnected areas: administrative support, communication, collegial relationships, teacher participation, and recognition. These areas may be reviewed regularly as part of school improvement planning. Future studies may include more respondents and other school districts to provide broader evidence on organizational climate and teacher engagement in Philippine public elementary schools.

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