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Teacher participation in school decision-making and organizational commitment: A correlational study in Philippine public elementary schools

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ABSTRACT

Teacher participation in school decision-making is an important aspect of educational management that may influence teachers' commitment to their institutions. However, the relationship between these variables remains insufficiently examined in the context of public elementary schools in Baggao, Cagayan. This study looked into teachers' participation in school decision-making and its relationship to organizational commitment. It employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design involving 100 public elementary school teachers and 15 school heads selected through random sampling. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson's product-moment correlation. Teachers' participation was generally high, particularly in instructional planning and school improvement initiatives, but comparatively lower in resource allocation and policy formulation. Organizational commitment was also high, with affective commitment receiving the highest rating. A significant positive relationship existed between participation and organizational commitment. School administrators are encouraged to strengthen teacher involvement in administrative decisions and institutional planning to promote collaborative school governance.

Keywords: Teacher participation, school decision-making, organizational commitment, participatory leadership, educational management.

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers are not merely implementers of school policies. They are also important participants in decisions that shape teaching, learning, and the overall direction of a school. Their daily experiences provide valuable insights into learners' needs, classroom challenges, instructional resources, and school operations. When school administrators involve teachers in relevant decisions, they create opportunities for shared responsibility and professional

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engagement. Teacher participation in school decision-making therefore deserves attention in educational management because it concerns both school governance and teachers' relationship with their institutions.

School decision-making covers several areas of educational management, including instructional planning, curriculum implementation, school policies, resource allocation, professional development, and school improvement initiatives. Teachers may be consulted on these matters, invited to participate in committees, or given opportunities to influence decisions. However, meaningful participation involves more than attending meetings or receiving information. It requires opportunities to express professional judgment and contribute to decisions that affect teaching and school operations. Smylie (1992) examined teachers' willingness to participate in school decision-making and highlighted the importance of organizational conditions and teacher–principal relationships. This suggests that participation depends not only on formal management arrangements but also on the working relationships within a school.

The Philippine education system provides an institutional basis for examining this issue. Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, established a framework for decentralizing educational governance and strengthening accountability in basic education (Republic Act No. 9155, 2001). The Department of Education (DepEd, 2024) subsequently reinforced this direction through its revised School-Based Management policy, which emphasizes decentralized decision-making and continuous school improvement. These policy directions recognize the importance of school-level participation in addressing educational needs. They also raise questions about how teachers experience and participate in decision-making within their respective schools.

Organizational commitment is another important consideration. Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualized organizational commitment in terms of affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment to an organization, continuance commitment concerns the perceived costs of leaving, and normative commitment reflects a sense of obligation to remain. These dimensions help explain why teachers may remain in their schools for different reasons. Some may feel a strong personal connection to their institutions, while others may stay because of practical considerations or professional obligations. Understanding these distinctions can help school administrators examine teachers' commitment beyond employment continuity.

International research has established the relevance of participation to teachers' professional and organizational commitment. Somech and Bogler (2002) examined the relationship between participation in decision-making and teachers' organizational and professional commitment. Their study of 983 teachers in Israeli middle and high schools found that participation in managerial decisions was positively associated with both forms of commitment, whereas participation in technical decisions was associated with professional commitment. This distinction suggests that the area in which teachers participate may matter as much as the extent of their involvement.

Bogler (2005) further examined teacher empowerment as a factor in the relationship between participation in decision-making and professional commitment. The study highlighted the importance of empowerment in understanding how participation relates to teachers' professional attachment. Teachers may be more committed when they perceive that their knowledge and judgment are valued and that they can contribute meaningfully to school decisions.

Research on distributed leadership provides additional evidence. Hulpia et al. (2010) examined the influence of distributed leadership, participative decision-making, and leadership support on teachers' organizational commitment. Their multilevel analysis of 1,522 teachers

found that participative decision-making, cooperation within leadership teams, and leadership support were significantly associated with organizational commitment. Hulpia et al. (2012) likewise found that cooperation within leadership teams and the quality of leadership support were important factors associated with teachers' commitment in secondary education. These studies emphasize that participation operates within a broader organizational environment shaped by leadership practices and working relationships.

Devos et al. (2014) also examined distributed leadership in relation to teachers' organizational commitment. Their work adds to the evidence that leadership arrangements and opportunities for participation are relevant to understanding teachers' attachment to their schools. Smylie et al. (1996), meanwhile, investigated instructional outcomes associated with school-based participative decision-making, connecting shared decision-making to broader questions of school improvement. Together, these studies provide a basis for examining participation as both a management practice and a potential correlate of teachers' organizational commitment.

Evidence from other educational settings reinforces this argument. Muthiah et al. (2021) examined distributed leadership and organizational commitment among teachers in international schools in Malaysia. Their study found a positive relationship between distributed leadership and commitment, with teacher participation in decision-making and cooperation within leadership teams showing meaningful associations with commitment. Ibrahim et al. (2026), in a study of 1,040 teachers in public and private schools in the United Arab Emirates, also found a positive association between distributed leadership and organizational commitment, particularly affective and normative commitment. Although these studies differ in setting and design, they support further examination of participatory leadership in different educational contexts.

Philippine research provides a more immediate basis for the present inquiry. Jayuma and Baguio (2025) investigated decision-making practices and individual commitment among 131 teachers in public elementary schools in Boston District, Division of Davao Oriental. Their correlational study found a significant relationship between decision-making practices and individual commitment. This evidence establishes the relevance of participatory management to Philippine elementary education. However, findings from one locality cannot automatically be applied to another because schools may differ in leadership practices, administrative arrangements, and opportunities for teacher participation.

A localized examination is therefore warranted. Although international and Philippine studies have investigated decision-making, leadership, and teacher commitment, the relationship between teachers' participation in school decision-making and organizational commitment has not been established by the cited studies specifically among public elementary school teachers in Baggao, Cagayan. This local empirical gap provides the rationale for examining both variables within the same setting.

Public elementary schools in Baggao, Cagayan, provide a relevant setting for this investigation. Although these schools operate within a common national education framework, school-level management practices may differ. Teachers may have varying opportunities to participate in instructional planning, policy formulation, resource allocation, and school improvement. School heads also influence the extent to which consultation and shared decision-making are practiced. Examining teachers' experiences can help clarify how participation is associated with organizational commitment in this local context.

This study aimed to determine the extent of teachers' participation in school decision-making and their level of organizational commitment in public elementary schools in Baggao, Cagayan. Specifically, it sought to assess teachers' participation in school decision-making,

determine their organizational commitment, and establish whether a significant relationship existed between the two variables. The findings also served as a basis for proposing a school management enhancement plan to strengthen teacher participation and organizational commitment.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine teachers' participation in school decision-making and its relationship to organizational commitment in public elementary schools in Baggao, Cagayan. The respondents consisted of 100 public elementary school teachers and 15 school heads. Teachers served as the primary respondents, while school heads provided supplementary information about school decision-making practices and opportunities for teacher participation. The respondents were selected through random sampling from eligible personnel in the participating schools.

Data were gathered using structured questionnaires developed from the study objectives and relevant literature. The teacher questionnaire assessed participation in instructional planning, school improvement initiatives, school policy formulation, and resource allocation. It also measured affective, continuance, and normative commitment based on Meyer and Allen's (1991) framework. A separate questionnaire gathered information from school heads regarding decision-making practices and opportunities for teacher participation. The instruments underwent expert review and pilot testing before administration. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha where appropriate.

The researchers secured the necessary permissions from the relevant education authorities and school administrators before collecting data. The purpose of the study was explained to participants, and informed consent was obtained. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained throughout data collection and analysis. Completed questionnaires were checked, coded, and prepared for statistical treatment.

Frequency and percentage were used to summarize relevant respondent characteristics. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe teachers' participation in school decision-making and organizational commitment. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the two principal variables at a significance level of .05, subject to the assumptions of the test. School heads' responses were summarized separately and used to provide additional context for interpreting the findings and developing management recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' participation in School Decision-Making

Teachers' participation in school decision-making was assessed in terms of instructional planning, school improvement initiatives, school policy formulation, and resource allocation. The overall mean was 3.42 (SD = 0.58) on a four-point scale. Instructional planning obtained the highest mean (M = 3.61, SD = 0.51), followed by school improvement initiatives (M = 3.52, SD = 0.55). Participation was lower in school policy formulation (M = 3.27, SD = 0.63) and resource allocation (M = 3.18, SD = 0.67).

The findings indicate that teachers had greater opportunities to participate in decisions concerning instruction and school improvement than in broader administrative matters. The 0.43-point difference between instructional planning and resource allocation highlights an area that requires attention. Teachers' classroom experiences can inform not only instructional

decisions but also the allocation of resources needed to address learners' needs. School administrators should therefore establish consultation mechanisms that allow teachers to contribute to resource planning and policy development. Their involvement can help ensure that administrative decisions reflect the actual needs of classrooms and learners.

These findings are relevant to Somech and Bogler's (2002) distinction between technical and managerial participation. Their study showed that participation in different decision-making domains may have different associations with organizational and professional commitment. In the present study, teachers' stronger participation in instructional planning suggests that opportunities for professional input were more pronounced in teaching-related decisions. Greater involvement in policy formulation and resource allocation could extend this participation to broader school management concerns.

Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment yielded an overall mean of 3.36 (SD = 0.61). Affective commitment obtained the highest mean (M = 3.55, SD = 0.54), followed by normative commitment (M = 3.39, SD = 0.60). Continuance commitment received the lowest mean (M = 3.14, SD = 0.69). The higher rating for affective commitment indicates that teachers' emotional attachment to their schools was more pronounced than their commitment based on the perceived costs of leaving.

Meyer and Allen (1991) explained that affective, continuance, and normative commitment represent distinct psychological bases for organizational attachment. These dimensions show that teachers' commitment involves more than the decision to remain employed. It also encompasses emotional identification with the school and a sense of professional responsibility.

The results are also relevant to Ibrahim et al. (2026), who found that distributed leadership was positively associated with organizational commitment among teachers in the United Arab Emirates, particularly affective and normative commitment. Muthiah et al. (2021) similarly found a positive relationship between distributed leadership and organizational commitment among teachers in international schools in Malaysia. These studies highlight the importance of leadership practices that recognize teacher contributions and provide opportunities for professional involvement. School administrators should therefore support collegial relationships, recognize teachers' contributions, and provide opportunities for professional growth.

Relationship between Participation and Organizational Commitment

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between teachers' participation in school decision-making and organizational commitment. The analysis yielded a positive correlation, $r(98) = .48$, $p < .001$, based on 100 teacher respondents. This coefficient indicates a moderate positive association between the variables. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .23$) indicates that approximately 23% of the variance was shared between participation in decision-making and organizational commitment in the bivariate analysis. This shared variance does not establish that participation independently caused the observed level of commitment.

Teachers who perceived greater involvement in school decisions also tended to demonstrate stronger organizational commitment. Participation may provide opportunities for teachers to express professional judgment, contribute to institutional priorities, and share

responsibility for school outcomes. Bogler (2005) highlighted the role of empowerment in understanding the relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and professional commitment. Similarly, Jayuma and Baguio (2025) found a significant relationship between decision-making practices and individual commitment among teachers in Philippine public elementary schools.

The results are also consistent with Somech and Bogler's (2002) finding that participation in managerial decisions was positively associated with organizational commitment. Hulpia et al. (2010) identified participative decision-making, leadership support, and cooperation within leadership teams as factors associated with teachers' organizational commitment. Hulpia et al. (2012) further emphasized the importance of cooperation and leadership support in explaining differences in commitment among teachers. Muthiah et al. (2021) also found a positive relationship between distributed leadership and organizational commitment in Malaysian international schools. These studies support the relevance of participatory leadership while showing that commitment is shaped by interconnected leadership and workplace factors.

The correlation found in the present study does not establish the direction of the relationship. Teachers with stronger organizational commitment may also be more inclined to participate in school decision-making. Leadership style, working conditions, collegial relationships, and professional development opportunities may influence both variables. Further research using longitudinal or mixed-methods designs could help explain how these factors interact over time.

Implications for Educational Management

The findings have practical implications for school leadership. Although teachers' participation was generally high, their comparatively lower involvement in resource allocation and policy formulation indicates areas for improvement. School heads should involve teachers in identifying resource priorities, explain the basis of allocation decisions, and provide regular opportunities for feedback. Such practices can help align administrative decisions with classroom needs and strengthen teachers' sense of professional contribution.

The findings support the development of a school management enhancement plan that strengthens teacher representation in decision-making bodies, improves transparency in resource allocation, and establishes regular consultation and feedback mechanisms. Greater involvement in administrative decisions can complement teachers' existing participation in instructional planning and school improvement. For public elementary schools in Baggao, Cagayan, these measures offer practical ways to promote shared responsibility and more inclusive school governance.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that teachers' participation in school decision-making was generally high, although their involvement varied across management areas. Participation was strongest in instructional planning and school improvement initiatives and comparatively lower in resource allocation and school policy formulation. This suggests that teachers had greater opportunities to contribute to instructional matters than to broader administrative decisions. School administrators should therefore strengthen teacher involvement in resource planning and policy development.

Teachers also demonstrated generally high organizational commitment, with affective commitment receiving the highest rating. This indicates that emotional attachment to their

schools was more pronounced than commitment associated with the perceived costs of leaving. School leaders should continue to foster supportive working relationships, recognize teachers' contributions, and provide opportunities for professional growth.

A significant positive relationship existed between teachers' participation in school decision-making and organizational commitment. Teachers who perceived greater participation also tended to demonstrate stronger commitment to their schools. This finding highlights the relevance of participatory leadership in educational management. However, the correlational design does not establish that participation directly causes stronger commitment.

The findings provide a basis for developing a school management enhancement plan for public elementary schools in Baggao, Cagayan. The plan should prioritize teacher representation in decision-making bodies, transparent resource allocation, regular consultation, and feedback mechanisms. These measures may help strengthen shared responsibility and promote more inclusive school governance. Further research may examine leadership style, organizational climate, and working conditions to provide a broader understanding of the factors associated with teachers' organizational commitment.

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