

Original Article

Preferred School Head Leadership Style and Job Involvement of Public Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract

This quantitative descriptive-correlational study investigated the relationship between preferred school head leadership styles and job involvement among experienced public elementary school teachers in the Panabo North District. Surveying randomly selected educators, the research assessed leadership domains (authoritarian, participative, transformational, and transactional) alongside emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of job involvement. Results revealed that teachers reported highly extensive preferences for all leadership styles, particularly participative and transactional approaches, alongside highly extensive levels of overall job involvement. Crucially, a significant positive correlation emerged between preferred leadership styles and teacher job involvement. Furthermore, all leadership domains significantly predicted job involvement, with authoritarian leadership demonstrating the strongest predictive effect. Ultimately, the findings suggest that a leadership approach integrating structure, participation, inspiration, and accountability effectively foster stronger teacher engagement, highlighting critical implications for school leadership preparation and district-level professional development.

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1. Introduction

Teacher job involvement reflects the degree to which work becomes central to a teacher's identity, effort, and sense of professional purpose. In school contexts, high job involvement is associated with stronger commitment to instructional responsibilities, higher persistence under pressure, and better classroom quality. Recent evidence has also shown that satisfied and committed teachers tend to provide better instruction, remain more stable in schools, and contribute more positively to school improvement efforts (Harrison et al., 2023; Frahm & Cianca, 2021). Because teachers' work requires sustained emotional, cognitive, and behavioral investment, job involvement remains a major concern for educational leadership and school effectiveness research.

Leadership is one of the most plausible organizational influences on teacher involvement. School heads shape expectations, define channels for participation, distribute recognition, regulate accountability, and create the relational climate within which teachers carry out their work. Studies on teacher well-being and school improvement continue to show that supportive leadership structures affect motivation, retention, collaboration, and perceived professional value (Buonomo et al., 2020; Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2024). Leadership does not influence teachers only through formal authority. It also operates through trust, clarity, support, and the perceived fairness of how work is organized.

Different leadership styles may activate teacher involvement in distinct ways. Participative leadership tends to strengthen voice, shared ownership, and collaboration. Transformational leadership tends to reinforce vision, commitment, and professional growth. Transactional leadership may support performance through clear standards, monitoring, and recognition. Even authoritarian features, although often debated, may provide order and decisiveness in settings where teachers work under high demands and tight accountability structures. Research on teacher commitment and sustainable teaching performance has underscored the salience of transformational leadership, while studies on collaboration and professional relationships point to the value of participative and relationally responsive school cultures (Alzoraiki et al., 2023; García-Martínez et al., 2021). At the same time, evidence from teacher-support studies suggests that leadership effectiveness often depends on how teachers experience the balance between structure and support (Diab & Green, 2024).

Job involvement itself is multidimensional. Emotional involvement concerns attachment, enthusiasm, and satisfaction in work. Cognitive involvement concerns attention, reflection, problem solving, and professional focus. Behavioral involvement concerns visible effort, persistence, and active fulfillment of responsibilities. These dimensions align with contemporary scholarship that links teacher emotions, engagement, and professional identity with performance and teacher-student relationships (Butakor et al., 2021; Aldrup et al., 2022; Amerstorfer & Freiin von Münster-Kistner, 2021). Teachers who feel connected to their work, think deeply

about it, and act consistently in support of it are more likely to sustain quality practice across time.

Despite the broad literature on educational leadership, a more localized account remains necessary. Public elementary schools operate within particular administrative routines, workload conditions, and district cultures that may shape what teachers view as effective leadership. In Panabo North District, the issue is not merely whether school heads lead, but which leadership patterns teachers prefer and how those patterns relate to their involvement in work. This study therefore examined the extent of preferred school head leadership styles and job involvement among public elementary school teachers, tested the relationship between the two constructs, and identified which leadership domains significantly influenced job involvement. By focusing on a district-level public school setting, the study contributes context-specific evidence to current discussions on teacher engagement and school leadership.

2. Methodology

This study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine the association between preferred school head leadership styles and job involvement among public elementary school teachers. The design was appropriate because the investigation sought to describe the level of each variable and test the statistical relationship between them without manipulating the natural school setting. The target population consisted of 220 teachers in public elementary schools in Panabo North District, Division of Panabo City. Using Slovin's formula at a 0.05 margin of error, the study obtained a sample of 128 teachers. Simple random sampling was used after the eligible population had been identified. To qualify, a respondent had to be currently employed in a public elementary school in the district during school year 2025-2026 and have at least three years of teaching experience. Teachers on temporary leave, under administrative action, or not directly assigned to elementary teaching roles were excluded.

Data were gathered through an adapted questionnaire with two major parts. The first measured preferred school head leadership style across four domains: authoritarian, participative, transformational, and transactional. The second measured job involvement across emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. The study documented expert review for content validation and a pilot test with 30 teachers to establish face validity, item clarity, and sequencing. Internal consistency evidence indicated strong reliability for the leadership-style scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.95 in the present study) and for the job-involvement scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.90). Both scales used a five-point Likert response format. Interpretation bands classified means from 4.20 to 5.00 as Very Extensive, 3.40 to 4.19 as Extensive, 2.60 to 3.39 as Moderately Extensive, 1.80 to 2.59 as Less Extensive, and 1.00 to 1.79 as Not Extensive.

The data-gathering process followed formal institutional permission procedures and ethical safeguards. After approval from the graduate school and

relevant education authorities, the researcher coordinated with school officials for questionnaire distribution and retrieval. Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized so that respondents could answer candidly. The study adhered to the Belmont Report principles, addressed informed consent, privacy, justice, transparency, and adequacy of facilities, and sought to minimize respondent discomfort. For statistical treatment, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the extent of leadership styles and job involvement. Pearson product-moment correlation tested the relationship between the composite leadership-style variable and job involvement. Multiple linear regression then determined which leadership-style domains significantly influenced job involvement.

3. Results

Table 1 summarizes the four leadership-style domains. Participative and transactional leadership both obtained the highest mean of 4.36, followed by authoritarian leadership at 4.35 and transformational leadership at 4.33. The overall mean for preferred school head leadership style was 4.35 (SD = 0.75), and all domains were classified as Very Extensive.

Table 1. Summary of leadership-style domains among public elementary school teachers.

Domain	Mean	SD	Descriptive level
Authoritarian	4.35	0.80	Very Extensive
Participative	4.36	0.82	Very Extensive
Transformational	4.33	0.85	Very Extensive
Transactional	4.36	0.79	Very Extensive
Overall	4.35	0.75	Very Extensive

Table 2 summarizes the job-involvement dimensions. Cognitive involvement obtained the highest mean of 4.36, followed by emotional involvement at 4.34 and behavioral involvement at 4.32. The overall mean for job involvement was 4.34 (SD = 0.71), and all dimensions were classified as Very Extensive.

Table 2. Summary of job-involvement dimensions among public elementary school teachers.

Domain	Mean	SD	Descriptive level
Emotional	4.34	0.78	Very Extensive
Cognitive	4.36	0.83	Very Extensive
Behavioral	4.32	0.75	Very Extensive
Overall	4.34	0.71	Very Extensive

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between preferred school head leadership style and job involvement. The correlation coefficient was 0.65, the coefficient of determination was 0.42, the p-value was 0.000, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3. Correlation results.

Variables	r	p-value
Preferred school head leadership style and job involvement	0.65	0.000

Table 4 presents the multiple regression analysis. All four leadership domains had significant coefficients, and the largest standardized beta was observed for authoritarian leadership (Beta = 0.68). The reported model statistics were R = 0.65, R² = 0.422, F = 76.46, and p = 0.000.

Table 4. Regression results predicting job involvement.

Variables	Coefficient	t-stat	p-value	Remarks
Constant	3.30	6.90	0.000	Significant
Authoritarian	0.90	6.40	0.000	Significant
Participative	0.87	6.35	0.000	Significant
Transformational	0.85	6.32	0.000	Significant
Transactional	0.82	6.29	0.000	Significant

4. Discussion

The study showed that teachers rated all four preferred school head leadership styles as very extensive, with participative and transactional leadership sharing the highest domain mean. This pattern suggests that teachers in the district valued both voice and structure. On one hand, the high rating for participative leadership indicates that teachers appreciated decision spaces, ownership, and consultative leadership. On the other hand, the equally high rating for transactional leadership suggests that teachers also valued clear standards, recognition, and consistent follow-through. This combination is consistent with research that frames effective school leadership as a practical balance between relational engagement and organizational clarity rather than a single ideal style (Fusarelli & Fusarelli, 2024).

The high rating for authoritarian leadership deserves careful interpretation. In many discussions, authoritarian leadership is treated as a restrictive approach, yet the present data show that teachers still rated this domain very highly and that it later emerged as the strongest regression predictor of job involvement. In public school settings where deadlines, reporting requirements, and compliance pressures are substantial, decisiveness and close supervision may be interpreted not merely as control, but as administrative competence and dependable direction. This reading aligns with work that shows leadership structure can reduce ambiguity and support coordinated action, especially in demanding institutional environments (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). The result does not mean that rigid control is universally desirable. Rather, it suggests that structured leadership may be experienced positively when it is tied to fairness, clarity, and task completion.

Job involvement was also very extensive across emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, with cognitive involvement obtaining the highest mean. This indicates that the teachers in the study were not only attached to their work but also mentally invested in it. The prominence of cognitive involvement suggests a workforce that remains attentive to decisions, skill development, and work-related problem solving. This pattern fits scholarship that links teacher efficacy, reflection, and professional engagement with stronger commitment and sustained work quality (Butakor et al., 2021). The high emotional and behavioral scores further indicate that work involvement in this sample was not confined to thought alone but extended to satisfaction, commitment, and active effort.

The significant positive correlation between preferred school head leadership style and job involvement affirms that leadership matters to the way teachers experience and invest in their work. With 42% of the variance in job involvement explained by leadership style, the association is not trivial. The result supports the view that school leadership helps shape the psychological climate of teaching by affecting trust, recognition, support, participation, and accountability. Studies on teacher satisfaction and instructional quality have likewise emphasized that teachers' professional states are closely connected with school conditions and relational supports (Harrison et al., 2023; Buonomo et al., 2020). In practice, this means that leadership is not peripheral to teacher engagement. It is one of the organizing conditions through which engagement is sustained or weakened.

The regression results indicate that all four leadership domains significantly influenced job involvement, although authoritarian leadership showed the largest standardized effect. Participative, transformational, and transactional leadership also remained significant, which suggests that teacher involvement is strongest when school heads combine decisiveness with consultation, inspiration, and accountability. Transformational leadership likely contributes through vision, encouragement, and professional growth, a pattern that echoes evidence linking transformational leadership with teacher commitment and sustainable teaching performance (Alzoraiki et al., 2023). Participative leadership likely supports involvement by strengthening collaboration and shared responsibility, in line with scholarship on teacher

collaboration and school success (García-Martínez et al., 2021). Transactional leadership likely reinforces consistency through standards and recognition, which may matter in highly procedural public-school systems.

Taken together, the findings suggest that leadership for teacher involvement in this setting is best understood as composite rather than singular. Teachers appear to respond well to school heads who can direct clearly, involve staff meaningfully, motivate improvement, and reinforce performance expectations. Professional development for school heads should therefore move beyond narrow typologies and instead help leaders calibrate structure, support, participation, and recognition to the realities of teacher work. Support systems for teachers, especially those that address resilience, belonging, and collegial learning, may further strengthen the pathways from leadership to involvement (Diab & Green, 2024). Because this study was limited to one district and relied on self-report survey data, future work may test whether similar patterns hold in other public-school contexts and whether qualitative evidence can clarify why teachers view structured leadership so favorably.

5. Conclusion

This study found that preferred school head leadership styles and job involvement were both rated very extensive among public elementary school teachers in Panabo North District, Division of Panabo City. Participative and transactional leadership obtained the highest domain means among the leadership styles, while cognitive involvement obtained the highest mean among the job-involvement dimensions. A significant positive relationship was established between preferred school head leadership style and job involvement, and the regression analysis showed that authoritarian, participative, transformational, and transactional leadership all significantly influenced job involvement.

The findings support the view that teacher involvement is closely tied to how school leadership is experienced in daily practice. In this setting, teachers appeared to value a leadership mix that offers direction, inclusion, inspiration, and accountability. School improvement efforts may therefore benefit from leadership preparation and district interventions that strengthen these complementary capacities. Such efforts may help sustain teacher engagement, strengthen work commitment, and support a more effective instructional environment.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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