

Decision-Making Practices and Individual Commitment of Teachers in Public Elementary Schools

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to discern the decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers in public elementary schools of Boston District, Division Davao Oriental. This study used the non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing correlational method. The respondents of this study were composed of 131 teachers in public elementary school using the universal sampling. The data analysis utilized the mean, Pearson r and regression analysis. The findings disclosed that the levels of decision-making practices were high and oftentimes manifested by the teachers. Meanwhile, the level individual commitments of teachers were very high and always manifested by the teachers. It was found out that there was a significant relationship between decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers. Moreover, it proved further, that the domains of decision-making practices of teachers were significantly influenced the individual commitment of public elementary schools. It is recommended that school administrators implement training programs to enhance teachers' decision-making practices, fostering their professional growth. Teachers are also encouraged to actively engage in such initiatives to further strengthen their commitment to their roles.

Keywords: decision-making practices, individual commitment, elementary school teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' decision-making practices and individual commitment impact the success of and effectiveness schools. Decision-making in schools often involves collaborative processes where teachers contribute their expertise, insights, and perspectives to shape policies, strategies, and classroom practices (Schildkamp, 2019). When teachers are actively involved in decision-making, they feel a greater sense of ownership and responsibility toward the outcomes, which strengthens their individual commitment to the school's goals and vision (Kilag et al., 2023).

Teachers' participation in decision-making can take various forms, such as involvement in curriculum planning, policy formulation, resource allocation, and addressing student-related issues (Rao, 2024). Schools that adopt participatory decision-making practices empower teachers to share their professional knowledge and innovative ideas, leading to more informed and practical decisions. This collaborative approach fosters trust and mutual respect among staff members and enhances teachers' motivation and job satisfaction, as they feel valued and included in shaping the school's direction (Young et al., 2018).

Individual commitment among teachers is reflected in their dedication to their roles, their willingness to go above and beyond for their students, and their alignment with the school's mission (Torres et al., 2024). Teachers who are committed tend to invest more effort into creating meaningful learning experiences, continuously improving their teaching practices, and fostering positive relationships with students, colleagues, and the community. When schools prioritize teacher involvement in decision-making, it reinforces a culture of shared accountability and professional growth, further enhancing commitment (Daniel et al., 2019).

Ultimately, the integration of effective decision-making practices with the strong individual commitment of teachers leads to better school performance, higher student achievement, and a more cohesive and motivated teaching workforce. This synergy ensures that the school operates as a collaborative and dynamic environment where educators and students can thrive (Wambugu, 2018).

Decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers are vital components in fostering a productive and collaborative school environment. Decision-making in schools involves various processes where teachers, alongside administrators and other stakeholders, participate in shaping policies, designing instructional strategies, and addressing challenges within the educational system (Ni et al., 2018). When teachers are actively involved in these processes, it cultivates a sense of empowerment and belonging, directly influencing their individual commitment to their roles and responsibilities (Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020).

Participatory decision-making practices, such as regular meetings, committees, and feedback systems, ensure that teachers' voices are heard and respected. This inclusive approach promotes transparency and builds trust among staff members (Wise, 2020). Teachers who feel their opinions and expertise are valued are more likely to take ownership of the decisions made, aligning their personal goals with the school's vision. For example, involving teachers in curriculum design or resource planning enables them to tailor approaches that meet the specific needs of their students, fostering a sense of professional fulfillment (Caena & Redecker, 2019).

Individual commitment among teachers manifests through their dedication to their students, willingness to embrace new challenges, and continuous efforts to enhance their teaching

practices (Maki, 2023). Committed teachers are more likely to invest additional time and energy in planning lessons, addressing students' individual needs, and participating in extracurricular activities. Schools that prioritize shared decision-making create a culture of mutual accountability and professional growth, reinforcing teachers' motivation and dedication (Stronge, 2018).

The synergy between decision-making practices and teacher commitment creates a positive school climate where collaboration thrives. This not only enhances the professional satisfaction of teachers but also contributes to improved student outcomes, as educators work with greater enthusiasm and purpose (Kilag et al., 2023). A school that values and supports teacher involvement in decision-making cultivates a cohesive and motivated teaching workforce, paving the way for long-term success (Burnett, 2024).

In the Philippines, decision-making practices and the individual commitment of teachers are essential in shaping the overall effectiveness of educational institutions (Miramon et al., 2024). Decision-making within schools often encompasses areas such as curriculum design, classroom management strategies, resource allocation, and student support systems. When teachers are actively involved in these processes, their sense of responsibility and ownership over school outcomes increases, leading to stronger engagement and higher levels of commitment (Eggleston, 2018).

In Davao Region, participatory decision-making practices where teachers collaborate with administrators, colleagues, and other stakeholders foster a culture of inclusivity and shared responsibility. Teachers bring valuable insights from their direct interactions with students, making their contributions critical in developing practical and effective policies. When their voices are heard and respected, they feel more connected to the institution's goals, boosting morale and creating a sense of professional fulfillment. In contrast, exclusion from decision-making can lead to disengagement and a lack of motivation, negatively affecting their commitment and performance (Dicdican, 2024).

Individual commitment among teachers reflects their dedication to their professional roles, including their willingness to innovate, adapt, and go beyond expectations to meet the needs of their students. Teachers who are committed are more likely to embrace challenges, invest time in continuous professional development, and contribute to building a positive school environment (Maki, 2023). Schools that involve teachers in meaningful decision-making processes not only improve teacher satisfaction but also enhance organizational effectiveness, as committed teachers are pivotal to driving student success (Kilag et al., 2023).

Similarly, Johnson (2020) stated that the interplay between decision-making practices and teacher commitment creates a mutually reinforcing cycle of growth and improvement. A collaborative and supportive environment encourages teachers to remain invested in their roles, while their dedication ensures the successful implementation of decisions, contributing to the overall success of the school community.

With all these scenarios, the researcher decided to conduct this study to identify the level of teacher proficiency, understand the strongest predictors of teacher professionalism, and generate the best-fitting practices to enhance teacher proficiency. Furthermore, this study will serve as a basis for formulating and enhancing **Department of Education (DepEd)** policy and regulation to improve its performance. It may provide insights into which programs and activities should be prioritized and implemented to stimulate teacher **proficiency**.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

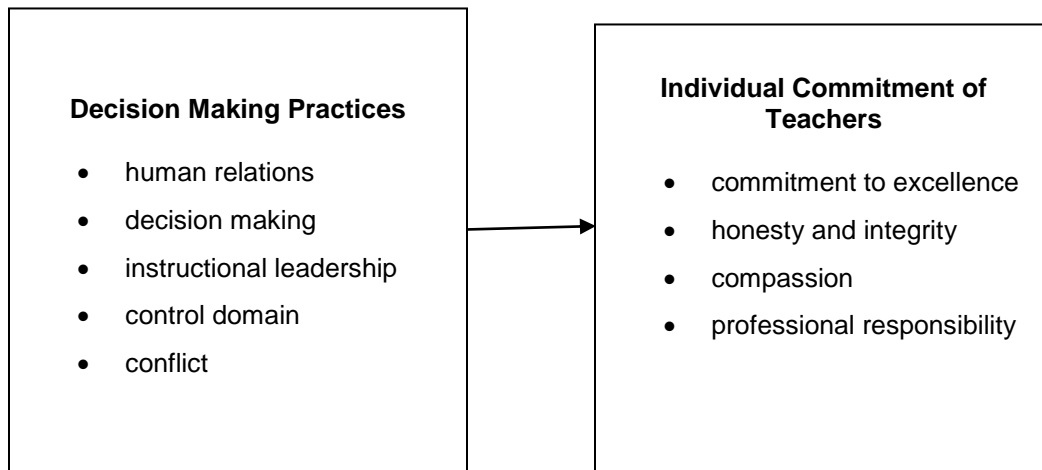


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing the correlational method. This method measures the association between variables with varying levels of measurement. In certain cases, two variables become related because they are influenced by, or caused by, another variable or variables. Hence, two variables generally tend to vary together; the presence of one often indicates the presence of the other, or one can even be predicted based on the presence of the other. This method was used to measure the relationship between the decision-making practices of school teachers and the individual commitment of teachers in public elementary schools (Pregoner & Baguio, 2024).

The correlational method involves examining relationships between two or more variables. While researchers can use correlations to identify if a relationship exists, the variables themselves are not under the control of the researchers. In other words, correlational studies cannot prove cause-and-effect relationships (Seeram, 2019). The goal of conducting a quantitative research study is to determine the relationship between one variable (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) within a population. Quantitative research designs are either descriptive, where subjects are usually measured once, or involve other approaches. A descriptive study establishes only associations between variables (Pregoner, 2024).

The study focused on determining the significant relationship between decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers in public elementary schools in the Boston District, Division of Davao Oriental.

2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of the study consisted of 131 teachers from various public schools in the Boston District, Division of Davao Oriental. These respondents were teachers with at least three years of work experience in public schools. They evaluated the decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers in public elementary schools. This study was conducted during the academic year 2021-2022.

2.3 Research Instrument

Two instruments were used in this study, namely decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers. The questionnaires were self-made and were developed based on various sources from different authors. Universal sampling was employed. The researcher-designed instruments were submitted to experts for validation to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Based on their comments and suggestions, revisions were made. To test for reliability and validity, the instruments were piloted in a separate school within the same district, involving 30 teachers. The instruments were found to be reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha result of .748.

2.4 Data Collection

The data were gathered through the following procedure: The researcher first sought permission and endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges for the Superintendent's approval. After obtaining the Dean's approval, request letters were submitted to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon the Superintendent's approval, endorsement letters were submitted to the School Heads. A letter seeking permission from the School Heads was also included in the appendices.

Following this, a schedule was arranged for the distribution of the questionnaires for pilot testing to determine the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The explanation about the study and instructions for the tests were incorporated into the questionnaires. After completing the pilot testing and obtaining the results, the survey was administered to all respondents. Subsequently, the researcher collected all the questionnaires and submitted them to the statistician for statistical treatment. Finally, the data were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis involved several statistical tools to address the research objectives effectively. The mean was utilized to measure the level of decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers in public elementary schools in Boston District, Division of Davao Oriental. To examine the relationships between decision-making practices and individual commitment, the Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was employed. Additionally, regression analysis was conducted to determine the significant influence between decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers within the same context. In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized SPSS version 23.0.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Decision-making Practices among Teachers

Table 1 Summary of Decision-making Practices

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Level
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human relations	4.11	High
decision-making	4.35	Very High
instructional leadership	4.01	High
control domain	4.01	High
Conflict	4.16	High
OVERALL	4.13	High

Table 1 presents the summary on the level of decision-making practices of school teachers of public elementary schools in terms of human relations; decision-making; instructional leadership; control domain and conflict. The mean rating of this indicators are as follows: human relations (4.11); decision-making with a mean rating of (4.35); instructional leadership (4.01); control domain with a mean rating of (4.01) and conflict (4.16). Combining all the five indicators of decision-making practices of school teachers of public elementary schools in terms of human relations; decision-making; instructional leadership; control domain and conflict generates an overall mean rating of 4.13 described as high. This means that decision-making practices of teachers in public elementary schools are always evident among school teachers. It implies that the decision-making practices of school teachers in public elementary schools, particularly in the areas of human relations, decision-making, instructional leadership, control domain, and conflict management, are generally considered to be effective. This high rating indicates that teachers demonstrate a strong ability to manage relationships, make informed decisions, provide leadership in instructional settings, exercise control within the classroom, and handle conflicts effectively. It suggests that these teachers are likely to be well-equipped to navigate the complexities of their roles, contributing positively to the school environment and student outcomes.

This finding is consistent with the study of Franklin and Harrington (2019), which emphasized the importance of effective decision-making in creating an environment conducive to both teaching and learning. Their research highlighted that teachers who demonstrate strong decision-making skills are better able to manage classroom dynamics, provide clear guidance, and foster a positive learning environment. The high level of decision-making practices observed in this study suggests that teachers in public elementary schools are skilled at making informed decisions that support both student learning and classroom management.

Additionally, this finding aligns with the work of Blackley et al. (2021), who emphasized that effective decision-making is critical to instructional leadership and overall school effectiveness. Their research indicated that teachers who are confident in their decision-making practices tend to have better control over their classrooms and create more engaging and productive learning experiences. The high mean score in this study further supports these conclusions, showing that public elementary school teachers are effectively utilizing their decision-making practices to enhance the learning environment and support student success.

3.2 Level of Individual Commitment among Teachers

Table 2. Level of Individual Commitment among Teachers

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Level
commitment to excellence	4.22	Very High
honesty and integrity	4.27	Very High
Compassion	4.27	Very High
professional responsibility	4.13	High

OVERALL	4.20	Very High
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Table 2 presents the individual commitment of public elementary school teachers in terms of commitment to excellence; honesty and integrity; compassion and professional responsibility. The mean rating of this indicators are as follows: commitment to excellence (4.22); honesty and integrity (4.27); compassion (4.27) and professional responsibility with (4.13). Bringing all together the indicators of individual commitment of public elementary schools in terms of commitment to excellence; honesty and integrity; compassion and professional responsibility obtained an overall mean rating of 4.27 described as very high. This means that individual commitment of public elementary schools is oftentimes manifested. It implies that teachers are highly dedicated to their work and responsibilities. This rating suggests that they demonstrate strong motivation, a deep sense of professional responsibility, and a high level of engagement in their roles. Such commitment likely reflects their willingness to invest time and effort into supporting student learning, upholding educational standards, and contributing to the overall success of the school. It also indicates that these teachers are passionate about their profession and are likely to have a positive impact on their students and the school community.

This finding supports the study of Wang et al. (2021), which emphasized the crucial role of teacher commitment in fostering a positive and effective educational environment. Their research highlighted that teachers who are highly committed to their profession tend to exhibit greater dedication, persistence, and a strong sense of responsibility, all of which contribute to improved student outcomes and school success. The high level of individual commitment observed in this study suggests that public elementary school teachers are deeply invested in their roles and are committed to the well-being and academic development of their students.

Additionally, this finding aligns with the work of Pedler et al. (2021), who highlighted the connection between teacher commitment and their ability to create meaningful relationships with students. Their research showed that teachers who demonstrate high levels of commitment are more likely to engage with students effectively, offering personalized support and encouragement. The high mean score in this study further supports these conclusions, indicating that public elementary school teachers are highly dedicated to their profession, which positively influences their teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

3.3 Significant Relationship between the Decision-Making Practices and Individual Commitment

Table 3. Significant Relationship between the Decision-Making Practices and Individual Commitment

Variables	X	Y	r-value	p-value	Degree of Correlation	Decision (Ho)
Decision-making practices	4.46					
Individual commitment			0.734	0.00	High Correlation	Rejected

Table 3 shows the significant relationship between decision-making practices and individual commitment among public elementary school teachers. The mean rating for decision-making practices is 4.46, while individual commitment has a mean rating of 4.04. The calculated r -value of 0.734 indicates a high correlation between the two variables, suggesting a strong positive relationship. With a p -value of 0.00, the results are statistically significant, meaning the observed relationship is not due to chance. The null hypothesis (H_0), which posited no significant relationship, is rejected based on these findings. Therefore, it can be concluded that effective decision-making practices are closely linked to higher individual commitment among teachers. This suggests that teachers who demonstrate strong decision-making abilities are more likely to show a high level of dedication to their work.

This finding is consistent with the study of Galvis (2018), which emphasized the importance of effective decision-making in shaping teacher commitment and overall performance. Their research highlighted that teachers who possess strong decision-making skills are better equipped to navigate classroom challenges, manage student needs, and enhance their instructional effectiveness. The positive relationship observed in this study between decision-making practices and individual commitment supports this idea, suggesting that teachers who make informed and confident decisions are more likely to demonstrate greater dedication and involvement in their work.

Furthermore, this result aligns with the work of Stronge and Xu (2021), who argued that decision-making is a critical factor in fostering teacher engagement and commitment. Their research showed that teachers who make thoughtful, timely decisions are more likely to be committed to their roles, as they feel empowered and capable in managing their responsibilities. The correlation observed in this study reinforces this argument, indicating that teachers with strong decision-making abilities tend to exhibit higher levels of commitment, which positively impacts their teaching and professional growth.

In addition, the finding resonates with the research of Zhang et al. (2021), who highlighted the link between decision-making skills and teacher dedication. They found that when teachers are confident in their decision-making processes, they feel more motivated and committed to their profession. The significant correlation identified in the present study further supports this conclusion, suggesting that teachers who demonstrate strong decision-making practices are more likely to show a high level of commitment to their work, ultimately benefiting both their students and the broader school community.

3.4. Significant Influence of Decision-making Practices on Individual Commitment among Teachers

Table 4. Significant Influence of Decision-making Practices on Individual Commitment among Teachers

Model	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig
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Regression	54.3797	1	54.009	.596	0.00
Residual Total	511.311	130	9.5847		
	543.111	131			

Decision-making Practices					
Teachers Personal Commitment (Indicators)		B	β	t	Sig.
commitment to excellence; honesty and integrity; compassion and professional responsibility	human relations	-.076	-.057	-.504	.000
commitment to excellence; honesty and integrity; compassion and professional responsibility	decision-making	.015	.013	.126	.000
commitment to excellence; honesty and integrity; compassion and professional responsibility	instructional leadership	-.217	-.205	-1.808	.000
commitment to excellence; honesty and integrity; compassion and professional responsibility	control domain	.163	.186	1.571	.000

commitment to excellence; honesty and integrity; compassion and professional responsibility	conflict	.014	.012	.125	.001
R	.754				
R ²	.552				
F	.596				
p	.000				

Table 4 presents the results of the analysis examining the significant influence of decision-making practices on individual commitment among teachers. The regression sum of squares is 54.3797, while the residual sum of squares is 511.311, leading to a total sum of squares of 543.111. The degrees of freedom for the regression is 1, and for the residual is 130, with a total of 131 degrees of freedom. The mean square for the regression is 54.009, and for the residual is 9.5847. The F-value is 0.596, and the p-value is 0.00, which indicates a statistically significant relationship. This suggests that decision-making practices have a meaningful influence on individual commitment among teachers, implying that enhancing decision-making practices can positively impact teachers' commitment to their roles.

This finding suggests that decision-making practices have a meaningful influence on individual commitment among teachers, which can be understood through Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2024). This theory emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation and the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in driving individuals' commitment and engagement. In the context of teaching, when teachers are empowered with the autonomy to make decisions, feel competent in their decision-making abilities, and experience a sense of connection with their students and colleagues, their overall commitment to their roles is likely to increase. Therefore, enhancing decision-making practices allows teachers to meet these intrinsic needs, fostering greater dedication to their profession.

Moreover, the finding validates the Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), which distinguishes between motivators (factors that encourage employees to perform better) and hygiene factors (factors that prevent dissatisfaction). In the case of teachers, effective decision-making practices can be seen as a motivator that positively influences their commitment by providing them with a sense of control and satisfaction in their roles. When teachers are involved in decision-making and feel their contributions matter, it enhances their job satisfaction and motivates them to be more committed to their teaching responsibilities.

Additionally, these results can be interpreted through the lens of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which suggests that job resources, such as decision-making autonomy, play a crucial role in balancing job demands and enhancing employees' motivation. Teachers who have access to decision-making practices that allow them to manage their workload and responsibilities more effectively are more likely to experience higher levels of job engagement and commitment. By enhancing these decision-

making practices, schools can increase teachers' sense of accomplishment and motivation, leading to stronger commitment to their roles.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to discern the decision-making practices and individual commitment of teachers in public elementary schools. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn: The decision-making practices of school teachers in public elementary schools were often manifested by the school heads. Additionally, the level of teachers' individual commitment in public elementary schools was often demonstrated by the teachers. Furthermore, the study established a significant relationship between the decision-making practices and the personal commitment of teachers. Lastly, the domains of decision-making practices of school teachers were found to significantly influence teachers' individual commitment in public elementary schools.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are given: It is recommended that the decision-making practices of teachers and their personal commitment in public elementary schools, being significantly related, should be considered by policymakers and human resource managers in formulating policies, training programs, and seminars aimed at improving the professionalism of teachers. School administrators are likewise encouraged to conduct training and programs that support teachers' professional development and organizational growth. Teachers, in turn, are urged to actively participate in all school programs, training sessions, and activities that contribute to their professional and social learning. Future researchers interested in conducting similar studies may explore other indicators of decision-making practices and teachers' personal commitment, aiming to identify additional variables that could serve as predictors and contribute to the broader understanding of this subject.

CONSENT

This quantitative study followed rigorous ethical standards to safeguard the privacy and protection of all participants. Prior to data collection, informed consent was secured from all participants, and they were fully informed about the study's purpose and the steps taken to maintain confidentiality. To ensure anonymity, no personally identifiable information was gathered, and each participant was assigned a unique code for data processing. All data were stored securely on encrypted servers, with access restricted to the research team. The results were presented in aggregate form, ensuring that individual responses remained untraceable. Additionally, statistical analyses were conducted in a way that further protected the anonymity of participants, maintaining their privacy throughout the research process.

Ethical Approval:

The data were gathered through the following procedure: The researcher first sought permission and endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges for the Superintendent's approval. After obtaining the Dean's approval, request letters were submitted to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon the Superintendent's approval, endorsement letters were submitted to the School Heads.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

The author(s) hereby declare that generative AI technologies have been used during the writing and editing of this manuscript. The details of the AI usage are as follows:

1. Grammarly: Used for grammar and spell-checking, as well as suggestions for improving sentence structure and overall clarity.

2. Quillbot: Employed for paraphrasing and refining sentence flow to enhance readability and coherence.

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