



Leadership Skills, Conflict Management Practices, and Organizational Climate in Public Elementary Schools in Zone 4, Division of Catanduanes: Basis for an Action Plan

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Abstract

Educational leadership plays a critical role in promoting organizational effectiveness in public elementary schools, particularly in rural settings where school heads must balance instructional leadership, conflict management, and organizational development. Despite the recognized interrelationship of these organizational dimensions, limited evidence has simultaneously examined leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate from the perspectives of both school heads and teachers in rural Philippine schools. This descriptive-comparative study assessed these variables among 50 school heads and 50 teachers from public elementary schools in Zone 4, Division of Catanduanes, and developed an action plan to enhance leadership effectiveness. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, and independent-samples t-test. Findings revealed that transformational leadership was the most frequently practiced leadership style, whereas autocratic and laissez-faire leadership were the least practiced. Conflict management was generally characterized by accommodating, collaborating, and compromising strategies, while the organizational climate was highly manifested, with people-oriented climate receiving the highest ratings and innovation-oriented climate the lowest. Independent-samples t-test results further revealed no significant differences between the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate across all measured dimensions. These findings indicate a shared understanding and consistent evaluation of leadership behaviors, conflict management approaches, and organizational climate among school stakeholders, reflecting organizational coherence in school management practices. Accordingly, the proposed action plan focuses on sustaining effective leadership practices, strengthening collaborative and reflective leadership, enhancing conflict management competencies, fostering innovation, and maintaining a positive organizational climate through continuous professional development, participatory governance, and systematic monitoring and evaluation.

Keywords: instructional leadership, conflict management, organizational climate, public elementary schools, school heads, Catanduanes, Philippines



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INTRODUCTION

Effective school leadership has become a critical determinant of educational quality, particularly in public education systems where limited resources and complex stakeholder demand require strong managerial and interpersonal competencies. School heads are expected to function not only as administrative

managers but also as instructional leaders and organizational catalysts who shape teacher performance, school culture, and institutional outcomes (Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020). Accordingly, contemporary educational discourse recognizes leadership effectiveness as a multidimensional construct encompassing transformational, transactional, and participative approaches that collectively

influence school improvement, teacher engagement, and organizational effectiveness (Bush, 2020; Özdemir et al., 2022). Complementing leadership, conflict management and organizational climate are recognized as interrelated organizational dimensions that influence school functionality and long-term sustainability (Rahim, 2023).

As a multidimensional construct, leadership in schools is strongly associated with teacher motivation, organizational commitment, and instructional effectiveness. Transformational leadership, in particular, has been widely recognized for fostering shared vision, professional empowerment, and collaborative school cultures (Leithwood et al., 2020; Liu & Bellibas, 2018). Democratic leadership further strengthens participation and trust, while transactional leadership supports accountability and performance monitoring (Balyer, 2017; Bush, 2020). However, excessive reliance on autocratic or laissez-faire approaches has been linked to reduced teacher engagement and weakened organizational cohesion (Northouse, 2025). Collectively, these leadership approaches underscore the importance of adopting context-responsive and balanced practices to promote effective school governance and organizational success.

Conflict management is another essential dimension of school leadership, as schools are inherently dynamic environments where differences in perspectives, values, and roles frequently arise (Rahim, 2023). Constructive approaches such as collaborating, accommodating, and compromising have been shown to enhance interpersonal relationships, improve communication, and strengthen organizational harmony (Elgoibar et al., 2017; Özgan & Bozbayındır, 2011). In contrast, avoidance and excessive competition may hinder problem resolution and reduce trust among stakeholders when not properly managed (Morrison, 2023). Accordingly, effective conflict management serves as a fundamental leadership competency for sustaining a positive, collaborative, and productive school environment.

Organizational climate also plays a central role in shaping school effectiveness, as it reflects shared perceptions of leadership behavior, interpersonal relationships, and institutional structures (Wang & Degol, 2016; Kutsyuruba et al., 2011). A positive school climate characterized by trust, support, and clear organizational goals has been consistently linked to higher teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and instructional performance (Collie et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Dimensions such as people-oriented, goal-oriented, and role-oriented climates are particularly important in fostering stability and coherence within schools, while innovation-oriented climates support adaptability and continuous improvement (Wang & Degol, 2016). These dimensions collectively demonstrate that a supportive organizational climate reinforces effective leadership practices and contributes to sustained school improvement.

Despite the growing body of literature on educational leadership, conflict management, and organizational climate, several research gaps remain evident, particularly regarding contextual coverage and integrated investigations across educational settings (Hallinger, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020). First, although numerous studies have examined these variables in educational institutions, much of the empirical evidence has been generated from urban or relatively well-resourced contexts, with comparatively limited research conducted in geographically isolated and resource-constrained settings such as rural Philippine public schools (Hallinger, 2018; OECD, 2020). Second, while leadership, conflict management, and organizational climate have been independently studied, fewer studies have examined these constructs simultaneously within a single integrated framework, particularly from the dual perspectives of school heads and teachers. Third, there is a persistent methodological gap in comparative perception studies that explore alignment or divergence between school leaders and teachers in assessing these key organizational variables. These gaps suggest the need for localized, multi-dimensional inquiry to better

understand school dynamics in context-specific settings.

In response to these gaps, this study descriptively assessed the leadership skills, conflict management strategies, and organizational climate in public elementary schools within Zone 4 of the Division of Catanduanes as perceived by school heads and teachers. It further examined whether significant differences exist between the two groups' assessments and utilized the findings as the basis for developing an action plan to enhance leadership effectiveness and organizational development. By addressing the identified contextual and methodological gaps through a descriptive and comparative assessment that informs context-specific interventions, the study contributes to strengthening evidence-based school leadership practices and organizational improvement in rural educational settings in the Philippines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational leadership, conflict management, and organizational climate are widely recognized as interconnected dimensions that shape school effectiveness and educational quality. Effective school leadership extends beyond administrative functions by fostering collaboration, improving instructional practices, and responding to organizational and contextual demands (Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020). Organizational climate reflects shared perceptions of leadership, interpersonal relationships, communication, and institutional structures that influence teachers' motivation, commitment, and workplace effectiveness (Wang & Degol, 2016). Similarly, effective conflict management enables school leaders to address workplace disagreements constructively, strengthen collaboration, and sustain positive professional relationships that support organizational effectiveness (Rahim, 2023). International and regional studies consistently demonstrate that leadership, conflict management, and organizational climate collectively contribute to school

improvement and teacher performance (OECD, 2020; Kutsyuruba et al., 2011). Consequently, examining these constructs from the perspectives of both school heads and teachers provides a more comprehensive understanding of organizational dynamics within public schools.

Leadership Skills and Educational Effectiveness. Leadership skills have been consistently identified as a fundamental factor influencing school effectiveness; however, empirical studies differ regarding which leadership approaches produce the most favorable educational outcomes. While transformational leadership is frequently associated with enhanced teacher commitment, professional collaboration, and instructional improvement (McCarley et al., 2016; Velarde et al., 2020), other scholars argue that its effectiveness depends on organizational context and should be complemented by participative and instructional leadership practices that encourage shared decision-making and continuous professional learning (Day et al., 2016; Fullan, 2020). Likewise, transactional leadership contributes to organizational stability by reinforcing accountability and performance expectations, although excessive reliance on directive leadership may limit teacher autonomy and innovation (Northouse, 2025). These varying perspectives suggest that leadership effectiveness is not determined by a single style but by school leaders' capacity to adapt their leadership behaviors to organizational needs. Nevertheless, comparative evidence examining how school heads and teachers perceive these leadership skills within the same public-school setting remains limited, particularly in the Philippine context.

Conflict Management Practices in Educational Organizations. Conflict management is widely recognized as an essential leadership competency because educational organizations routinely encounter differences in goals, expectations, and professional perspectives. Rather than viewing conflict as inherently detrimental, contemporary research suggests

that its outcomes depend largely on the strategies adopted by school leaders. Collaborative and compromising approaches are consistently associated with improved communication, mutual trust, and stronger professional relationships, enabling schools to resolve disagreements while sustaining organizational cohesion (Al-Hamdan et al., 2018; Elgoibar et al., 2017). Conversely, avoidance and excessive competition may delay problem resolution, reduce staff morale, and weaken teamwork when used as dominant conflict management styles (Morrison, 2023; Shaked & Schechter, 2017). Evidence from Southeast Asian educational settings further indicates that school leaders who encourage open dialogue and participatory problem-solving create more supportive working environments and enhance teachers' organizational commitment (Ismail et al., 2011). Despite these findings, comparative evidence examining how school heads and teachers perceive conflict management practices within the same public-school context remains limited, particularly in Philippine basic education.

Organizational Climate and School Effectiveness. Organizational climate is widely regarded as a critical determinant of school effectiveness because it shapes teachers' perceptions of leadership, professional relationships, communication, and institutional support. Studies have consistently shown that a positive organizational climate promotes teacher motivation, job satisfaction, collaboration, and commitment, thereby creating conditions that enhance instructional quality and school performance (Collie et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). In the Philippine context, Ferrer (2021) found that supportive principal behavior, collegial teacher relationships, and participative school practices were associated with a more favorable organizational climate in secondary schools. Similarly, Velarde et al. (2020) reported that school environments characterized by trust, collaboration, and supportive leadership strengthened teachers' organizational commitment and professional engagement.

Collectively, these findings suggest that organizational climate is shaped by both leadership practices and interpersonal interactions. Nevertheless, limited Philippine studies have comparatively examined how school heads and teachers perceive organizational climate within the same public-school setting, highlighting an important gap addressed by the present investigation.

Comparative Studies on School Heads and Teachers. Comparative studies involving school heads and teachers provide valuable insights into how key organizational practices are understood across different stakeholder groups. Research indicates that school heads frequently evaluate leadership practices, organizational conditions, and management effectiveness more favorably than teachers, reflecting differences in professional roles, responsibilities, and daily experiences within schools (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Similar findings have been reported in Asian educational settings, where variations in perceptions were attributed to communication patterns, decision-making processes, and levels of participation in school governance (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012). Within the Philippine educational context, comparing the perspectives of school heads and teachers provides a more comprehensive understanding of instructional leadership and school management practices, thereby supporting context-responsive leadership development and evidence-based school improvement initiatives.

Synthesis, Research Gap, and Study Contribution. The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate are essential components of effective school management. While previous studies have provided substantial evidence on these constructs individually, most have examined them using correlational, predictive, or single-variable approaches and have often relied on the perspectives of only one respondent group (Cansoy, 2020; Tintoré et al., 2022). Moreover,

empirical investigations conducted in Philippine public elementary schools remain limited, particularly those simultaneously assessing these organizational dimensions from the perspectives of both school heads and teachers. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence regarding the extent to which the two groups share or differ in their perceptions of leadership, conflict management, and organizational climate within the same educational context. Addressing this gap, the present study adopts a descriptive-comparative approach to generate localized evidence that may inform leadership development, organizational improvement, and context-responsive interventions in public elementary schools within the Division of Catanduanes.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. The present study is anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Management Theory (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974), and Organizational Climate Theory (Halpin & Croft, 1963; Litwin & Stringer, 1968). These theories collectively provide the foundation for understanding leadership behaviors, conflict management practices, and organizational climate as key organizational constructs within the school setting. Transformational Leadership Theory explains how school heads foster motivation, collaboration, and professional growth through inspirational leadership. The Thomas–Kilmann framework identifies five conflict management strategies: collaborating, accommodating, avoiding, competing, and compromising that facilitate effective conflict resolution and organizational harmony. Organizational Climate Theory emphasizes that leadership, interpersonal relationships, organizational structures, and institutional policies shape the working environment, influencing employee motivation, engagement, and overall organizational effectiveness. Recent empirical studies have further demonstrated the positive contributions of transformational leadership to school improvement, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and organizational performance

(McCarley et al., 2016; Velarde et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020).

These theoretical perspectives guided the identification of the study variables and the interpretation of the findings without assuming causal or predictive relationships among them. Specifically, the study examined three major constructs: leadership skills of school heads, conflict management practices, and organizational climate, as perceived by two respondent groups, school heads and teachers. Consistent with the descriptive-comparative research design, the investigation focused on describing the extent of each construct and determining whether significant differences existed between the perceptions of the two groups.

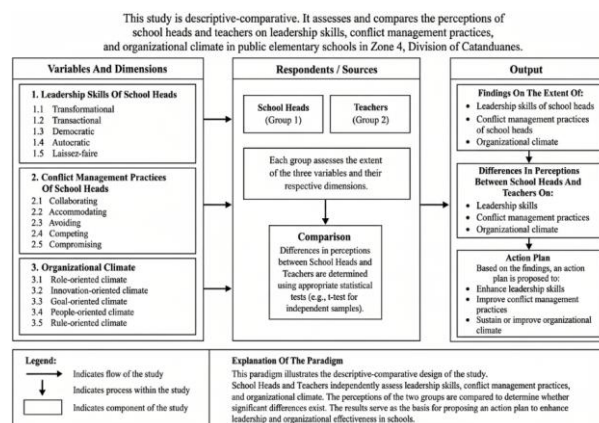


Figure 1
Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual paradigm of the study. The framework shows that school heads and teachers independently assessed the three study variables, after which their responses were compared using appropriate statistical analyses to determine similarities and differences in perceptions. Rather than depicting cause-and-effect relationships, the paradigm emphasizes the assessment and comparison of perceptions in accordance with the study objectives and peer-review recommendations. The findings subsequently served as the basis for formulating an evidence-based action plan to strengthen leadership skills, enhance conflict management

practices, and sustain a positive organizational climate in public elementary schools.

Statement of the Problem. This study aimed to assess the leadership skills, conflict management strategies, and organizational climate in public elementary schools within Zone 4 of the Division of Catanduanes, as perceived by school heads and teachers. It further examined whether significant differences exist between the two groups in their assessments and proposed an action plan to enhance leadership and organizational effectiveness.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of leadership skills of school heads as perceived by school heads and teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 Transformational;
 - 1.2 Transactional;
 - 1.3 Democratic;
 - 1.4 Autocratic; and
 - 1.5 Laissez-faire?
2. What is the extent of conflict management practices of school heads as perceived by school heads and teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 Collaborating;
 - 2.2 Accommodating;
 - 2.3 Avoiding;
 - 2.4 Competing; and
 - 2.5 Compromising?
3. What is the extent of organizational climate in schools as perceived by school heads and teachers in terms of:
 - 3.1 Role-oriented climate;
 - 3.2 Innovation-oriented climate;
 - 3.3 Goal-oriented climate;
 - 3.4 People-oriented climate; and
 - 3.5 Rule-oriented climate?
4. Is there a significant difference between school heads' and teachers' perceptions of school heads' leadership skills?

5. Is there a significant difference between school heads' and teachers' perceptions of school heads' conflict management practices?
6. Is there a significant difference between school heads' and teachers' perceptions of organizational climate?
7. Based on the findings of the study, what action plan may be proposed to enhance the leadership skills and conflict management practices of school heads and to sustain or improve the organizational climate of schools?

Null Hypotheses. This study tested the following null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance:

Ho₁. There is no significant difference between school heads' and teachers' perceptions of school heads' leadership skills.

Ho₂. There is no significant difference between school heads' and teachers' perceptions of school heads' conflict management practices.

Ho₃. There is no significant difference between school heads' and teachers' perceptions of organizational climate.

Scope of the Study. This study examined the leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate in selected public elementary schools within Zone 4 of the Division of Catanduanes, Philippines, during the School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it assessed leadership styles in terms of transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire dimensions; conflict management practices across collaborating, accommodating, avoiding, competing, and compromising strategies; and organizational climate along role-oriented, innovation-oriented, goal-oriented, people-oriented, and rule-oriented dimensions, as perceived by school heads and teachers.

The study further determined significant differences in the perceptions of the two groups using a comparative descriptive research design, with findings limited to respondents' self-reported perceptions rather than direct observations of actual leadership or conflict management practices. Findings served as the basis for proposing an action plan aimed at enhancing leadership effectiveness, strengthening conflict management practices, and improving organizational climate in the participating public elementary schools.

METHODS

Research Design. This study employed a quantitative descriptive comparative research design to examine and compare the leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate in public elementary schools in Zone 4, Division of Catanduanes, as perceived by school heads and teachers. This design is appropriate as it describes existing conditions and determines significant differences between two groups without manipulating variables, making it suitable for educational leadership and organizational studies where natural settings are observed. The study further utilizes inferential statistics to test differences in perceptions, consistent with contemporary applications of comparative analysis in school leadership research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population, Samples and Sampling Technique.

The population of the study comprised school heads and teachers in selected public schools. All 50 school heads were included through complete enumeration, while 50 teacher respondents were selected through simple random sampling, with one teacher drawn from each school headed by the participating school head to allow school-level comparison. Although the two groups were matched by school, the responses were not paired respondent-to-respondent; hence, an independent samples t-test was appropriate. This approach ensured equal group sizes, improved comparability, and minimized sampling bias and variability across the two

groups in the comparative analysis (Levy & Lemeshow, 2011; Lohr, 2021).

Instrumentation. This study utilized a researcher-developed questionnaire to assess leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate among public elementary schools in Zone 4 of the Division of Catanduanes. The instrument consisted of three major domains, each comprising five subdomains with five indicators aligned with the study objectives. Qualitative content validation was undertaken by five experts in educational management, leadership, and research methodology who evaluated the instrument's relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the research objectives (Polit & Beck, 2021). A pilot test involving 30 respondents from a non-participating district demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .945 to 1.000 across the subdomains and .975 for the overall instrument, confirming its high reliability (Taber, 2018). All responses were measured using a standardized four-point Likert scale, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Rating Scale Matrix for Leadership Skills, Conflict Management Practices, and Organizational Climate

Assigned Points	Numerical Range	Leadership Skills	Conflict Management	Organizational Climate
4	3.25-4.00	Frequently Practiced	Very Often Practiced	Highly Manifested
3	2.50-3.24	Practiced	Often Practiced	Manifested
2	1.75-2.49	Less Practiced	Moderately Practiced	Less Manifested
1	1.00-1.74	Least Practiced	Rarely Practiced	Least Manifested

Data Collection. Prior to data collection, approval was secured from the Schools Division Office and the principals of the selected public elementary schools in Zone 4, Division of Catanduanes. Ethical standards, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw, were strictly observed. Primary data were collected using a validated researcher-developed structured questionnaire administered to 50 school heads and 50 teachers selected through simple random sampling (Lohr, 2021). As the respondents represented two independent groups, their

perceptions were compared using the independent-samples t-test. The instrument measured leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate using standardized Likert-scale measures to ensure reliability and consistency (DeVellis, 2017). Retrieved questionnaires were checked for completeness, encoded, and organized for statistical analysis following established survey research procedures (Taherdoost, 2016).

Data Analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques consistent with the study's descriptive-comparative research design. Weighted mean and standard deviation were employed to determine the extent and variability of leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate as perceived by school heads and teachers, with interpretations based on the established four-point Likert scale (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Differences between the two independent groups were examined using an independent samples *t*-test at the .05 level of significance, an appropriate procedure for comparing group means (Field, 2018). Statistical analyses were performed using standard statistical software to ensure accurate, reliable, and consistent interpretation of the data in accordance with accepted quantitative research procedures (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

Ethical Considerations. The study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Permission was obtained from the appropriate authorities before data collection, and informed consent was secured from all respondents. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by excluding personally identifiable information and reporting findings in aggregate form. All data were used exclusively for research purposes and handled in accordance with the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, consistent with

international ethical guidelines (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences [CIOMS], 2016; American Psychological Association [APA], 2020).

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in this section, focusing on the perceived extent of leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate of school heads as assessed by both school heads and teachers. It also examines the significant differences between their perceptions across the three major variables, and culminates with a proposed action plan for enhancing the leadership skills of school heads based on the findings.

Extent of Leadership Skills of School Heads as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers. Table 2 shows that both school heads and teachers perceived the leadership skills of school heads as generally practiced. Transformational leadership received the highest ratings (WM = 3.64–3.68), indicating that school heads frequently demonstrate inspirational, vision-driven, and motivational leadership behaviors.

Table 2
Composite Table on the extent of Leadership Skills of School Heads as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers

Dimension	School Heads (n = 50)				Teachers (n = 50)			
	WM	SD	VI	Rank	WM	SD	VI	Rank
Transformational	3.64	0.56	Frequently Practiced	1	3.68	0.53	Frequently Practiced	1
Transactional	3.52	0.61	Frequently Practiced	2	3.55	0.59	Frequently Practiced	2
Democratic	3.50	0.58	Frequently Practiced	3	3.53	0.56	Frequently Practiced	3
Autocratic	1.93	0.72	Less Practiced	4	1.94	0.69	Less Practiced	5
Laissez-faire	1.93	0.74	Less Practiced	5	1.98	0.71	Less Practiced	4
Overall Weighted Mean	2.90	0.64	Practiced	–	2.94	0.62	Practiced	–

Legend: 3.25–4.00= Frequently Practiced; 2.50–3.24= Practiced; 1.75–2.49= Less Practiced; 1.00–1.74= Least Practiced

Transactional (WM = 3.52–3.55) and democratic leadership (WM = 3.50–3.53) were likewise frequently practiced, reflecting the consistent use of performance-based management and participative decision-making. Conversely, autocratic (WM = 1.93–1.94) and laissez-faire

leadership (WM = 1.93–1.98) were less practiced, suggesting that directive and non-interventionist leadership approaches are seldom employed. The overall weighted means (WM = 2.90–2.94) indicate that leadership skills are generally practiced, reflecting a school leadership environment characterized by collaborative, supportive, and transformational practices.

Extent of Conflict Management Practices of School Heads as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers. Table 3 shows that both school heads and teachers perceived the conflict management practices of school heads as often practiced. Accommodating received the highest ratings (WM = 3.49–3.50), indicating that school heads frequently prioritize harmonious relationships and respond to conflicts with consideration for others' needs. Collaborating (WM = 3.43–3.47) and compromising (WM = 3.41–3.43) were likewise rated as very often practiced, reflecting a strong emphasis on cooperative problem-solving, shared decision-making, and mutually acceptable solutions.

Table 3

Composite Table on the Extent of Conflict Management Practices of School Heads as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers

Dimension	School Heads (n = 50)				Teachers (n = 50)			
	WM	SD	VI	Rank	WM	SD	VI	Rank
Collaborating	3.43	0.58	Very Often Practiced	2	3.47	0.55	Very Often Practiced	2
Accommodating	3.49	0.54	Very Often Practiced	1	3.50	0.52	Very Often Practiced	1
Avoiding	1.97	0.71	Moderately Practiced	5	1.97	0.69	Moderately Practiced	5
Competing	2.09	0.67	Moderately Practiced	4	2.13	0.65	Moderately Practiced	4
Compromising	3.41	0.60	Very Often Practiced	3	3.43	0.58	Very Often Practiced	3
Overall Weighted Mean	2.89	0.62	Often Practiced	–	2.90	0.60	Often Practiced	–

Legend: 3.25–4.00= Very Often Practiced; 2.50–3.24= Often Practiced; 1.75–2.49= Moderately Practiced; 1.00–1.74= Rarely Practiced

In contrast, avoiding (WM = 1.97) and competing (WM = 2.09–2.13) were moderately practiced, suggesting that school heads are less inclined to withdraw from conflicts or rely on authority and dominance to resolve disagreements. The overall weighted means (WM = 2.89–2.90) indicate that conflict management practices are

often practiced, reflecting a school environment that generally promotes constructive, collaborative, and relationship-oriented approaches to conflict resolution.

Extent of Organizational Climate in Schools as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers. Table 4 shows that both school heads and teachers perceived the organizational climate in schools as highly manifested. People-oriented climate received the highest ratings (WM = 3.57–3.61), indicating that schools foster supportive interpersonal relationships, collaboration, and concern for the welfare of personnel. Goal-oriented climate (WM = 3.57–3.58) and role-oriented climate (WM = 3.53–3.54) were likewise highly manifested, reflecting a shared commitment to organizational objectives and clearly defined responsibilities.

Table 4

Composite Table on the Extent of Organizational Climate as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers

Dimension	School Heads (n = 50)				Teachers (n = 50)			
	WM	SD	VI	Rank	WM	SD	VI	Rank
Role-Oriented Climate	3.53	0.55	Highly Manifested	3	3.54	0.53	Highly Manifested	3
Innovation-Oriented Climate	3.39	0.61	Highly Manifested	5	3.40	0.59	Highly Manifested	5
Goal-Oriented Climate	3.57	0.52	Highly Manifested	2	3.58	0.50	Highly Manifested	2
People-Oriented Climate	3.57	0.51	Highly Manifested	1	3.61	0.49	Highly Manifested	1
Rule-Oriented Climate	3.51	0.56	Highly Manifested	4	3.52	0.54	Highly Manifested	4
Overall Weighted Mean	3.53	0.55	Highly Manifested	–	3.53	0.53	Highly Manifested	–

Legend: 3.25–4.00= Highly Manifested; 2.50–3.24= Manifested; 1.75–2.49= Less Manifested; 1.00–1.74= Least Manifested

Rule-oriented climate (WM = 3.51–3.52) was also highly manifested, suggesting consistent adherence to institutional policies and established procedures. Although innovation-oriented climate (WM = 3.39–3.40) obtained the lowest ratings, it remained highly manifested, indicating that creativity and openness to change are evident but comparatively less emphasized than other dimensions. Average result (WM=3.53) indicates a highly manifested organizational climate, reflecting a school environment characterized by supportive relationships, clear organizational direction, and effective institutional practices.

Comparison of Perceived Leadership Skills of School Heads Between School Heads and Teachers. Table 5 shows that no significant difference exists between the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding the leadership skills of school heads. All leadership dimensions, including transformational ($t = -0.37$, $p = 0.713$), transactional ($t = -0.25$, $p = 0.803$), democratic ($t = -0.26$, $p = 0.796$), autocratic ($t = -0.07$, $p = 0.945$), and laissez-faire leadership ($t = -0.35$, $p = 0.729$), as well as the overall leadership skills ($t = -0.32$, $p = 0.751$), yielded p-values greater than the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the failure to reject the null hypothesis. These findings indicate that school heads and teachers share comparable perceptions of leadership practices, suggesting a common understanding and consistent evaluation of how leadership behaviors are demonstrated within the school setting.

Table 5

Summary Results of the Test of Difference Between School Heads and Teachers on the Extent of Leadership Skills of School Heads

Dimension	t (df = 98)	p (two-tailed)	Decision ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership	-0.37	0.713	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Transactional Leadership	-0.25	0.803	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Democratic Leadership	-0.26	0.796	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Autocratic Leadership	-0.07	0.945	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Laissez-faire Leadership	-0.35	0.729	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Overall Leadership Skills	-0.32	0.751	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant

Note: Level of Significance= 0.05; Null Hypothesis (H_0)= There is no significant difference in the perceived leadership skills of school heads as perceived by school heads and teachers.

Comparison of Perceived Conflict Management Practices of School Heads Between School Heads and Teachers. Table 6 shows that no significant difference exists between the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding the conflict management practices of school heads. All dimensions, including collaborating ($t = -0.35$, $p = 0.724$), accommodating ($t = -0.09$, $p = 0.925$), avoiding ($t = 0.00$, $p = 1.000$), competing ($t = -0.30$, $p = 0.762$), and compromising ($t = -0.17$, $p = 0.866$), as well as the overall conflict management practices ($t = -0.08$, $p = 0.935$), yielded p-values greater than the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the failure to reject the null hypothesis. These

findings indicate that school heads and teachers hold comparable perceptions of how conflict is managed in schools, suggesting a shared understanding and consistent evaluation of the conflict management practices demonstrated by school heads.

Table 6

Summary Results of the Test of Difference Between School Heads and Teachers on the Extent of Conflict Management Practices of School Heads

Dimension	t (df = 98)	p (two-tailed)	Decision ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Interpretation
Collaborating	-0.35	0.724	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Accommodating	-0.09	0.925	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Avoiding	0.00	1.000	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Competing	-0.30	0.762	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Compromising	-0.17	0.866	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Overall Conflict Management	-0.08	0.935	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant

Note: Level of Significance= 0.05; Null Hypothesis (H_0)= There is no significant difference between the perceptions of school heads and teachers on the extent of conflict management practices of school heads.

Comparison of Perceived Organizational Climate Between School Heads and Teachers.

Table 7 shows that no significant difference exists between the perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding the organizational climate in schools. All dimensions, including role-oriented ($t = -0.09$, $p = 0.926$), innovation-oriented ($t = -0.08$, $p = 0.934$), goal-oriented ($t = -0.10$, $p = 0.922$), people-oriented ($t = -0.40$, $p = 0.690$), and rule-oriented climate ($t = -0.09$, $p = 0.928$), as well as the overall organizational climate ($t = 0.00$, $p = 1.000$), yielded p-values greater than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating the failure to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 7

Summary Results of the Test of Difference Between School Heads and Teachers on the Extent of Organizational Climate

Dimension	t (df = 98)	p (two-tailed)	Decision ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Interpretation
Role-Oriented Climate	-0.09	0.926	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Innovation-Oriented Climate	-0.08	0.934	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Goal-Oriented Climate	-0.10	0.922	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
People-Oriented Climate	-0.40	0.690	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Rule-Oriented Climate	-0.09	0.928	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant
Overall Organizational Climate	0.00	1.000	Fail to reject H_0	Not significant

Note. Level of Significance= 0.05

These findings indicate that school heads and teachers share comparable perceptions of the organizational climate, suggesting a common understanding and consistent evaluation of the school's interpersonal relationships, organizational processes, and working environment.

Proposed Action Plan for Enhancing Leadership Skills of School Heads. Drawing from the empirical findings of the study, the proposed action plan is designed to strengthen leadership effectiveness by consolidating dominant strengths while addressing identified developmental areas in leadership behavior, conflict management, and organizational

climate. The plan is anchored on the generally “frequently practiced” transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership styles, the “often practiced” but highly consistent conflict management practices, and the “highly manifested” organizational climate, while strategically targeting areas requiring maintenance, strengthening, and enhancement, such as autocratic and laissez-faire leadership tendencies, moderate use of competing and avoiding conflict styles, and relatively lower emphasis on innovation-oriented climate. Overall, the action plan focuses on sustaining established strengths, enhancing areas with opportunities for further development, and promoting continuous improvement in

Table 8
Proposed Action Plan for Enhancing Leadership Skills of School Heads

Key Result Area	Evidence from Findings	Objectives	Strategies / Activities	Persons Involved and Resources Needed	Timeline	Expected Output	Success Indicators
Strengthening Transformational, Transactional, and Democratic Leadership	Leadership skills were generally Practiced (Overall WM = 2.90–2.94; Overall SD = 0.62–0.64).	Sustain and further enhance effective leadership behaviors.	Conduct advanced leadership development programs focusing on visionary leadership, instructional leadership, performance management, and participatory decision-making.	Persons Involved: School Heads, Public Schools District Supervisors (PSDS), Education Program Supervisors (EPS), external leadership trainers, Division HRD personnel. Resources Needed: Training modules, venue, multimedia equipment, LCD projector, laptops, printed handouts, evaluation forms, training funds, certificates, internet connectivity.	Quarterly	Enhanced leadership competencies and strengthened instructional leadership practices.	Increased leadership performance ratings, higher teacher satisfaction scores, and successful completion of leadership development programs.
Reducing Autocratic and Laissez-faire Leadership Tendencies → Managing and Enhancing Autocratic and Laissez-faire Leadership Practices	Leadership skills were generally Practiced (Overall WM = 2.90–2.94; Overall SD = 0.62–0.64), with autocratic and laissez-faire leadership identified as the least practiced dimensions.	Maintain the generally positive leadership practices while further strengthening balanced, adaptive, and participatory leadership behaviors and minimizing reliance on passive or overly directive approaches when inappropriate.	Conduct situational leadership seminars, leadership coaching, mentoring sessions, reflective practice workshops, and leadership self-assessment activities to strengthen adaptive decision-making, delegation, consultation, and appropriate leadership responses to different school situations.	Persons Involved: School Heads, mentors, Division Supervisors, leadership coaches. Resources Needed: Leadership assessment tools, mentoring guides, reflection journals, seminar materials, venue, audio-visual equipment, funding for coaching sessions.	Semi-annually	More balanced and adaptive leadership practices.	Sustained or improved leadership performance ratings, appropriate use of participative and situational approaches, improved feedback ratings, and continued participative decision-making.
Enhancing Conflict Management Effectiveness	Conflict management practices were generally Often Practiced (Overall WM = 2.89–2.90; Overall SD = 0.60–0.62).	Improve consistency and effectiveness in conflict resolution practices while sustaining the generally positive level of conflict management practices.	Conduct conflict resolution training, emotional intelligence workshops, mediation and negotiation seminars, and case-based simulation exercises to maintain effective practices and further strengthen school heads' capacity to manage diverse workplace situations constructively.	Persons Involved: School Heads, HR personnel, Guidance Coordinators, legal/resource speakers, teachers. Resources Needed: Conflict management manuals, simulation materials, training venue, presentation equipment, workshop supplies, evaluation tools, training budget.	Quarterly	Improved conflict resolution competencies among school leaders.	Sustained or improved conflict management competency ratings, constructive resolution of workplace conflicts, improved teacher-administrator relationships, and effective application of conflict resolution strategies.
Strengthening Collaborative and Constructive Conflict Management	Conflict management practices were generally Often Practiced (Overall WM = 2.89–2.90; Overall SD = 0.60–0.62), reflecting the consistent use of collaborative approaches.	Promote collaborative and participatory conflict resolution practices and sustain the consistent use of constructive approaches.	Organize team-building activities, peer coaching, collaborative dialogue sessions, and participatory conflict resolution workshops to reinforce existing collaborative practices and further develop shared problem-solving and communication.	Persons Involved: School Heads, teachers, School Governance Council members, facilitators. Resources Needed: Team-building materials, workshop kits, meeting venue, communication materials, facilitation guides, budget for activities.	Throughout the school year	Stronger culture of collaboration and teamwork.	Improved teamwork climate, increased collaboration ratings, and sustained or improved collaborative conflict-management practices and constructive communication.
Enhancing Organizational Climate (People-Oriented Dimension)	The perceived people-oriented climate showed no significant difference between school heads and teachers ($p = 0.690$), indicating comparable perceptions.	Strengthen interpersonal relationships, employee well-being, and collegiality while maintaining the comparable and positive perceptions of the people-oriented organizational climate.	Conduct wellness programs, employee engagement activities, team building, participatory governance sessions, and recognition programs to sustain collegial relationships, promote employee well-being, and further enhance staff engagement.	Persons Involved: School Heads, teachers, non-teaching personnel, PTA officers, Division Office representatives. Resources Needed: Wellness program materials, meeting venue, recognition awards, communication materials, activity funds, survey instruments.	Annually	Improved interpersonal relationships and employee engagement.	Higher organizational climate ratings, increased staff morale, and improved employee engagement results or sustained positive ratings across stakeholder groups.
Improving Innovation-Oriented Organizational Climate	The perceived innovation-oriented climate showed no significant difference between school heads and teachers ($p = 0.934$), indicating comparable perceptions.	Foster innovation, creativity, and continuous improvement in school management while sustaining and enhancing the existing innovation-oriented climate.	Implement school-based innovation projects, encourage action research, establish innovation grants, and recognize exemplary innovative practices to strengthen a culture that supports experimentation, creativity, evidence-based improvement, and knowledge sharing.	Persons Involved: School Heads, teachers, research coordinators, Division Research Committee, stakeholders. Resources Needed: Research and innovation funds, proposal templates, computers, internet access, recognition incentives, documentation materials.	Annually	Increased implementation of innovative school programs and practices.	Number of completed innovation projects, action research outputs, and sustained or improved innovation climate ratings and participation in innovation initiatives.
Sustaining Positive Organizational Climate	The overall organizational climate showed no significant difference between school heads and teachers ($p = 1.000$), indicating comparable perceptions.	Maintain a supportive, collaborative, and productive school climate and continuously enhance practices that contribute to positive organizational conditions.	Conduct periodic organizational climate assessments, regular consultation meetings, employee feedback sessions, and school improvement planning reviews to sustain strengths and identify opportunities for continuous enhancement.	Persons Involved: School Heads, teachers, Division Supervisors, School Planning Team. Resources Needed: Survey questionnaires, data analysis software, meeting venue, office supplies, communication platforms, monitoring forms.	Ongoing	Sustained positive organizational climate.	Stable or improved organizational climate scores, increased employee satisfaction, and continuous school improvement supported by regular monitoring and stakeholder feedback.
Institutionalizing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement	No significant differences were found in overall leadership skills ($p = 0.750$), overall conflict management practices ($p = 0.935$), and overall organizational climate ($p = 1.000$), indicating consistent perceptions between school heads and teachers.	Ensure sustainability, accountability, and evidence-based leadership improvement by maintaining established strengths and systematically enhancing leadership, conflict management, and organizational climate practices.	Implement 360-degree leadership feedback, annual leadership performance reviews, leadership development portfolio, and continuous data-driven planning to monitor existing practices, document strengths, identify opportunities for enhancement, and support evidence-based decision-making.	Persons Involved: School Heads, Division Office, School Monitoring and Evaluation Team, HR personnel, teachers. Resources Needed: Monitoring and evaluation tools, leadership assessment instruments, data management software, computers, reports, evaluation budget.	Ongoing	Institutionalized leadership monitoring and continuous improvement system.	Documented improvements in leadership competencies, positive evaluation results, and annual leadership development reports demonstrating sustained strengths, targeted enhancements, and continuous improvement.

leadership practices, conflict management, and organizational climate. Since the findings show no statistically significant differences in conflict management practices and organizational climate, the proposed interventions are intended to support the maintenance and further enhancement of existing practices rather than address statistically significant perceptual gaps.

General Implementation Framework. The action plan shall be implemented through a data-driven, participatory, and continuous professional development framework that emphasizes reflective leadership practice, collaborative governance, and evidence-based decision-making. It integrates structured capacity-building interventions with ongoing feedback mechanisms to ensure sustainability and responsiveness to identified leadership gaps.

Evaluation Mechanism

- Effectiveness of the action plan shall be assessed through:
- Pre- and post-intervention leadership assessment scales
- Teacher perception surveys
- Conflict management effectiveness evaluations
- Organizational climate assessments
- 360-degree leadership feedback
- School performance and engagement indicators

DISCUSSION

The present study examined leadership skills, conflict management practices, and organizational climate from the perspectives of school heads and teachers in rural public elementary schools. Overall, the findings indicate that leadership is collaborative, stable, and relationship-oriented, with both respondent groups demonstrating largely similar perceptions of leadership effectiveness. This convergence suggests that leadership practices are consistently experienced through shared governance, instructional supervision, and routine professional collaboration,

fostering common expectations of effective school leadership (Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020).

The predominance of transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership reflects school heads' ability to balance vision, accountability, and participatory decision-making. The absence of significant differences between school heads and teachers further suggests that these leadership behaviors are consistently demonstrated and reinforced through frequent interactions in school improvement planning, instructional monitoring, and community engagement. Such organizational proximity likely explains the shared perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Likewise, the limited practice of autocratic and laissez-faire leadership indicates a preference for collaborative leadership and shared responsibility, consistent with contemporary models of school governance (Bush, 2020; Northouse, 2025).

Conflict management reflected a collaborative orientation, with both school heads and teachers consistently rating collaborating, accommodating, and compromising as the most practiced strategies. The absence of significant differences across all conflict management dimensions indicates a shared perception of how school heads manage workplace conflicts, suggesting the consistent application of constructive and relationship-oriented conflict resolution practices. This finding supports Rahim's (2023) assertion that effective conflict management fosters cooperation, mutual respect, and organizational harmony.

Likewise, the organizational climate was perceived as highly manifested across all dimensions by both respondent groups. No significant differences were found in role-oriented, innovation-oriented, goal-oriented, people-oriented, or rule-oriented climate, indicating a common perception of the school's working environment. Although the innovation-oriented climate received the lowest ratings among the dimensions, it remained highly manifested, suggesting opportunities to further

strengthen innovation and continuous improvement. These findings are consistent with Kutsyuruba et al. (2011), who emphasized that supportive leadership and collaborative organizational practices contribute to a positive school climate.

Collectively, these findings portray rural public elementary schools as organizations characterized by effective and collaborative leadership supported by positive organizational conditions. The strong alignment in leadership perceptions reflects established professional trust and shared organizational goals, while the absence of significant differences in conflict management and organizational climate indicates generally comparable perceptions among school heads and teachers regarding interpersonal processes and organizational conditions. These consistent perceptions suggest a shared understanding of conflict management practices and the people-oriented dimensions of the organizational climate, providing a foundation for sustaining existing strengths and pursuing further enhancement. These findings imply that leadership development should move beyond strengthening administrative competencies toward enhancing relational leadership, emotional intelligence, collaborative conflict resolution, and innovation while maintaining effective existing practices and continuously strengthening areas that can further contribute to positive school effectiveness.

The proposed action plan directly responds to these findings by sustaining effective leadership practices while addressing identified gaps in conflict management and organizational climate through continuous professional development, mentoring, participatory governance, innovation initiatives, and systematic monitoring. These interventions reinforce the interconnected nature of leadership, conflict management, and organizational climate as complementary drivers of effective school leadership (Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020).

Recommendations. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed. School heads should sustain transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership while strengthening interpersonal communication, emotional intelligence, and collaborative conflict-management practices to enhance the people-oriented organizational climate. Teachers should actively engage in shared governance, professional dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving to reinforce collegial relationships and organizational trust. School administrators and the Schools Division Office should institutionalize continuous leadership development, mentoring programs, organizational climate assessments, and 360-degree feedback systems to support evidence-based leadership improvement. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate the study using mixed-methods or longitudinal designs across diverse educational settings and to examine additional variables, such as instructional leadership, teacher engagement, organizational commitment, school culture, and learner outcomes, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership effectiveness in Philippine public schools.

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Author contributions. Lilibeth J. Clavecilla: Conceptualization, Validation, Investigation, Resources, Data curation, Writing-original draft, Project administration | Johnmar F. Cordial: Methodology, Software, Writing-review & editing | Yolanda M. Tariman: Formal analysis, Supervision.

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