

Ethical Climate and School Leaders Commitment in Laak North and South District, Davao De Oro Division

Edwin Casosula

Abstract. This study aimed to determine which domains of ethical climate significantly influence the commitment of school leaders in Laak North and South District Division of Davao de Oro. The study utilized a descriptive-correlation design. A total of 74 school leaders in the public Junior High Schools or Senior High Schools in Laak North and South District Division of Davao de Oro were identified through tabachnick and fidell formula and sampled using stratified random sampling. Two adapted survey questionnaires were utilized in the gathering of data. Mean, Pearson r, and regression analysis were used as statistical tools of the study. Results revealed a on the level of ethical climate in terms of institutional ethics was oftentimes evident, in terms of instrumental ethics was sometimes evident, in terms of personal ethics was oftentimes evident. Further, overall, the data revealed a high mean, which means that ethical climate was oftentimes evident. In addition, On the level of commitment of school leaders in terms of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment was oftentimes evident. Overall, the level of commitment of school leaders were high and was oftentimes evident.. The test of relationship showed a significant relationship between ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. Moreover, institutional ethics, instrumental ethics, and personal ethics significantly influence commitment of school leaders, specifically, instrumental ethics significantly influenced commitment of school leaders. Thus, the study recommends school leaders to demonstrate commitment in the workplace by ensuring that the company is doing well and that targets are frequently met. When a principal understands their commitment, it can boost their motivation.

KEY WORDS

1. Ethical climate 2. commitment 3. school leaders

Date Received: April 05, 2025 — Date Reviewed: May 15, 2025 — Date Published: June 18, 2025

1. Introduction

The general atmosphere and efficacy of educational institutions are significantly influenced by the commitment of school administrators and the establishment of an ethical environment. These interrelated factors are essential for the establishment of a supportive community, the assurance of student success, and the cultivation of a positive school culture. The commitment of school administrators to the educational institution's mission and objectives is not limited to their professional responsibilities. It is not merely an administrative role; it necessitates a robust sense of responsibility and a comprehensive strategy for the school's development. Devoted leaders establish the foundation for a thriving learning environment in which parents,

teachers, and students feel a sense of worth and encouragement.

The successful operation and achievement of a school are contingent upon the commitment of its principals. It is essential for the success of a school to retain experienced principals. Even so, a report (Markow et al., 2023) by Metlife revealed that nearly seventy percent of principals in the United States reported that their roles had become excessively complex, irrespective of their demographic backgrounds. The principal plan to leave was at a historical high, with one-third of respondents indicating that they were likely to quit their jobs within the next five years, according to the same survey conducted since 2001. The vacancy has resulted in additional costs and labor for schools due to the rise in principal turnover rate. In low-performing and minority-student dominant schools, the adverse consequences of high principal turnover are even more pronounced and detrimental (Béteille et al., 2022).

Conversely, the adeptness of leaders was a critical factor in the success of any institution or organization, which increased the strain on school leaders to act with greater agility (Zhao, 2020). In order to be effective, school leaders must possess strong leadership skills. In order to effect long-term change, they must employ and implement 21st-century skills (Talat et al., 2019). Leadership is an extraordinary responsibility that necessitates specialized training and the acquisition of current skills to effectively manage both human and non-human resources, including emergent situations like COVID-19 (Azorin, 2020). The roles and duties of school leaders have been altered as a result of the pandemic.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (2020) acknowledged the important position of the school principals in the continuity of education amid the COVID-19 crisis. It asserted its obligation to giving professional development to school principals. The school princi-

pals were trained to carry out the adoption of an array of learning delivery prototypes based on their preparedness, resources, and plans. They were given an opportunity to be familiar with the range of learning delivery prototypes they can employ depending on the capacity and situation of the community they are located.

It is believed that school leader is responsible to give highly valued visions that are focused on their day-to-day methods and that serve to foster a good culture that is supportive of exceptional teacher wellbeing (Saleem et al., 2020). Without a strong commitment, the principal will fail to carry out his duties by his obligations, making it impossible to achieve the goals of the elementary school organization.

With the above manifestations, the researcher is prompted to pursue this study since it is important to determine the extent of commitment of school leaders and ethical climate in the Laak North and South District, Davao De Oro Division. Limited literature has been identified that focuses on the relationship between ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. Thus, it is urgent to pursue this study to determine the link between the two variables.

This study aimed to determine the influence of the ethical climate on the commitment of school leaders in the Laak North and South District, Davao De Oro Division. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of ethical climate as perceived by school leaders in terms of institutional ethics, instrumental ethics, and personal ethics. It also aimed to assess the level of commitment of school leaders in terms of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Furthermore, the study sought to examine whether there is a significant relationship between the ethical climate and the commitment of school leaders. Lastly, it aimed to determine the significant influence of the ethical climate on the commitment of school leaders in the specified districts.

The hypotheses of the study were tested at

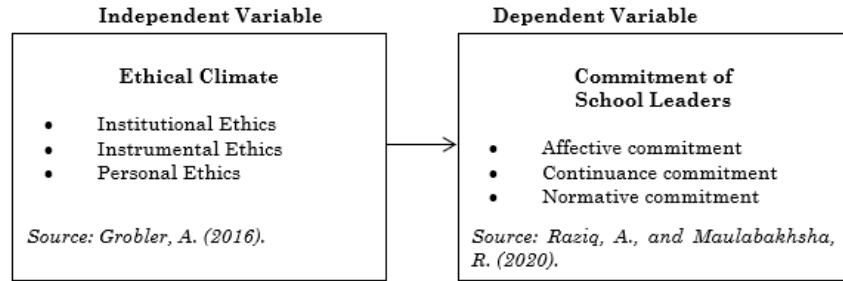


Fig. 1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

the 0.05 level of significance. The first null hypothesis (Ho1) stated that there is no significant relationship between the ethical climate and the commitment of school leaders. The second null hypothesis (Ho2) posited that there is no significant influence of the ethical climate on the commitment of school heads.

The findings of this study are valuable to both teachers and learners. For teachers, understanding their commitment helps improve instructional quality and fosters a positive learning environment. For learners, increased teacher commitment enhances motivation, engagement, and academic performance, encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their education. Ultimately, the study highlights the importance of nurturing a supportive school

climate to strengthen the overall teaching and learning experience.

1.1. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework of the Study—Figure 1 showed the conceptual framework that illustrated the variables of the study. It presented the interaction between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The figure displayed that ethical climate was the independent variable of the study, measured in terms of institutional, instrumental, and personal ethics. On the other hand, the dependent variable of the study was the commitment of school leaders, measured in terms of affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Ultimately, the aim of the study was to determine the influence of ethical climate on the commitment of school leaders.

2. Methodology

The following section outlines the procedures used by the researcher to perform this research study. It includes the population and sampling, instrumentation, data source, and data analysis.

2.1. Research Design—This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to explore the ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. The descriptive component aimed to identify and describe the levels of ethical climate and commitment, providing a clear picture of the existing conditions (Qualtrics, 2023). Meanwhile, the correlational aspect examined the statistical relationship between these variables without manipulating them, determining whether and to what

extent the ethical climate is associated with or influences the commitment of school leaders (Hassan, 2022). In the context of the study, this determined the relationship between ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. Also, this aimed to determine the influence of ethical climate on commitment of school leaders.

2.2. Ethical Consideration—The researcher strictly followed ethical principles outlined by RMC's Research Ethics, including informed consent, confidentiality, participant

safety, and transparency. Respondents were fully informed about the study and participated voluntarily, with the right to withdraw at any time. Risks were minimal and addressed through data anonymization and adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The study offered potential benefits to school leaders, teachers, and students by promoting commitment and leadership development. The researcher ensured fairness, avoided conflicts of interest, and sought guidance from mentors to uphold the study's credibility and ethical integrity.

2.3. Research Respondents—The respondents of the study were 74 school leaders from Laak North and South Districts, Davao De Oro Division. The sample size was determined using Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) formula for regression analysis: $n = 50 + 8(m)$, with $m = 3$ representing the independent variables—institutional, instrumental, and personal ethics. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation from both districts (QuestionPro, 2023). Inclusion criteria required school heads managing either Junior or Senior

High Schools with at least three years of service and holding a permanent position, while those not meeting these qualifications were excluded.

2.4. Research Instrument—This study used adapted survey questionnaires to assess the ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. The ethical climate questionnaire, adapted from Grobler (2016), consisted of 15 items across three indicators: institutional ethics, instrumental ethics, and personal ethics, each with five items. It demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach alpha of .80 and used a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions. The commitment questionnaire, adapted from Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2020), also contained 15 items, evenly distributed among affective, continuance, and normative commitment, and had an excellent reliability score of .90. Both instruments were validated by a panel of experts, with revisions made based on their feedback. A pilot test was conducted prior to the final administration, resulting in improved reliability indices confirming their strong consistency and suitability for the study.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure—In this study, data collection followed a systematic process to ensure accuracy and reliability. The researcher first secured permission by submitting formal requests to the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges and the Division Superintendent, followed by school principals' approval. The instruments underwent content validation by a panel of experts who provided feedback for improvement. A pilot

test involving 30 school heads not included in the main study was then conducted to assess reliability, leading to further refinements. The validated questionnaires were administered face-to-face to build rapport and encourage honest responses. Completed questionnaires were carefully retrieved and securely stored to maintain data integrity. Finally, the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), ensuring compliance with academic standards and generating reliable results.

2.6. Data Analysis—The study utilized several statistical tools to address the research questions effectively. The mean was used to assess the level of ethical climate and the commitment of school leaders. Pearson r was applied to

determine the relationship between ethical climate and commitment. Lastly, linear regression analysis was employed to examine the extent to which ethical climate influences the commitment of school leaders.

3. Results and Discussion

This section highlighted the results and discussion of the study. The presentation starts from the descriptive analysis of ethical climate and commitment of school leaders followed by the discussion on the correlation between the two variables. The presentation ends with the influence of the ethical climate and commitment of school leaders.

3.1. Level of Ethical Climate—Table 1 shows the level of ethical climate in the three categories, namely the institutional ethics, instrumental ethics, and personal ethics. Between the three ethical climate categories, the ethical climate in terms of institutional ethics got the highest category mean of 3.69 described as high, followed by personal ethics with a category mean of 3.61 described as high indicating that ethical climate in terms of institutional ethics and personal ethics are oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, instrumental ethics got the least category mean of 3.25 described as moderate indicating that the ethical climate in terms of instrumental ethics was sometimes evident. The overall mean rating on this domain marked (3.52) which was described as High. This means that the level of ethical climate in the three categories, namely the institutional ethics, instrumental ethics, and personal ethics was oftentimes evident.

Table 1. Level of Ethical Climate

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Institutional Ethics	3.69	High
2	Instrumental Ethics	3.25	Moderate
3	Personal Ethics	3.61	High
Overall		3.52	High

Legend: 1.00–1.79: Very Low, 1.80–2.59: Low, 2.60–3.39: Moderate, 3.40–4.19: High, 4.20–5.00: Very High

3.2. Level of Commitment of School Leaders—Table 2 shows the level of commitment of school leaders in the three categories, namely the affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Between the three commitment categories, the commitment of school leaders in terms of affective commitment got the highest category mean of 3.74 described as high, followed by continuance commitment with a category mean of 3.57 described as high indicating that commitment of school leaders in terms of affective commitment and continuance commitment are oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, the normative commitment got the least category mean of 3.40 described as High indicating that the commitment of school leaders in terms of normative commitment was oftentimes evident. The overall mean rating on this domain marked (3.57) which were described as High. This means that the summary of the level of commitment of school leaders in the three categories, namely the affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment was oftentimes evident.

Table 2. Level of Commitment of School Leaders

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Affective Commitment	3.74	High
2	Continuance Commitment	3.57	High
3	Normative Commitment	3.40	High
Overall		3.57	High

Legend: 1.00–1.79: Very Low, 1.80–2.59: Low, 2.60–3.39: Moderate, 3.40–4.19: High, 4.20–5.00: Very High

3.3. Significant Relationship between Ethical Climate and Commitment of School leaders— as ethical climate increases, the commitment of school leaders also increases.

Table 3 presented the significant relationship between ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. Results revealed that there was a significant relationship between ethical climate and commitment of school leaders with an overall correlation coefficient 0.323 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Further, this means that there is a significant relationship between ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. Moreover, this indicates that

Specifically, when the indicators of ethical climate are correlated with commitment of school leaders, two indicators were found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance with institutional ethics having a correlation coefficient of 0.028 and instrumental ethics with 0.388. These indicators show a significant relationship with the commitment of school leaders. This implies that while institutional ethics has a minimal yet statistically significant correlation, instrumental ethics demonstrates a stronger influence on the commitment of school leaders.

Table 3. Significant Relationship between Ethical Climate and Commitment of School Leaders

Ethical Climate	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Institutional Ethics	.028	.014	Significant
Instrumental Ethics	.388	.001	Significant
Personal Ethics	.111	.346	Not Significant
Overall	.323	.005	Significant

**Significant at $p < 0.05$*

3.4. Significant Influence of Ethical Climate on Commitment of School leaders—Table 4 presented the influence of ethical climate on commitment of school leaders. The results showed that instrumental ethics obtained the highest beta of 0.398. It indicates that instrumental ethics has the highest degree of influence on commitment of school leaders. Additionally, as indicated by an F-value of 4.67 with a

corresponding p-value of 0.005, the regression model is therefore significant. Thus, it leads to the rejection of null hypothesis. Therefore, instrumental ethics predicted the commitment of school leaders.

Further, the R-squared of 0.167 signifies that 16.7 percent of the variation in commitment of school leaders is explained by the predictor variables. This would mean that 83.30 percent of

the variation can be attributed to other factors aside from the predictor variables. This suggests that while ethical climate contributes to explaining commitment, there are other significant influences that were not captured in the

model. Future studies may consider exploring additional variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, or personal motivation to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Table 4. Significant Influence of Ethical Climate on Commitment of School Leaders

Commitment of School Leaders (IV)	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.515	–	7.765	.000
Institutional Ethics	.050	.097	.872	.386
Instrumental Ethics	.187	.398	3.591	.001
Personal Ethics	.040	.086	.786	.434
R	0.408			
R²	0.167			
R	0.131			
F	4.67			
p-value	.005			

**Significant at $p < 0.05$*

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Findings—This study aimed to determine the level of ethical climate in terms of: (1) institutional ethics, (2) instrumental ethics, (3) personal ethics, and to determine the level of commitment of school leaders in terms of: (1) affective commitment, (2) continuance commitment, and (3) normative commitment. In addition, it also seeks to have empirical evidence on the perceived relationship between ethical climate and commitment of school leaders. Further, data were gone through psychometric analysis to draw out the significant influence of the ethical climate on the commitment of school leaders. The following are the significant findings:

4.2. Conclusions—On the level of ethical climate in terms of institutional ethics, instrumental ethics, personal ethics, The study found

that the overall ethical climate in the organization was generally high, particularly in terms of institutional ethics, where there was a strong focus on the well-being of others and acting in the best interest of both students and colleagues. This reflects a supportive environment where individuals look out for one another. In terms of instrumental ethics, the results showed a mixed climate—while the organization prioritizes its goals and interests, some individuals displayed self-serving behaviors, indicating a weaker emphasis on personal morals in certain situations. Lastly, personal ethics were strongly present, with individuals encouraged to act based on their own moral convictions and judgment. This highlights the importance of individual accountability and ethical decision-making in shaping a positive organizational culture.

On the level of commitment of school leaders in terms of affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, The study revealed that school leaders demonstrated varying levels of commitment across affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. In terms of affective commitment, leaders showed a strong emotional attachment to the organization, driven by the presence of personal ethics and the encouragement to act according to their own moral values. For continuance commitment, a high level of loyalty and pride in being part of the organization was observed, with leaders expressing satisfaction and a desire to remain despite some openness to other opportunities. Normative commitment was also high, though mixed with some dissatisfaction, as leaders generally aligned with the organization's values but expressed concerns about certain policies and decisions.

On the relationship of ethical climate and commitment of school leaders, it was found that an ethical climate that is consistent with the values of school leaders can strengthen their commitment. When executives believe that their organization shares their ethical beliefs and values, they are more likely to feel a sense of commitment and devotion. A positive and ethical climate can boost school leaders' affective commitment. Leaders who believe their business runs with honesty, fairness, and transparency are more likely to form a strong emotional attachment to and commitment to their roles.

On the significant influence of ethical climate towards commitment of school leaders, it was found that an ethical climate that aligns

with the personal values of school leaders fosters a sense of alignment and commitment. Leaders are more likely to be committed to an organization that reflects and upholds their ethical principles and beliefs. When leaders trust that their organization operates with integrity, transparency, and fairness, it strengthens their commitment. Trust is a fundamental element in building and maintaining organizational commitment.

4.3. Recommendations—Based on the conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed. Students should be encouraged to understand and apply ethical principles through curriculum integration and reflective activities, fostering responsibility and integrity. Teachers are urged to align their personal ethics with institutional values, promoting shared accountability and reinforcing professional commitment. School leaders should model ethical behavior, promote transparency, and create supportive environments that strengthen staff well-being and commitment. Policymakers are advised to develop clear guidelines that uphold ethical standards and promote fairness in school leadership. The Department of Education should support initiatives that align organizational and personal ethics through training and open dialogue to reinforce a positive and cohesive ethical climate. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to examine strategies that strengthen the balance between institutional and instrumental ethics while enhancing ethical alignment and reducing self-serving behavior within organizations.

5. References

- Azorín, C. (2020). Beyond covid-19 supernova. is another education coming? *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-05-2020-0019>
- Béteille, T., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S. (2022). Stepping stones: Principal career paths and school outcomes. *Social Science Research*, 41(4), 904–919.

- Grobler, A. (2016). An adapted measure of ethical climate organizations—a southern african study. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 11(1), 1–21.
- Hassan, M. (2022). Correlational research: Methods, types and examples.
- Markow, D., Lara, M., & Helen, L. (2023). The metlife survey of the american teacher: Challenges for school leadership.
- of Education, D. (2020). Deped strengthens support to school heads for school year 2020–2021.
- Qualtrics. (2023). What is descriptive research.
- QuestionPro. (2023). Stratified random sampling: Definition, method and examples.
- Raziq, A., & Maulabakhsh, R. (2020). Impact of working environment on job satisfaction. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 23, 717–725. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(15\)00324-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)00324-2)
- Saleem, A., Aslam, S., Yin, H. B., & Rao, C. (2020). Principal leadership styles and teacher job performance: Viewpoint of middle management. *Sustainability*, 12, 3390.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (5th). Pearson Education.
- Talat, A., & Fakhar, H. (2019). The effect of pbl and 21st century skills on students' creativity and competitiveness in private schools. *The Lahore Journal of Business*, 15(6), 89–114.
- Zhao, Y. (2020). Covid-19 as a catalyst for educational change. *Prospects*, 1–5.