

A Correlational Analysis of Rights Cognizance and Organizational Commitment Among Filipino Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract. Public school teachers often struggle to understand and assert their legally mandated rights, creating a gap that may weaken their sense of belonging and organizational commitment. This study examined the relationship between public school teachers' understanding of their legally mandated rights and their organizational commitment in the District of Romblon, Philippines. A total of 287 elementary teachers participated in a descriptive-correlational survey that measured their knowledge, awareness, and attitudes toward educational rights, as well as affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Results showed that while most teachers reported high awareness and positive attitudes toward the implementation of their rights, their actual knowledge of specific legal provisions was low. Correlation analysis revealed that factual knowledge was not significantly related to organizational commitment, whereas both awareness and positive attitudes were strongly associated with higher commitment. These findings suggest that teachers' perceptions and satisfaction with the implementation of rights are more influential in building commitment than detailed legal knowledge. The study highlights the importance of fostering a transparent and supportive organizational climate to strengthen teacher dedication and professional engagement.

Keywords: Educational policy; Legal awareness; Organizational commitment; Perceived support; Teacher rights

1.0 Introduction

Teacher organizational commitment—defined as the psychological bond between a teacher and the school (Meyer & Allen, 1991)—remains a cornerstone of educational effectiveness and institutional stability. Committed teachers demonstrate greater professional engagement, improved classroom performance, and reduced intentions to leave (Somech & Bogler, 2002; Hammond, 2006). Recent studies reaffirm that teacher commitment significantly predicts student achievement and overall school performance (Tran et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022). Conversely, low commitment contributes to burnout, absenteeism, and attrition, which weaken school quality and continuity (Han & Yin, 2021). Although extensive research has examined how leadership, workplace climate, and organizational culture influence teacher commitment (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Sungu et al., 2020),

relatively few have explored how teachers' understanding and awareness of their legally mandated rights affect their sense of organizational loyalty and professional dedication.

In the Philippine context, teaching is viewed as a noble vocation vital to national development. Teachers' rights and welfare are protected under key legal frameworks, such as the 1987 Constitution, Republic Act 4670 (the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers), and Batas Pambansa Blg. 232 or the *Education Act of 1982*, and the *Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers* (De Vera, 2018; Orillos, 2015). More recent policy reviews emphasize that effective implementation of these laws depends not only on their existence but also on teachers' awareness and understanding of them (Garcia & Lopez, 2019; Dizon & Tolentino, 2022). Studies in various contexts reveal that teachers who are unaware of their rights are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction, role ambiguity, and decreased commitment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021; Oduro & Mensah, 2023). These findings imply that fostering legal and professional literacy among teachers can enhance perceived fairness, empowerment, and organizational trust—key dimensions of commitment (Meyer & Maltin, 2019).

However, despite growing international interest in teacher well-being and organizational behavior, research connecting teachers' knowledge of professional rights to their organizational commitment remains limited, particularly within developing countries like the Philippines. Prior studies have primarily centered on external or managerial factors such as leadership style, school support, and job satisfaction (Aruta, 2021; Kim & Loadman, 2020), often neglecting the internal dimension of teachers' rights awareness as a potential predictor of commitment. Moreover, most available literature is descriptive or policy-oriented rather than empirical, leaving a gap in understanding the relational dynamics between legal knowledge, attitudes toward rights implementation, and organizational attachment.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the relationship between teachers' understanding of their legally mandated rights and their organizational commitment among elementary public school teachers in the District of Romblon, Philippines. It examines explicitly teachers' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes toward educational rights and how these relate to affective, continuance, and normative commitment. By illuminating this underexplored dimension, the study aims to contribute to both teacher policy discourse and organizational behavior literature, emphasizing how strengthening rights awareness can enhance teacher empowerment, retention, and institutional stability.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design using a one-shot survey. This design was chosen as it allowed the researcher to describe teachers' knowledge, awareness, and attitude regarding their rights and privileges, and to examine their relationship with organizational commitment without manipulating variables. Data were collected at a single point in time via a self-administered questionnaire.

2.2 Research Participants

The study was conducted across all 29 public elementary schools in the District of Romblon during the second semester of Academic Year 2021–2022. A complete enumeration of the population approach was used, with 287 out of 296 teachers participating, yielding a 97% response rate. Teachers who were present and available during the data collection period were included, ensuring broad coverage of the district's teaching population.

2.3 Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire composed of four sections. The researcher developed the first, second, and third sections of the instrument. The first section gathered demographic information. The second section assessed teachers' knowledge of educational rights and privileges through a 20-item multiple-choice test developed by the researcher. The third section measured awareness and attitude toward the implementation of these rights using Likert-type items (4-point scale: Strongly Agree to Disagree Strongly). The fourth section measured organizational commitment using the established scale by Allen and Meyer (1990), which employed a 5-point scale (Strongly Agree to Disagree Strongly). No modifications were made to the original organizational commitment scale.

The instrument underwent content validation by five experts in educational management. Using a 4-point relevance scale, the Item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) ranged from 0.80 to 1.00, and the Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-CVI/Ave) was 0.93, indicating excellent content validity. A pilot test was also conducted with 30 teachers from a non-participating school. Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicated acceptable internal consistency: knowledge ($\alpha = .77$), awareness ($\alpha = .75$), and attitude ($\alpha = .78$). The Allen and Meyer (1990) scale was deemed reliable based on its established psychometric properties. The 20-item multiple-choice test was likewise administered to 30 non-respondents. Using the *KR-20*, the reliability coefficient was 0.87, indicating good internal consistency and suitability for data collection.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was first secured from the appropriate school and district authorities. After approval, the researcher personally distributed and retrieved the questionnaires from participants. Respondents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire, typically within one working day, and all completed forms were collected directly by the researcher to ensure a high retrieval rate.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data were encoded and analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and medians were used to summarize demographic data and responses. Spearman's rho was used to examine relationships among knowledge, awareness, attitude, and organizational commitment, as the data were ordinal and did not meet parametric assumptions. Statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards of research involving human participants. Written informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection, emphasizing voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Anonymizing responses maintained confidentiality, and all data were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. The questionnaire was designed to minimize discomfort, and participants were provided with contact details for further inquiries or concerns.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' Level of Knowledge on Rights and Privileges

The assessment of teacher respondents' knowledge regarding their rights and privileges, as stipulated in key Philippine educational laws, yielded a concerning distribution. As shown in Table 1, of the 287 elementary public school teachers, the majority ($f=127$, 44.2%) scored at the below-average level. A further 119 respondents (41.5%) scored within the average level, while the remaining 41 teachers (14.3%) scored at a poor level. Critically, no respondents scored within the above-average or superior ranges. These results indicate that teachers' collective knowledge in the Romblon District falls below the proficiency standard.

Table 1. Teachers' Level of Knowledge on Their Rights and Privileges ($n=287$)

Level	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Superior	18-20	0	0.00%
Above Average	14-17	0	0.00%
Average	8-13	119	41.5%
Below Average	4-7	127	44.2%
Poor	0-3	41	14.3%
Total		287	100%

Qualitative data from follow-up interviews substantiated these findings. Participants confirmed a lack of clarity regarding the specific details of their legal entitlements. A standard admission was that since receiving their permanent appointments, they had not engaged in a systematic review of the relevant legal documents, primarily citing a lack of time and dedicated opportunity for such study. Several respondents expressed a desire for professional development through seminars or conferences to address this knowledge gap. This finding aligns with international research suggesting that professionals often operate with a perceived, rather than actual, understanding of the legal frameworks governing their work (Hareket, 2021; Erdem & Ertürk, 2022). The interview data provide a plausible explanation for this gap, highlighting a lack of structured, ongoing legal education as a primary factor, a barrier commonly identified in the literature (Smith & Murphy, 2020).

3.2 Teachers' Level of Awareness of Rights and Privileges

In stark contrast to their knowledge scores, respondents reported a high level of awareness of their rights and privileges. As shown in Table 2, the vast majority of teachers ($f=191$, 66.3%) were classified as "Highly Aware," with an additional 90 teachers (31.3%) categorized as "Aware." Only a small minority ($f=7$, 2.4%) reported being unaware. This high level of awareness is further supported by a median score of 4 and an interquartile range (IQR) of 1.0.

Table 2. Teachers' Level of Awareness of Their Rights and Privileges ($n=287$)

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Aware	191	66.3%
Aware	90	31.3%
Unaware	5	1.70%
Very Unaware	2	0.70%

When questioned about the dissonance between their high awareness and low knowledge, interviewees clarified that their awareness was usually general and superficial, lacking in detailed understanding. They reported that awareness often emerged anecdotally through workplace conflicts or discussions with colleagues, rather than from formal study. The divergence between this study's finding of high awareness and other studies (e.g., Erdem, 2021) underscores the importance of context. Institutional culture, the frequency of rights-based discourse within the district, and the historical relationship between administrators and teachers can significantly influence collective awareness (Johnson et al., 2022). The interview data reveal a potentially unreliable and fragmented mechanism for disseminating crucial information. Relying on such informal channels risks perpetuating misconceptions and an uneven understanding of rights across the organization.

3.3 Teachers' Attitude Towards the Implementation of Rights and Privileges

Teachers' attitudes regarding the implementation of their rights and privileges were generally positive. As detailed in Table 3, over half of the respondents ($f=157$, 54.5%) held a "Positive" attitude, and 113 teachers (39.2%) had a "Very Positive" attitude. A small number ($f=18$, 6.2%) had negative attitudes. The median score of 3 and an IQR of 1.0 suggest a consensus among respondents.

Table 3. Teachers' Attitude Towards the Implementation of Their Rights and Privileges ($n=287$)

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very Positive	113	39.2%
Positive	157	54.5%
Negative	17	5.90%
Very Negative	1	0.30%

Interview data revealed that this overall satisfaction stemmed from the perception that the Department of Education was honoring most core rights. However, teachers noted specific lapses in implementation, particularly concerning provisions for free medical check-ups and sabbatical leave (study leave with pay).

3.4 Teachers' Level of Organizational Commitment

The respondents demonstrated a high level of organizational commitment across all three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative. As presented in Table 4, the combined "High" and "Very High" categories accounted for 99.3% of responses for affective commitment, 97.2% for continuance commitment, and 95.8% for normative commitment. The median score for all three dimensions was 4, with an IQR of 1.0, indicating a strong and consistent level of commitment across the sample.

Table 4. Teachers' Level of Organizational Commitment ($n=287$)

Dimension	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Affective	Very High	139	48.3%
	High	147	51.0%
	Fairly High	2	0.70%
Continuance	Very High	117	40.6%
	High	163	56.6%
	Fairly High	8	2.80%
Normative	Very High	91	31.6%

High	185	64.2%
Fairly High	12	4.20%

The high level of normative commitment is particularly noteworthy. It suggests that teachers feel a strong moral obligation to remain with the organization. This can be interpreted as a positive outcome of perceived fair treatment, fostering a sense of mutual obligation and ethical duty (Meyer & Allen, 2023).

3.5 Relationships Between Variables

Spearman's rho was used to examine the relationships among the independent variables (knowledge, awareness, attitude) and the dependent variable (organizational commitment and its three dimensions). As shown in Table 5, no significant relationship was found between the teachers' level of knowledge and any dimension of organizational commitment (affective: $r = -.063$, $p = .286$; continuance: $r = -.043$, $p = .464$; normative: $r = .008$, $p = .889$).

Table 5. Relationship Between Teachers' Level of Knowledge and Organizational Commitment

Independent Variable		Affective	Continuance	Normative
Level of Knowledge	Spearman's Rho	-.063	-.043	.008
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.286	.464	.889
	Result	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

NS = Not Significant ($p > .05$)*

This lack of a significant relationship suggests that a deep, technical understanding of legal text is not a primary driver of an employee's emotional attachment, sense of cost, or feeling of obligation to the organization. This may be because detailed legal knowledge is often only mobilized in times of conflict or grievance (Conley & Campbell, 2021), whereas more pervasive factors influence day-to-day commitment.

Conversely, as detailed in Table 6, a significant positive relationship was found between the teachers' level of awareness and all three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective: $r = .414$, $p < .001$; continuance: $r = .369$, $p < .001$; normative: $r = .312$, $p < .001$).

Table 6. Relationship Between Teachers' Level of Awareness and Organizational Commitment

Independent Variable		Affective	Continuance	Normative
Level of Awareness	Spearman's Rho	.414	.369	.312
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	Result	Significant	Significant	Significant

S = Significant ($p < .05$)*

Finally, as presented in Table 7, a significant positive relationship was also found between the teachers' attitude towards implementation and all dimensions of organizational commitment (affective: $r = .450$, $p < .001$; continuance: $r = .352$, $p < .001$; normative: $r = .327$, $p < .001$).

Table 7. Relationship Between Teachers' Attitude Towards Implementation and Organizational Commitment

Independent Variable		Affective	Continuance	Normative
Attitude Towards Implementation	Spearman's Rho	.450	.352	.327
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001
	Result	Significant	Significant	Significant

The strong, significant positive relationships between awareness, attitude, and all dimensions of organizational commitment are the core finding of this research. This indicates that teachers' perceptions of being informed and their *satisfaction* with how their rights are enacted are potent predictors of their loyalty and attachment. This supports the principles of Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011), which posits that employees develop a global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (perceived organizational support). When teachers believe their rights are recognized and implemented (a key form of organizational support), they reciprocate with higher levels of commitment.

4.0 Conclusion

This study underscores that teachers' perceptions of organizational support and fairness exert a more substantial influence on their commitment than mere familiarity with legal codes or policies. The findings reinforce growing evidence that supportive school environments—where professional rights are not only recognized but effectively implemented—are essential to nurturing a stable, satisfied, and committed teaching workforce. For the Department of Education, these results highlight the importance of professional development initiatives that move beyond theoretical discussions of teachers' rights toward practical applications using case studies, simulations, and real-world scenarios. Equally important is leadership training that cultivates transparency, trust, and participatory decision-making, ensuring that teachers consistently feel valued and protected within their institutions.

However, this study is not without limitations. It relied on self-reported data from teachers within a single district, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or school contexts. The use of a descriptive-correlational design also limits causal interpretations of the relationship between rights awareness and organizational commitment. Future research may address these limitations by employing mixed-method or longitudinal approaches, incorporating larger and more diverse samples, and examining mediating variables such as job satisfaction, leadership style, or institutional climate. Such extensions would deepen understanding of how legal awareness interacts with organizational dynamics to shape teacher commitment across different educational settings.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

All authors contributed equally to this study.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest concerning the publication of this paper..

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