

Smart Leadership of School Heads on the Teachers' Empowerment and School Organizational Culture

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Abstract—This study examined how school heads practice smart leadership across six dimensions and how these practices relate to teachers' empowerment and school organizational culture. Specifically, it assessed the level of Smart leadership of school heads. Also, to measure the level of teachers' empowerment and school organizational culture. Furthermore, to find out if there is a significant relationship between these variables. This study used descriptive correlational research design. One hundred twenty-five purposely selected respondents were chosen in the conduct of this research. Required data for analysis was collected using validated self-made questionnaires. Statistical tools such as Mean, Standard deviation and Pearson r were used to analyze the data gathered. The findings revealed that smart leadership, teachers' empowerment, and school organizational culture were all rated at a very high level. Teachers felt most empowered through professional growth and collaboration. Open communication led school organizational culture, while innovation and creativity showed the most inconsistency across schools. Most significantly, the analysis confirmed strong and statistically significant positive relationships between smart leadership and both teachers' empowerment and school organizational culture. The study concluded that smart leadership of school heads has a significant positive relationship with both teachers' empowerment and school organizational culture, leading to the rejection of both null hypotheses. These results affirm that effective leadership is deeply connected to how empowered teachers feel and how healthy and collaborative the school culture becomes. The study recommends that school administrators continue strengthening smart leadership practices by building trust and involving teachers in meaningful decisions. Education officials should sustain professional development programs that enhance leadership competencies and foster positive school cultures. Teachers are encouraged to actively collaborate, embrace growth, and contribute to an open and respectful work environment. Future researchers are urged to explore smart leadership, empowerment, and organizational culture across broader and more diverse contexts to deepen understanding and widen its application.

Keywords— School Heads, Teachers, Smart Leadership, Teachers' Empowerment, School Organizational Culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is not merely a set of actions but an experience that is deeply felt by those being led. It is reflected in their sense of motivation, support, and purpose. In educational settings, leadership becomes a powerful force that shapes teacher performance, school climate, and student outcomes. Effective leaders create environments where individuals feel valued and guided, demonstrating that leadership extends beyond results to the cultivation of trust, vision, and shared meaning within the organization.

Smart leadership builds on this foundation by integrating strategic thinking, innovative, pro-active, adaptive, relationship building, data-driven decision making. Grounded in the domains outlined in DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020 (PPSSH), Smart leadership emphasizes a balanced approach to leading schools which is aligning vision and goals, managing resources efficiently, prioritizing teaching and learning, fostering professional growth, and strengthening partnerships. It reflects a leadership style that is both data-informed and people-centered, enabling school heads to respond effectively to complex educational demands while maintaining a strong sense of purpose and direction.

Teachers' empowerment and school organizational culture are essential outcomes and reinforcing elements of effective smart leadership. Through policies such as DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 (PPST) and Republic Act No. 10912, teachers are encouraged and required to pursue continuous professional development, enhancing their competence, autonomy, and engagement. At the same time, DepEd Order No. 19, s. 2016 underscores the importance of a positive organizational culture in supporting school effectiveness. When leadership empowers teachers and nurtures a collaborative, trust-based culture, schools become dynamic environments where both educators and learners are positioned to succeed.

In the Division of Laguna, teachers are empowered by the school heads to express their expertise, participate in reflective practice, and make significant contributions for the school. Teachers' sense of accountability and professional identity are strengthened by this kind of empowerment, which has a direct impact on their output and dedication to the profession. Additionally, the development of an encouraging work environment is greatly aided by the empowerment of teachers. A person who feels empowered is more inclined to work together, support programs for continuous improvement, and preserve common values. This kind of empowerment helps to build a positive school work environment.

This study looks closely at how school heads practice smart leadership that has truly effects on teachers' empowerment and school organizational culture.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Problem/s which were addressed by the research

This study aims to assess the level of smart leadership of school heads and its influence on teachers' empowerment and school organizational culture in selected central schools in the Division of Laguna. Recognizing that school heads play a pivotal role in shaping the overall direction and climate of

their institutions, this research seeks to explore how the qualities and practices embedded in smart leadership translate into meaningful outcomes for both teachers and the broader school community. By examining these relationships, the study hopes to provide school administrators, education leaders, and policymakers with a deeper understanding of what effective leadership looks like in the context of public elementary education. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a valuable reference in crafting leadership development programs that are responsive to the real needs of school heads and the communities they serve. Ultimately, this research is driven by the belief that when school heads are equipped with the right kind of leadership, every teacher is empowered, every classroom is enriched, and every learner benefits.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of:
 - 1.1 Strategic thinker;
 - 1.2 Innovative;
 - 1.3 Pro-Active;
 - 1.4 Adaptive;
 - 1.5 Relationship builder; and
 - 1.6 Data-Driven Decision Making?
2. What is the level of teachers' empowerment in terms of:
 - 2.1 Decision making autonomy;
 - 2.2 Professional growth;
 - 2.3 Collaboration and teamwork; and
 - 2.4 Impact?
3. What is the level of school organizational culture in terms of:
 - 3.1 Trust and respect;
 - 3.2 Innovation and creativity;
 - 3.3 Open communication; and
 - 3.4 Positive work environment?
4. Is there a significant relationship between smart leadership of school heads and teachers' empowerment?
5. Is there a significant relationship between smart leadership of school heads and school organizational culture?

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive correlational research design. One hundred twenty-five purposely selected respondents were chosen in the conduct of this research. Validated self-made questionnaires were used to gather necessary data for analysis. Statistical tools such as Mean, Standard deviation and Pearson r were used to analyze the data gathered.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents and discusses the data gathered from the 125 respondents in the Division of Laguna. The findings are carefully organized to address the five research questions that guided this study. The first three questions describe the levels of smart leadership practiced by school heads, teachers' empowerment, and school organizational culture as perceived by the respondents. Each variable is examined based on its specific indicators to provide a clear and accurate picture of

how these concepts are experienced in the schools within the division.

Level of Smart Leadership

In this study, the level of smart leadership is manifested by school heads across six key indicators: strategic thinker, innovative, pro-active, adaptive, relationship builder, and data-driven decision making. The tables present the mean scores, standard deviations, and corresponding descriptive levels for each indicator. These results provide a clear picture of how school leaders demonstrate competencies in managing and guiding their institutions. The findings also highlight areas of strength and opportunities for further professional development among school heads. Such insights are essential in crafting targeted interventions and capacity-building programs that align with the evolving demands of educational leadership. Ultimately, understanding these competencies enables stakeholders to make informed decisions that foster a culture of continuous improvement and excellence within schools.

Table 1. Level of Smart Leadership of School Heads in terms of Strategic Thinking

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The School Head can identify long-term goals that align with the school's vision.	4.81	0.39	Strongly Agree
The School Head considers multiple perspectives before making decisions.	4.77	0.42	Strongly Agree
The School Head anticipates challenges and prepares strategies in advance.	4.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
The School Head connects present actions to future outcomes.	4.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
The School Head fosters critical thinking among stakeholders to promote continuous school improvement.	4.75	0.43	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.76		
SD	0.42		
Verbal Interpretation			Very High

Table 1 shows the level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of strategic thinking.

Respondents strongly agree that the school head can identify long-term goals that align with the school's vision ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 0.39$), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. The School Head considers multiple perspectives before making decisions ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 0.42$), and fosters critical thinking among stakeholders to promote continuous school improvement ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.43$). School heads similarly anticipate challenges and prepare strategies in advance ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.44$) and connect present actions to future outcomes ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.44$).

The level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of strategic thinking attained the overall weighted mean of 4.76 with a standard deviation of 0.42, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that the seasoned school leaders who demonstrate a high level of strategic thinking are able to effectively plan, anticipate challenges, and implement long-term strategies that support school improvement.

In summary, the findings indicate that strategic thinking enables leaders to make informed decisions, align school goals

with educational priorities, and guide teachers toward achieving organizational objectives.

Table 2. Level of Smart Leadership of School Heads in terms of Innovative

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The School Head encourages collaboration to generate fresh ideas for improving school performance.	4.82	0.38	Strongly Agree
The School Head makes informed decisions by analyzing data, feedback, and emerging trends in education.	4.78	0.41	Strongly Agree
The School Head empowers teachers and staff to take initiative and try new solutions to challenges.	4.69	0.46	Strongly Agree
The School Head anticipates future school needs and plans innovative actions to address them.	4.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
The School Head integrates innovation into long-term school planning and goal setting.	4.75	0.43	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.75		
SD	0.43		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Table 2 shows the level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being innovative.

Respondents strongly agree that the school head encourages collaboration to generate fresh ideas for improving school performance (M = 4.82, SD = 0.38), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. The School Head also makes informed decisions by analyzing data, feedback, and emerging trends in education (M = 4.78, SD = 0.41). The school head integrates innovation into long-term school planning and goal setting (M = 4.75, SD = 0.43), and anticipates future school needs and plans innovative actions to address them (M = 4.70, SD = 0.46). School heads likewise empower teachers and staff to take initiative and try new solutions to challenges (M = 4.69, SD = 0.46).

The level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being innovative attained the overall weighted mean of 4.75 with a standard deviation of 0.43, verbally interpreted as Very High. This indicates that school heads consistently demonstrate innovative behaviors by promoting collaboration, utilizing data, and embedding creativity into the school's planning and goal-setting processes.

In summary, the findings indicate that innovative leadership creates an environment where fresh ideas, proactive planning, and teacher initiative are valued and institutionalized.

Table 3. Level of Smart Leadership of School Heads in terms of Pro-active

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The School Head takes initiative without waiting for directions.	4.58	0.57	Strongly Agree
The School Head addresses problems before it becomes serious.	4.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
The School Head volunteers to lead tasks that benefit the organization.	4.71	0.45	Strongly Agree
The School Head anticipates students and colleagues' needs ahead of time.	4.68	0.52	Strongly Agree
The School Head prepares solutions in advance rather than reacting to problems.	4.71	0.45	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.68		
SD	0.49		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Table 3 shows the level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being pro-active. Respondents strongly agree that the school head addresses problems before they become serious (M = 4.74, SD = 0.44), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. The school head volunteers to lead tasks that benefit the organization (M = 4.71, SD = 0.45) and prepares solutions in advance rather than reacting to problems (M = 4.71, SD = 0.45). School heads also anticipate students' and colleagues' needs ahead of time (M = 4.68, SD = 0.52). The indicator on taking initiative without waiting for directions obtained the lowest mean in this dimension (M = 4.58, SD = 0.57), though it still reflects strong agreement among respondents.

The level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being pro-active attained the overall weighted mean of 4.68 with a standard deviation of 0.49, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that seasoned school leaders consistently take initiative, anticipate challenges, and prepare for future needs rather than responding reactively to emerging problems.

In summary, the findings indicate that pro-active leadership plays a critical role in maintaining organizational stability and preparedness, allowing school heads to address potential issues before they escalate into serious problems.

Ultimately, pro-active leadership is not about being perfect or having all the answers. It is about caring enough to pay attention, to prepare, and to act before it is too late. When school heads lead this way, they do not just solve problems — they prevent them, and in doing so, they build a school community that feels safe, supported, and ready for whatever comes next.

Table 4. Level of Smart Leadership of School Heads in terms of Adaptive

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The School Head adjusts quickly to changes in policies or situations.	4.69	0.46	Strongly Agree
The School Head maintains effectiveness amid uncertain or challenging circumstances.	4.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
The School Head welcomes new responsibilities with a positive outlook.	4.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
The School Head demonstrates adaptability by learning new skills in response to emerging situations.	4.71	0.45	Strongly Agree
The School Head encourages others to adapt to changes constructively.	4.76	0.43	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.72		
SD	0.45		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Table 4 shows the level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being adaptive.

Respondents strongly agree that the school head encourages others to adapt to changes constructively (M = 4.76, SD = 0.43), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. The school head also welcomes new responsibilities with a positive outlook (M = 4.74, SD = 0.44) and demonstrates adaptability by learning new skills in response to emerging situations (M = 4.71, SD = 0.45). School heads likewise maintain effectiveness amid uncertain or challenging circumstances (M = 4.70, SD = 0.46). The indicator on adjusting quickly to changes in policies or

situations obtained the lowest mean in this dimension ($M = 4.69, SD = 0.46$), though it still reflects strong agreement.

The level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being adaptive attained the overall weighted mean of 4.72 with a standard deviation of 0.45, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that seasoned school leaders consistently demonstrate adaptive behaviors by modeling flexibility, embracing new responsibilities, and fostering a culture of constructive change among their colleagues.

In summary, the findings indicate that adaptive leadership enables school heads to navigate complex and evolving educational environments while simultaneously building the adaptive capacity of their teaching workforce.

Table 5 shows the level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being a relationship builder.

Respondents strongly agree that the school head supports teachers in achieving their professional goals ($M = 4.86, SD = 0.35$), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension and the highest individual item mean across all Smart Leadership indicators. The school head also values teamwork and cooperation in decision-making ($M = 4.83, SD = 0.39$), establishes trust with teachers ($M = 4.80, SD = 0.40$), and makes an effort to maintain positive relationships with stakeholders ($M = 4.80, SD = 0.40$). The indicator on resolving conflicts respectfully and constructively obtained the lowest mean in this dimension ($M = 4.75, SD = 0.43$), though it still reflects strong agreement.

Table 5. Level of Smart Leadership of School Heads in terms of Relationship Builder

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The School Head establishes trust with teachers.	4.80	0.40	Strongly Agree
The School Head values teamwork and cooperation in decision-making.	4.83	0.39	Strongly Agree
The School Head resolves conflicts respectfully and constructively.	4.75	0.43	Strongly Agree
The School Head makes an effort to maintain positive relationships with stakeholders.	4.80	0.40	Strongly Agree
The School Head supports teachers in achieving their professional goals.	4.86	0.35	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.81		
SD	0.40		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of being a relationship builder attained the overall weighted mean of 4.81 with a standard deviation of 0.40, verbally interpreted as very high. This is the highest-rated dimension among all six smart leadership indicators, indicating that building meaningful, trust-centered relationships is the most prominently demonstrated leadership quality of school heads as perceived by respondents.

In summary, the findings indicate that relationship-building is at the heart of effective school leadership, serving as the cornerstone upon which all other dimensions of school improvement and teacher development are built. When school heads genuinely invest in their teachers — treating them as partners, supporting their growth, and building trust — teachers become more committed, more confident, and more motivated to do their best work, ultimately translating their

sense of empowerment into improved instructional practices and better learning outcomes for students. This relational dynamic goes beyond mere professional courtesy, as it cultivates a deep sense of belonging, mutual respect, and shared accountability that permeates the entire school culture and influences how every member of the organization engages with their roles and responsibilities. The quality of the relationship between school leaders and teachers therefore acts as a powerful catalyst that shapes not only individual teacher performance but also the collective capacity of the school to innovate, adapt, and grow in the face of evolving educational demands and challenges.

Table 6 shows the level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of data-driven decision making.

Respondents strongly agree that the school head shares and discusses data findings with stakeholders to enhance student and school outcomes ($M = 4.74, SD = 0.46$), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. The School Head also uses data to guide classroom or school-related decisions ($M = 4.73, SD = 0.44$) and analyzes student performance results before implementing strategies ($M = 4.69, SD = 0.46$). School Heads likewise rely on evidence rather than assumptions in planning actions ($M = 4.63, SD = 0.48$). The indicator on using data to pinpoint and address areas for improvement obtained the lowest mean in this dimension ($M = 4.62, SD = 0.48$), though it still reflects strong agreement among respondents.

Table 6. Level of Smart Leadership of School Heads in terms of Data-Driven Decision Making

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The School Head uses data to guide classroom or school-related decisions.	4.73	0.44	Strongly Agree
The School Head analyzes student performance results before implementing strategies.	4.69	0.46	Strongly Agree
The School Head uses data to pinpoint and address areas for improvement.	4.62	0.48	Strongly Agree
The School Head relies on evidence rather than assumptions in planning actions	4.63	0.48	Strongly Agree
The School Head shares and discusses data findings with stakeholders to enhance student and school outcomes.	4.74	0.46	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.68		
SD	0.47		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The level of smart leadership of school heads in terms of data-driven decision making attained the overall weighted mean of 4.68 with a standard deviation of 0.47, verbally interpreted as very high. This dimension obtained the lowest weighted mean among the six smart leadership indicators; nevertheless, all items consistently registered strongly agree ratings, affirming that school heads routinely utilize data as the basis for their leadership decisions.

In summary, the findings indicate that data-driven decision making equips school leaders with the evidence they need to identify gaps, design targeted interventions, and track progress over time.

Respondents strongly agree that the teacher can decide on the best methods to meet the students' needs ($M = 4.73, SD =$

0.44), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. Teachers also have the freedom to make classroom-related decisions (M = 4.72, SD = 0.45) and feel empowered to try new teaching strategies (M = 4.71, SD = 0.45). The teachers' input is considered in school-level decision-making (M = 4.70, SD = 0.46). The indicator on demonstrating responsibility by making informed professional decisions independently obtained the lowest mean in this dimension (M = 4.62, SD = 0.48), though it still reflects strong agreement among respondents.

Level of Teachers' Empowerment

Table 7. Level of Teachers' Empowerment in terms of Decision- Making Autonomy

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The teacher has the freedom to make classroom-related decisions.	4.72	0.45	Strongly Agree
The teacher's input is considered in school-level decision-making	4.70	0.46	Strongly Agree
The teacher feels empowered to try new teaching strategies.	4.71	0.45	Strongly Agree
The teacher can decide on the best methods to meet the students' needs.	4.73	0.44	Strongly Agree
The teacher demonstrates responsibility by making informed professional decisions independently.	4.62	0.48	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.70		
SD	0.46		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The level of teachers' empowerment in terms of decision-making autonomy attained the overall weighted mean of 4.70 with a standard deviation of 0.46, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that teachers in the Division of Laguna consistently experience a high degree of professional autonomy in making classroom and instructional decisions, with their inputs also valued at the institutional level.

In summary, the findings indicate that decision-making autonomy is a fundamental dimension of teacher empowerment, as it allows teachers to exercise professional judgment and take ownership of their practice.

Table 8. Level of Teachers' Empowerment in terms of Professional Growth

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The teacher has access to training opportunities that enhance skills.	4.82	0.38	Strongly Agree
The teacher actively engages in professional development with guidance and support from the school administration, mentors, and professional learning communities.	4.83	0.37	Strongly Agree
The teacher actively uses feedback from the school head, mentors, and colleagues to enhance teaching practices and student outcomes.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
The teacher is encouraged to pursue further education or certifications.	4.77	0.42	Strongly Agree
The teacher feels that his/her career has clear growth opportunities.	4.76	0.43	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.80		
SD	0.40		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Table 8 shows the level of teachers' empowerment in terms of professional growth.

Respondents strongly agree that teachers actively engage in professional development with guidance and support from the school administration, mentors, and professional learning communities (M = 4.83, SD = 0.37), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. Teachers likewise have access to training opportunities that enhance skills (M = 4.82, SD = 0.38) and actively use feedback from the school head, mentors, and colleagues to enhance teaching practices and student outcomes (M = 4.79, SD = 0.41). Teachers are also encouraged to pursue further education or certifications (M = 4.77, SD = 0.42). The indicator on teachers feeling that their career has clear growth opportunities obtained the lowest mean in this dimension (M = 4.76, SD = 0.43), though it still reflects strong agreement.

The level of Teachers' empowerment in terms of professional growth attained the overall weighted mean of 4.80 with a standard deviation of 0.40, verbally interpreted as very high. This is the highest-rated dimension among all four teachers' empowerment indicators, reflecting that continuous professional development is strongly supported and institutionalized in the schools studied.

In summary, the findings indicate that professional growth opportunities are essential to teacher empowerment, as they enable teachers to refine their practices, expand their knowledge, and pursue career advancement.

Table 9. Level of Teachers' Empowerment in terms of Collaboration and Teamwork

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The teacher actively shares teaching strategies with the colleagues.	4.78	0.41	Strongly Agree
The teacher works with others to solve school-related challenges.	4.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
Collaboration among teachers is encouraged in the school by the School Head.	4.78	0.41	Strongly Agree
The teacher feels valued when he/she contributes to team efforts.	4.75	0.43	Strongly Agree
The teacher believes teamwork improves both teaching and student learning.	4.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.76		
SD	0.43		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Table 9 shows the level of teachers' empowerment in terms of collaboration and teamwork.

Respondents strongly agree that teachers actively share teaching strategies with colleagues and that collaboration among teachers is encouraged in the school by the school head, both obtaining the highest ratings in this dimension (M = 4.78, SD = 0.41). Teachers also feel valued when they contribute to team efforts (M = 4.75, SD = 0.43). Working with others to solve school-related challenges and believing that teamwork improves both teaching and student learning obtained equal means (M = 4.74, SD = 0.44), reflecting the lowest-rated yet still strongly agreed-upon indicators in this dimension.

The level of teachers' empowerment in terms of collaboration and teamwork attained the overall weighted mean of 4.76 with a standard deviation of 0.43, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that teachers in the Division of Laguna experience a deeply collaborative

professional culture where knowledge sharing, collective problem-solving, and mutual support are widely practiced and institutionally promoted.

In summary, the findings indicate that collaboration and teamwork are central to teacher empowerment, as they foster collective efficacy, professional belonging, and shared accountability for student learning. Fitriani et al. (2025) observed that teachers who regularly collaborate do not just share strategies — they share burdens and build each other up, strengthening the entire school community from within

Table 10. Level of Teachers' Empowerment in terms of Impact

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The teacher feels the work significantly contributes to student success.	4.74	0.44	Strongly Agree
The teacher is dedicated to influencing learners' growth and development in meaningful ways.	4.76	0.43	Strongly Agree
The teacher sees the results of teaching in student growth.	4.72	0.45	Strongly Agree
The teacher feels proud of the impact he/she creates as a teacher.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
The teacher helps to improve the overall school performance.	4.78	0.41	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.76		
SD	0.43		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Table 10 shows the level of teachers' empowerment in terms of impact.

Respondents strongly agree that teachers feel proud of the impact they create as a teacher ($M = 4.79, SD = 0.41$), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. Teachers also help to improve the overall school performance ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.41$) and are dedicated to influencing learners' growth and development in meaningful ways ($M = 4.76, SD = 0.43$). Teachers feel that their work significantly contributes to student success ($M = 4.74, SD = 0.44$). Despite still indicating great agreement, the marker on viewing the results of instruction in student development got the lowest mean in this area ($M = 4.72, SD = 0.45$).

The level of teachers' empowerment in terms of impact attained the overall weighted mean of 4.76 with a standard deviation of 0.43, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that teachers in the Division of Laguna possess a strong sense of professional impact, recognizing the significant contribution of their work to students' academic growth and the overall improvement of school performance.

In summary, the findings indicate that a strong sense of impact is vital to teacher empowerment, as it reinforces professional identity, sustains motivation, and deepens commitment to teaching excellence.

Level of School Organizational Culture

Table 11 shows the level of school organizational culture in terms of trust and respect.

Respondents strongly agree that the school head and teachers actively build mutual trust with each other, creating a supportive and collaborative school community, and that trust is evident in decision-making and collaboration, both obtaining the highest ratings in this dimension ($M = 4.79, SD$

$= 0.41$). Three indicators obtained equal means: respect is shown regardless of position or role ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.41$), the school head values the opinions of teachers ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.42$), and the teacher feels respected by the School Head ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.52$). The slightly higher standard deviation in the last item suggests minor variation in individual perceptions of felt respect, though the overall ratings remain consistently high.

Table 11. Level of School Organizational Culture in terms of Trust and Respect

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The school head and teachers actively build mutual trust with each other, creating a supportive and collaborative school community.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
Respect is shown regardless of position or role.	4.78	0.41	Strongly Agree
The school head values the opinions of teachers.	4.78	0.42	Strongly Agree
The teacher feels respected by the School Head.	4.78	0.52	Strongly Agree
Trust is evident in decision-making and collaboration.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.78		
SD	0.41		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The level of school organizational culture in terms of trust and respect attained the overall weighted mean of 4.78 with a standard deviation of 0.41, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that mutual trust and respect between school heads and teachers are strongly embedded in the organizational culture of schools in the Division of Laguna, forming a solid relational foundation for school improvement.

In summary, the findings indicate that trust and respect are the foundation of a positive school organizational culture.

Table 12. Level of School Organizational Culture in terms of Innovation and Creativity

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
New ideas are welcomed in this school to foster innovation and continuous improvement in teaching and learning.	4.69	0.92	Strongly Agree
Teachers are encouraged to experiment with creative teaching methods.	4.67	0.99	Strongly Agree
Innovation is valued in solving school challenges.	4.73	1.09	Strongly Agree
Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities for growth.	4.73	0.87	Strongly Agree
Creative contributions are recognized and appreciated.	4.74	1.09	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.71		
SD	0.45		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

Table 12 shows the level of school organizational culture in terms of innovation and creativity.

Respondents strongly agree that creative contributions are recognized and appreciated ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.09$), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. Innovation is valued in solving school challenges and mistakes are treated as learning opportunities for growth also obtained equal high means ($M = 4.73$). New ideas are welcomed in the school to foster innovation and continuous improvement ($M = 4.69, SD$

= 0.92). The indicator on teachers being encouraged to experiment with creative teaching methods obtained the lowest mean in this dimension (M = 4.67, SD = 0.99). Notably, this dimension recorded relatively wider standard deviations across its items, ranging from 0.87 to 1.09, suggesting considerable variability in individual respondents' perceptions of the school's innovative culture.

The level of school organizational culture in terms of innovation and creativity attained the overall weighted mean of 4.71 with a standard deviation of 0.45, verbally interpreted as high. While all individual items registered strongly agree ratings, the wider item-level standard deviations indicate that the experience of an innovative culture is not uniformly shared across all respondents, resulting in the overall dimension being classified under the High range.

In summary, the findings indicate that while a culture of innovation and creativity is generally present in the schools studied, its consistency across different school contexts merits continued attention and deliberate reinforcement.

Table 13 shows the level of school organizational culture in terms of open communication.

Respondents strongly agree that teachers actively participate in meetings, confidently voicing opinions and contributing to discussions (M = 4.83, SD = 0.37), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. Teachers also feel heard when expressing concerns or suggestions (M = 4.82, SD = 0.39). Communication channels are open and accessible to everyone and teachers and staff are encouraged to provide and receive constructive feedback both obtained equal means (M = 4.78). Information is shared transparently among the school head, teachers, parents, and stakeholders obtained the lowest mean in this dimension (M = 4.76, SD = 0.43), though it still reflects strong agreement.

Table 13. Level of School Organizational Culture in terms of Open Communication

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
Information is shared transparently among the School Head, teachers, parents, and stakeholders.	4.76	0.43	Strongly Agree
The teacher actively participates in meetings, confidently voicing opinions and contributing to discussions.	4.83	0.37	Strongly Agree
Communication channels are open and accessible to everyone.	4.78	0.41	Strongly Agree
Teachers and staff are encouraged to provide and receive constructive feedback to enhance teaching practices and school performance.	4.78	0.42	Strongly Agree
The teacher feels heard when expressing concerns or suggestions.	4.82	0.39	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.79		
SD	0.40		
Verbal Interpretation			Very High

The level of school organizational culture in terms of open communication attained the overall weighted mean of 4.79 with a standard deviation of 0.40, verbally interpreted as very high. This is the highest-rated dimension among all four school organizational culture indicators, indicating that transparent, participatory, and feedback-oriented

communication is a defining feature of the organizational culture in the schools studied.

In summary, the findings indicate that open communication is a hallmark of a healthy school organizational culture, enabling collective decision-making, transparency, and a shared sense of voice among all school stakeholders.

Table 14 shows the level of school organizational culture in terms of a positive work environment.

Respondents strongly agree that the school fosters a supportive and inclusive atmosphere (M = 4.73, SD = 0.44), which obtained the highest rating in this dimension. Teachers encourage one another during challenges (M = 4.72, SD = 0.45). The teacher enjoys contributing to this school environment and the teacher feels motivated to perform well because of the positive environment both obtained equal means (M = 4.71, SD = 0.45). The indicator on workload and responsibilities being manageable obtained the lowest mean in this dimension (M = 4.69, SD = 0.46), suggesting a slightly greater degree of variability in perceptions related to workload management, though it still reflects strong agreement.

Table 14. Level of School Organizational Culture in terms of Positive Work Environment

Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
The teacher enjoys contributing to this school environment, appreciating the supportive leadership, collegial collaboration, and focus on student success.	4.71	0.45	Strongly Agree
Teachers encourage one another during challenges.	4.72	0.45	Strongly Agree
The school fosters a supportive and inclusive atmosphere.	4.73	0.44	Strongly Agree
Workload and responsibilities are manageable.	4.69	0.46	Strongly Agree
The teacher feels motivated to perform well because of the positive environment.	4.71	0.45	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.71		
SD	0.45		
Verbal Interpretation			Very High

The level of school organizational culture in terms of positive work environment attained the overall weighted mean of 4.71 with a standard deviation of 0.45, verbally interpreted as very high. This indicates that teachers in the Division of Laguna experience a highly positive, inclusive, and motivating work environment that supports their well-being and sustains their professional engagement.

A positive work environment is essential to school organizational culture, as it sustains teacher motivation, reduces burnout, and fosters mutual support.

Significant Relationship between Smart Leadership of School Heads and Teachers' Empowerment

In this study, the significant relationship between smart leadership of school heads and teachers' empowerment were analyzed by applying Pearson Correlation Coefficient using Minitab 14.

Table 15 presents the significant relationship between smart leadership of school heads and teachers' empowerment. The results include Pearson correlation coefficients (r-values), p-values, and sample size (N=125) for each relationship.

Table 15. Significant Relationship between Smart Leadership of School Heads and Teachers' Empowerment

Smart School Heads	Leadership	Decision of Making Autonomy	Professional Growth	Collaboration and Teamwork	Impact
Strategic Thinker	Pearson Correlation	0.424*	0.522*	0.449*	0.512*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Innovative	Pearson Correlation	0.367*	0.471*	0.426*	0.273*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.002
	N	125	125	125	125
Pro-active	Pearson Correlation	0.332*	0.632*	0.329*	0.505*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Adaptive	Pearson Correlation	0.417*	0.543*	0.480*	0.530*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Relationship Builder	Pearson Correlation	0.597*	0.343*	0.245*	0.383*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.006	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Data-Driven Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	0.587*	0.544*	0.397*	0.437*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125

Note * p < .05

As shown, a significant relationship between the smart leadership of school heads and teachers' empowerment in terms of decision-making autonomy, professional growth, collaboration and teamwork, and impact exists. This is evident as all the obtained p-values are lower than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the relationships are statistically significant. This indicates that when school leaders demonstrate strategic thinking, innovation, proactiveness, adaptability, relationship building, and data-driven decision-making, teachers are more likely to experience greater autonomy, professional development, collaboration, and influence within the school environment. These results further suggest that smart leadership is not merely an administrative function but a transformative practice that directly shapes the professional experiences and overall well-being of teachers, positioning school heads as key architects of an empowering and growth-oriented workplace culture. The strength and consistency of these significant relationships across all empowerment dimensions reinforce the conclusion that investing in the development of smart leadership competencies among school heads is a critical and strategic priority for educational institutions seeking to build a highly motivated, empowered, and professionally fulfilled teaching force capable of driving meaningful and lasting school improvement.

Significant Relationship between Smart Leadership of School Heads and School Organizational Culture

In this study, the significant relationship between smart leadership of school heads and school organizational culture were analyzed applying Pearson correlation coefficient using Minitab 14.

Table 16. Significant Relationship between Smart Leadership of School Heads and School Organizational Culture

Smart School Heads	Leadership	of Trust & Respect	Innovation & Creativity	Open Communication	Positive Work Environment
Strategic Thinker	Pearson Correlation	0.406*	0.374*	0.313*	0.550*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Innovative	Pearson Correlation	0.271*	0.342*	0.313*	0.403*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000	.002
	N	125	125	125	125
Pro-active	Pearson Correlation	0.334*	0.459*	0.254*	0.670*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.004	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Adaptive	Pearson Correlation	0.472*	0.519*	0.315*	0.597*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Relationship Builder	Pearson Correlation	0.585*	0.647*	0.498*	0.560*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.006	.000
	N	125	125	125	125
Data-Driven Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	0.414*	0.287*	0.466*	0.441*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125

Note * p < .05

Table 16 presents the significant relationship between smart leadership of school heads and school organizational culture. The results include Pearson correlation coefficients (r-values), p-values, and sample size (N=125) for each relationship.

As shown, a significant relationship between the smart leadership of school heads and school organizational culture in terms of trust and respect, innovation and creativity, open communication and positive environment exist. This is evident as all the obtained p-values are lower than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the relationships are statistically significant. This indicates that when school leaders demonstrate strategic thinking, innovation, proactiveness, adaptability, relationship building, and data-driven decision-making, it influences changes within the school environment

In summary, these findings speak to a truth that runs deeper than policy or procedure — that when teachers are led with smart leadership, teachers felt empowered and they

become more committed, more passionate, and more willing to go beyond what is asked of them.

The correlation analysis reveals that there are significant positive relationships between the smart leadership of school heads, teachers' empowerment, and school organizational culture. The majority of the computed Pearson r values indicate strong to very strong positive correlations, many of which are statistically significant at the .05 level. These findings affirm that effective leadership competencies are significantly associated with favorable organizational outcomes in the educational setting.

Specifically, the data suggests that school heads who demonstrate smart leadership behaviors — such as building genuine relationships, leading proactively, and empowering their teachers through autonomy and collaboration — tend to cultivate schools where organizational culture is healthier, more cohesive, and more purposeful.

Taken together, these findings serve as a powerful reminder that smart leadership is never just about managing a school, but about genuinely taking care of the people within it. When school heads lead with intention and heart, teachers feel valued, schools grow stronger, and real transformation becomes possible — one decision, one relationship, and one empowered teacher at a time. Ultimately, the greatest measure of a school head's leadership is not found in reports or rankings, but in the confidence, growth, and sense of belonging that every teacher feels under their care.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study established a significant relationship between smart leadership and teachers' empowerment, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that the manner in which school heads exercise smart leadership directly influences how empowered teachers feel in their professional roles. When school heads embody strategic, innovative, and relationship-driven leadership, teachers are more likely to experience greater confidence, professional growth, and meaningful involvement in school affairs. This underscores the critical importance of developing and sustaining smart leadership practices among school heads as a deliberate strategy for fostering a more empowered and professionally fulfilled teaching force.

Similarly, the study established a significant relationship between smart leadership and school organizational culture, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that the quality of leadership exercised by school heads plays a pivotal role in shaping the values, norms, and overall

atmosphere of the school. When school heads lead with purpose, transparency, and genuine care for their people, they cultivate a culture characterized by open communication, collaboration, and innovation. These findings highlight the need for school heads to be intentional and reflective in their leadership practices, recognizing that their actions and decisions have far-reaching consequences on the kind of organizational culture that takes root and thrives within their schools.

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered for various stakeholders in the educational system:

School Administrators may strengthen their Smart Leadership competencies, especially in proactivity, innovation, and data-driven decision making, and regularly seek feedback from teachers to identify areas for improvement.

School Division Superintendents and Education Officials can integrate Smart Leadership frameworks into professional development programs and include Smart Leadership indicators in performance evaluation systems across all schools in the division.

Teachers and School Personnel is encouraged to actively engage in professional growth, collaborative planning, and participatory decision making to contribute meaningfully to a positive and empowering school culture.

Future Researchers are free to conduct longitudinal, experimental, qualitative, or mixed-methods studies to further explore the causal relationships between smart leadership, teachers' empowerment, and school organizational culture.

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