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Invisible Work, Emotional Labor, and Professional Commitment of Elementary School Teachers in Caramcam Elementary School, Bislig City Division: A Descriptive-Correlational Approach as Basis for a Teacher Well-Being and Support Program

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ABSTRACT

This study examined invisible work, emotional labor, and professional commitment among elementary school teachers of Caramcam Elementary School, Bislig City Division, during School Year 2025–2026, and used the findings as basis for a Teacher Well-Being and Support Program. A quantitative descriptive-correlational survey design was employed. Through total enumeration, all 29 teachers answered a researcher-made, 75-item, four-point Likert questionnaire. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product-moment correlation at the .05 level of significance. Teachers reported very high levels of invisible work (M = 3.39, SD = 0.37), emotional labor (M = 3.43, SD = 0.39), and professional commitment (M = 3.45, SD = 0.36). Learner monitoring and follow-up, patience and care for struggling learners, and commitment to learners were the highest-rated dimensions of their respective variables, whereas managing stress from multiple responsibilities and intention to remain in the profession were the lowest and were rated only "High." Invisible work had a significant moderate positive relationship with professional commitment ($r = .586$, $p = .001$), and emotional labor had a significant strong positive relationship with professional commitment ($r = .694$, $p < .001$). These cross-sectional associations do not show that heavier work demands cause greater commitment. A program that recognizes less visible work, shares workload, and supports teachers' emotional well-being is proposed to help sustain professional commitment.

Keywords: *Invisible Work, Emotional Labor, Professional Commitment, Elementary School Teachers, Teacher Well-Being*

INTRODUCTION

Professional commitment is central to the quality and continuity of school services because schools depend on teachers who remain dedicated to learners, instructional duties, school responsibilities, and professional growth. International evidence shows that teachers' motivation, self-efficacy, and job commitment are affected by stressful working conditions, which makes commitment an important variable in understanding teacher well-being and school effectiveness (Viac & Fraser, 2020). Concern for commitment is also urgent at the system level: UNESCO (2024) estimated that about 44 million additional primary and secondary teachers are needed by 2030, and that many serving teachers are expected to leave the profession. At the same time, TALIS 2018 found that 90% of teachers across participating OECD

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countries and economies were satisfied with their jobs, yet about one in five reported a lot of work-related stress (OECD, 2020). Commitment, in other words, can coexist with considerable strain.

Studies in Asia point the same way. Principal leadership, teacher well-being, and school conditions have been linked to teachers' organizational commitment in China (Xu & Pang, 2024), and emotional labor has been identified as a relevant correlate of organizational commitment among teachers (Akin et al., 2021). In Southeast Asia, heavy workloads, long working hours, and reduced life satisfaction have been associated with teacher burnout and weakened well-being (Wahab et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, teacher workload is now a recognized policy concern. DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 directed the immediate removal of administrative tasks from public school teachers (Department of Education, 2024a), and DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024 provided for the rationalization of teachers' workload and payment of teaching overload (Department of Education, 2024b). The Second Congressional Commission on Education reported that Filipino teachers work an average of 52 hours per week, that 27% work more than 60 hours weekly, and that ancillary work averages 3.6 hours per day against a policy limit of two hours (EDCOM II, 2025a, 2025b). Teachers' commitment is therefore tested by work that extends well beyond classroom instruction.

Two constructs help describe this work. Invisible work refers to labor that is necessary for an institution to function but is often unpaid, undocumented, or insufficiently recognized (Daniels, 1987; Star & Strauss, 1999). In teaching, it includes documentation, learner monitoring, preparation of intervention materials, parent communication, and committee and program duties. Emotional labor refers to the effort of regulating emotions, such as keeping patient, caring, and composed, to meet the expectations of the role (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Although teacher workload, emotional labor, and commitment have each been studied, few studies connect invisible work and emotional labor with professional commitment in a small, school-based elementary setting.

The local setting makes the gap concrete. Caramcam Elementary School serves 745 learners with 29 teachers and implements priority programs in literacy, numeracy, child protection, inclusive education, disaster risk reduction and management, school-based management, and ICT integration. Its school profile reports learner-related concerns (reading and numeracy difficulties, poor study habits, a high percentage of frustration readers) and management concerns (workload, overlapping activities, and difficulty sustaining remedial classes). This study therefore determined the levels of invisible work, emotional labor, and professional commitment of the school's teachers, tested whether invisible work and emotional labor are significantly related to professional commitment, and used the results as basis for a Teacher Well-Being and Support Program.

Theoretical Framework and Statement of the Problem

Three frameworks guided the study. The Job Demands–Resources model holds that job demands, which require sustained effort, produce strain unless balanced by job resources such as support and fair workload distribution (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001); invisible work is treated here as a job demand. Hochschild's (1983) emotional labor theory explains how service workers manage feelings to meet role expectations, which fits the patience, composure, and care expected of elementary teachers (Grandey, 2000; Yin, 2016). The three-component model of commitment distinguishes affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) and, with the teacher-commitment literature (Day, 2008; Somech & Bogler, 2002), anchors the measurement of professional commitment. Together, they support the assumption that invisible work and emotional labor are relevant to teachers' commitment and to the design of a school-based support program.

The study sought answers to the following: (1) the level of invisible work, (2) the level of emotional labor, and (3) the level of professional commitment of the teachers; (4) whether invisible work is significantly related to professional commitment; (5) whether emotional labor is significantly related to professional commitment; and (6) the Teacher Well-Being and Support Program that may be proposed. Two

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null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level: there is no significant relationship between (Ho1) invisible work and professional commitment, and (Ho2) emotional labor and professional commitment.

METHODS

Research Design

The study used a quantitative, descriptive-correlational survey design. The descriptive component determined the levels of invisible work, emotional labor, and professional commitment, while the correlational component determined whether invisible work and emotional labor are significantly related to professional commitment. No condition was manipulated and no intervention was introduced, so the design describes and relates variables but does not establish cause and effect (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fraenkel et al., 2019).

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Caramcam Elementary School, Purok 1, Caramcam District, Barangay Mangagoy, Bislig City, Surigao del Sur, Caraga Region, under the Schools Division of Bislig City. During School Year 2025–2026, the school had 29 teachers, two non-teaching personnel, and 745 learners from Kindergarten to Grade 6. It had a library or reading corner, a computer laboratory, internet connectivity, and projectors or televisions in rooms, and it implemented programs in literacy, numeracy, child protection, inclusive education, disaster risk reduction and management, school-based management, and ICT integration.

Sampling Technique

Because the population was small, total enumeration was used: all 29 teachers officially assigned at the school during School Year 2025–2026 were invited, regardless of grade level, position, or ancillary designation, and those who voluntarily agreed were included (Table 1). Non-teaching personnel, unassigned substitute personnel, and teachers who declined were excluded. All 29 teachers responded, and all 29 responses were valid for analysis.

Table 1. *Respondents of the Study*

Group	Population	Respondents
Elementary school teachers	29	29
TOTAL	**29**	**29**

Note. Total enumeration was used. Source: school profile, Caramcam Elementary School, School Year 2025–2026.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered with a researcher-made, three-part questionnaire of 75 scored items: 25 on invisible work, 25 on emotional labor, and 25 on professional commitment, each with five dimensions of five items. Invisible work covered documentation and reporting tasks; learner monitoring and follow-up; preparation of instructional and intervention materials; parent communication and coordination; and committee work and school program responsibilities. Emotional labor covered emotional regulation in teaching; patience and care for struggling learners; handling learner and parent concerns; maintaining professional composure; and managing stress from multiple responsibilities. Professional commitment covered commitment to learners, to instructional duties, to school responsibilities, and to professional growth, and intention to remain in the teaching profession. Items used a four-point scale (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree), and mean scores were interpreted as Very High (3.26–4.00), High (2.51–3.25), Low (1.76–2.50), or Very Low (1.00–1.75). Items were aligned with the statement of the problem and the theoretical frameworks, and internal consistency was examined with Cronbach's alpha, with .70 as the acceptable threshold.

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Data Gathering Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the concerned authorities and coordinated with the school head. Teachers were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to decline or withdraw. The questionnaires were administered, collected, checked for completeness, and encoded. Respondents were assigned codes, names were not used in the database, and responses were reported only in summarized form in keeping with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (National Privacy Commission, 2012).

Statistical Treatment

Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of invisible work, emotional labor, and professional commitment per dimension and overall. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the relationships between invisible work and professional commitment and between emotional labor and professional commitment, at the .05 level of significance. Correlation strength was interpreted as weak, moderate, or strong according to the size of r. The findings for Problems 1 to 5 served as the basis for the proposed program (Problem 6).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Invisible Work

Table 2 shows that the teachers' invisible work was Very High overall (M = 3.39, SD = 0.37), and every dimension was rated Very High. Teachers did a substantial amount of work beyond direct instruction, consistent with literature showing that teachers' work has intensified through documentation, accountability, and learner support duties (Creagh et al., 2025).

Table 2. *Level of Invisible Work Performed by Elementary School Teachers*

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Documentation and reporting tasks	3.37	0.46	Very High
Learner monitoring and follow-up	3.51	0.38	Very High
Preparation of instructional and intervention materials	3.43	0.42	Very High
Parent communication and coordination	3.28	0.52	Very High
Committee work and school program responsibilities	3.35	0.49	Very High
Overall	**3.39**	**0.37**	**Very High**

Note. Mean scale: 3.26–4.00 = Very High, 2.51–3.25 = High, 1.76–2.50 = Low, 1.00–1.75 = Very Low. N = 29.

Learner monitoring and follow-up had the highest mean (3.51), followed by preparation of instructional and intervention materials (3.43). Tracking progress, attendance, and behavior, and preparing remedial and intervention materials, are central in an elementary school with documented reading and numeracy concerns, yet much of this work happens outside teaching hours and is rarely counted. Documentation and reporting (3.37) and committee and program work (3.35) support accountability and school operations but may reduce time for rest, planning, and direct interaction with learners, in line with reports on time poverty and ancillary workload (Creagh et al., 2025; EDCOM II, 2025b). Parent communication and coordination had the lowest mean (3.28), which was still Very High and may reflect uneven parent availability and communication channels.

Level of Emotional Labor

As shown in Table 3, emotional labor was Very High overall (M = 3.43, SD = 0.39). Teachers were expected to stay patient, caring, and composed despite learner difficulties, parent concerns, and workload pressure, which is what emotional labor theory describes (Hochschild, 1983; Yin, 2016).

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Table 3. *Level of Emotional Labor Experienced by Elementary School Teachers*

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Emotional regulation in teaching	3.46	0.41	Very High
Patience and care for struggling learners	3.61	0.35	Very High
Handling learner and parent concerns	3.33	0.50	Very High
Maintaining professional composure	3.55	0.36	Very High
Managing stress from multiple responsibilities	3.18	0.59	High
Overall	**3.43**	**0.39**	**Very High**

Note. Mean scale: 3.26–4.00 = Very High, 2.51–3.25 = High, 1.76–2.50 = Low, 1.00–1.75 = Very Low. N = 29.

Patience and care for struggling learners (3.61) and maintaining professional composure (3.55) had the highest means, showing that professionalism was expressed largely through emotional control and sustained care for young learners. Managing stress from multiple responsibilities (3.18) was the only dimension of emotional labor rated High rather than Very High, and it also had the widest spread of responses (SD = 0.59). This suggests that teachers may appear calm and caring while finding the accumulated load harder to manage internally, so support should address strain as well as recognize professionalism.

Level of Professional Commitment

Table 4 shows Very High professional commitment overall (M = 3.45, SD = 0.36), indicating strong dedication to learners, instructional duties, school responsibilities, and professional growth (Day, 2008; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Table 4. *Level of Professional Commitment of Elementary School Teachers*

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Commitment to learners	3.68	0.30	Very High
Commitment to instructional duties	3.56	0.34	Very High
Commitment to school responsibilities	3.31	0.48	Very High
Commitment to professional growth	3.47	0.40	Very High
Intention to remain in the teaching profession	3.24	0.61	High
Overall	**3.45**	**0.36**	**Very High**

Note. Mean scale: 3.26–4.00 = Very High, 2.51–3.25 = High, 1.76–2.50 = Low, 1.00–1.75 = Very Low. N = 29.

Commitment to learners (3.68) was the strongest dimension, followed by commitment to instructional duties (3.56), so teachers' commitment was anchored chiefly in learner welfare and teaching. Commitment to school responsibilities (3.31) was lower, which is understandable because school responsibilities often add to workload. Intention to remain in the teaching profession had the lowest mean (3.24) and the widest spread (SD = 0.61) and was the only commitment dimension rated High. Teachers can therefore be deeply dedicated to their work while their long-term intention to stay is comparatively less firm, a pattern consistent with the coexistence of high commitment and strain reported in TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2020).

Relationship Between Invisible Work, Emotional Labor, and Professional Commitment

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlations. Invisible work had a significant moderate positive relationship with professional commitment ($r = .586$, $p = .001$), and emotional labor had a significant strong positive relationship with professional commitment ($r = .694$, $p < .001$). Both null hypotheses were rejected.

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Table 5. *Relationship of Invisible Work and Emotional Labor With Professional Commitment*

Variables correlated	r	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Invisible work and professional commitment	.586	.001	Significant moderate positive	Reject Ho1
Emotional labor and professional commitment	.694	< .001	Significant strong positive	Reject Ho2

Note. N = 29. Pearson product-moment correlation; significance level = .05.

Invisible work and professional commitment

Teachers who reported more invisible work also tended to report stronger commitment, suggesting that hidden tasks such as learner follow-up and preparation of intervention materials may be experienced as extensions of teachers' commitment to learners. This should not be read as evidence that more hidden work builds commitment. The design is cross-sectional and the data are self-reported, so the association may also mean that highly committed teachers are the ones who accept and sustain more invisible work. Because invisible work was Very High while intention to remain was only High, such work may become a long-term strain if it is not recognized, shared, and supported, as the Job Demands–Resources model would predict (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Emotional labor and professional commitment

The stronger relationship for emotional labor may reflect that its highest dimensions, patience and care for struggling learners and professional composure, align closely with the highest commitment dimension, commitment to learners. Emotional labor may thus express teachers' professional identity as well as burden. At the same time, composure without emotional support can become exhausting, and the lowest dimensions of both variables (managing stress and intention to remain) point to a need for support that maintains commitment over time. With N = 29 and a single school, the coefficients are also imprecise and should be treated as indicative.

Proposed Teacher Well-Being and Support Program

The findings were used to propose a Teacher Well-Being and Support Program (Table 6) built on three observations: invisible work and emotional labor were Very High; stress management and intention to remain were the weakest dimensions; and both variables were positively related to commitment, which the program seeks to protect rather than exploit.

Table 6. *Proposed Teacher Well-Being and Support Program*

Component	Key activities	Expected output
Workload mapping and task review	Map recurring documentation, monitoring, committee, and program tasks; review task distribution.	Fairer distribution of tasks; clearer view of invisible work
Documentation and reporting support	Shared templates, filing schedules, and report checklists; assistance for recurring reports.	Lighter, more organized paperwork
Learner monitoring support	Simple tracking tools for attendance, reading progress, and follow-up.	Less duplicated recording
Emotional wellness and stress management	Wellness check-ins, stress management sessions, peer sharing, and referral where needed.	Better emotional support and stress management
Peer mentoring and material sharing	Mentoring pairs, collaborative planning, and sharing of instructional materials.	Stronger collegial support; shared preparation load
Recognition of invisible work	Recognize follow-up, communication, preparation, and program support in meetings and school activities.	Greater appreciation and sustained morale
Parent communication protocols	Agreed schedules, templates, and referral procedures for learner concerns.	More organized communication; reduced strain

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Component	Key activities	Expected output
Professional growth and commitment support	Learning action cell sessions on workload management, emotional regulation, and teacher well-being.	Sustained commitment and intention to remain

Note. Components were derived from the descriptive and correlational findings. The program has not been implemented or evaluated.

Learner monitoring and material preparation had the highest invisible work means, so the program shares these tasks through tools and peer mentoring. Patience and composure carried the highest emotional labor means and stress management the lowest, so it provides stress support so teachers need not carry emotional demands silently. Because intention to remain was the weakest commitment dimension, recognition and professional growth components aim to sustain long-term commitment. The program should be implemented and evaluated in the school year using teacher feedback, workload records, and a follow-up assessment of the three variables.

CONCLUSION

Elementary school teachers of Caramcam Elementary School reported Very High invisible work, emotional labor, and professional commitment. Their strongest dimensions were learner monitoring and follow-up, patience and care for struggling learners, and commitment to learners, while managing stress and intention to remain were comparatively weaker. Invisible work and emotional labor were both significantly and positively related to professional commitment, with the stronger relationship for emotional labor, but these cross-sectional associations are not causal and may partly reflect that committed teachers absorb more hidden work. The findings justify a school-based program that recognizes invisible work, shares workload, supports emotional well-being, and strengthens professional growth. School heads and the School Improvement Planning Team may include the program in the school improvement plan and learning action cell activities, and monitor teachers' workload and well-being using aggregated data.

The study is limited to one school, relies on teachers' self-reports, and excludes other factors that may influence commitment, such as salary, school climate, burnout, job satisfaction, and years of experience. Future studies may replicate it in other schools, divisions, or regions, use larger samples and additional methods such as interviews, and evaluate the program after implementation.

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