

# Ethical Leadership of School Heads and Emotional Intelligence of Teachers: Basis for Action Plan

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## Abstract

This study examined the level of ethical leadership practices of school heads and the emotional intelligence of teachers in the Schools Division of Ifugao. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 121 respondents, comprising 110 teachers and 11 school heads. The results showed that school heads had a high level of ethical leadership ( $M = 3.57$ ), specifically in respectful communication, modeling of ethical behavior and promoting ethical values. Teachers also exhibited a very high level of emotional intelligence ( $M = 3.29$ ), with strengths in social awareness and inclusive practice, self-awareness and professionalism, interpersonal relationship and relationship building. On the other hand, the score in emotional regulation and self-control is somewhat lower ( $M=3.05$ ) but still interpreted as high. Data analysis showed no significant differences in ethical leadership practices when grouped according to age, sex, years in service, and educational attainment, indicating consistency across demographic profiles. However, a significant positive relationship was found between ethical leadership and teachers' emotional intelligence ( $r = .470, p < .01$ ), suggesting that ethical leadership is a strong predictor of teachers' emotional intelligence resulting to a very high social awareness of teachers. The study concludes that ethical leadership plays an essential role in fostering teachers' emotional intelligence, contributing to a positive school climate and effective professional relationships. Nonetheless, areas such as emotional regulation, communication openness, and decision-making consistency require further enhancement. The findings highlight the need for continuous leadership training and professional development programs focusing on both ethical leadership and emotional intelligence.

**Keywords:** Ethical Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Relationship-Building, Social Awareness, Professional Development, School Climate

## 1. Introduction

Ethical leadership in schools is a critical factor in sustaining a professional, supportive, and emotionally healthy educational environment. In the context of educational leadership, school heads are expected to uphold ethical standards, promote respect, demonstrate fairness, and provide clear direction in school governance. The reviewed literature emphasizes that teachers' emotional intelligence is shaped not only by personal competence but also by the ethical climate established by school leaders. Thus, this study focuses on the ethical leadership practices of school heads and their relationship with teachers' emotional intelligence in the Schools Division of Ifugao, with the findings intended to serve as basis for an action plan.

Professionals, particularly school administrators, are guided by the Code of Ethics in their daily operations, especially in showing respect, helpfulness, and sympathy toward faculty and staff while maintaining effective supervision, dignified administration, responsible leadership, and clear institutional vision. In the changing educational environment, ethical leadership has become increasingly significant because teachers face issues related to workload, school environment, and work-life balance, which may lead them to explore alternative careers or better opportunities (Ladres & Garcia, 2025). To address these concerns, schools need leaders who can encourage collaboration, provide emotional and professional support, promote respect, and maintain a clear vision for educational goals. Collaborative leadership fosters accountability, shared vision, innovation, and professional trust among school communities (Phebeni, 2025). School heads' ethical leadership significantly influences teachers' emotional intelligence and overall well-being. A positive environment that supports emotional growth can enhance teachers' emotional intelligence (Li et al., 2024), while unethical leadership may create stress, disrespect, and low emotional intelligence among teachers (Wilhelm, 2023). Schools operate within a dynamic and complex environment, making it necessary for school leaders to promote conditions that strengthen teachers' emotional intelligence because teacher well-being and professional behavior affect school performance (Asiimwe, 2025). Teaching is emotionally demanding, as teachers experience challenges such as new assessment tools, disruptive learners, heavy workloads, stressful work conditions, inconsiderate administrators, and parental expectations (Rahman et al., 2024). For

this reason, school heads must cultivate an ethical environment that promotes integrity, positive relationships, safety, inclusion, adaptability, and collaborative achievement.

The literature consistently presents ethical leadership as a leadership practice grounded in honesty, integrity, fairness, transparency, accountability, empathy, and concern for others. Ethical leadership allows school heads to balance their managerial and leadership responsibilities while protecting teacher welfare and building trust within the school community. Ethical Leadership is about embodying principles such as honesty, integrity and fairness in dealing with educational change (Clements, 2025). Ethical leadership of school leaders is likely to create an ethical and trusting work climate that promotes positive work behavior among teachers Vikaraman (2021). Similarly, school heads who demonstrate honesty, fairness, responsibility, and transparency can improve teachers' job satisfaction, performance, competence, emotional intelligence, professional development, psychological safety, and collaboration (Sabir, 2022). Factors such as school needs, teacher needs, innovative practices, student performance, policy refinement, and educational improvement also affect ethical leadership practices and teachers' emotional intelligence (Vikaraman et al., 2021). The reviewed studies also indicate that ethical leadership strengthens emotional intelligence by creating a supportive and respectful work environment. The school environment plays an important role in shaping teachers' Emotional Intelligence, and Daniel Goleman (2020) asserts that trust, empathy, relationship management, and social awareness are essential to strong interpersonal relationships. Supportive school climates can strengthen teachers' emotional competencies (Nayak, 2023), while positive school culture allows teachers and students to feel valued, respected, and motivated (Pruitt, 2024). Ethical leadership fosters integrity, respect, and trust, thereby supporting psychological qualities such as emotional intelligence (Luthans et al., 2021). The concept of ethical leadership has gained scholarly attention because unethical behavior in organizations is often associated with failure to promote ethical conduct (Budur & Demir, 2019). Ethical leadership is therefore considered an essential leadership style that improves followers' emotions and contributes to favorable organizational outcomes (Al-Mualm, 2023). Several studies link ethical leadership with teacher commitment, professionalism, job satisfaction, and positive work behavior. Ethical leadership promotes positive psychological outcomes such as good behavior at work and emotional competence (Brown & Treviño, 2022). Teachers' interpersonal skills and ability to establish supportive learning environments are significantly affected by ethical leadership, especially when school administrators demonstrate honesty, justice, and ethical role modeling (Nawaz et al., 2022). Ethical leadership also promotes accountability, openness, and justice, which encourage ethical employee behavior (Guo et al. 2022), stronger organizational engagement, teacher performance, and favorable school climate (Capuyan & Tabile 2024). Fernandez, (2026) also highlights that ethical leadership practices of school heads positively affect teachers' organizational commitment and professionalism, particularly through fairness, justice, integrity, transparency, and role modeling. The literature further emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence in teacher performance and effectiveness. Teachers with high emotional intelligence are more capable of managing stress, maintaining relationships, and coping with classroom and workplace challenges (Galvez & Lugo, 2025). Emotional intelligence supports teachers' ability to manage diversity and use inclusive teaching strategies (Ahmad et al., 2024). Teachers' responsibility, empathy, professional engagement, and emotional competence also influence productivity and workplace climate (Aldrup et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence is essential in inclusive education because it is connected with intercultural sensitivity and recognition of cultural differences (Gómez et al., 2026). Emotionally intelligent teachers are more sympathetic, flexible, and responsive to diverse learners (Khattak et al., 2025), and they are more likely to engage in self-reflection, professional growth, and student-centered teaching practices (Muñoz et al., 2024); Romero et al. (2024). However, administrative burden may reduce teachers' output despite their competence in professional and self-awareness domains (Nhidza et al., 2024)

Locally, this study is situated in selected public high schools in Schools Division of Ifugao during School Year 2025–2026. The study focuses on school heads, senior high school teachers, and stakeholders who have direct experience with school leadership practices and teachers' emotional intelligence. The Ifugao context provides a relevant educational setting for examining how ethical leadership operates in schools with diverse community conditions and how such leadership may contribute to teacher well-being, professional relationships, and school effectiveness. At the national and institutional level, the study is relevant to the Department of Education because it can provide information for designing leadership development programs, policies, and interventions that strengthen ethical leadership and improve teachers' workplace experiences. The findings may also support school heads in developing leadership practices that foster positive relationships, professionalism, collaboration, and supportive school climates. Schools in Ifugao, including private institutions, may use the findings to address similar concerns related to ethical leadership and teachers' emotional intelligence. Globally, the study relates to continuing discussions on educational leadership, teacher well-being, and school effectiveness. Effective leadership requires guiding schools through continuous change while maintaining ethical standards (Fullan, 2023). Ethical leadership also affects school culture by embedding dignity, fairness, and respect in daily practices (Clements, 2025), while leaders who anchor their decisions in ethics are better able to act in the best interest of the school community (Nagl, 2023). Ethical leadership is also linked to inclusivity, social justice, compassion, humility, and organizational trust (Phillip, 2025), while intelligent accountability and transparent self-evaluation support schools in working effectively toward the common good (Woods & David, 2020).

The study is anchored on the premise that ethical leadership of school heads influences the emotional intelligence of teachers. The conceptual framework follows an Input-Process-Output model in which profile of the respondents serves as the input, ethical leadership of school heads and emotional intelligence of teachers function as the process and improved ethical leadership of school heads and emotional intelligence of teachers, and proposed action plan as the output. Ethical leadership is reflected in integrity, fairness, accountability, people orientation, and ethical guidance, while emotional intelligence is examined in terms of relationship-building, emotional regulation and self-control, social awareness and inclusive practice, interpersonal relationship, and self-awareness and professionalism. The framework assumes that when school heads demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors, teachers are more likely to develop stronger emotional intelligence, particularly in managing emotions, building relationships, practicing social awareness, maintaining interpersonal relationships, and demonstrating professionalism. This is consistent with the view that the primary role of school leaders is to encourage, capacitate, and enrich teachers' efficacy and well-being (Pont et al., 2008). It also aligns with studies showing that effective leadership supports teachers' emotional intelligence and job satisfaction (Salip & Quines, 2023), relationship management affects teacher motivation and collaboration (Williams, 2024), and school principal leadership influences teacher work behavior and school success (Ramlah & Mahmud, 2023). The framework also recognizes that school heads' ethical leadership and teachers' emotional intelligence are interrelated and may influence the development of an action plan. Such an action plan may include training, programs, and strategies aimed at improving ethical leadership practices among school heads and enhancing teachers' emotional intelligence to promote a positive organizational climate and improved educational outcomes.

Existing research often focuses on the emotional intelligence of school leaders, leadership styles, personal factors, professional contexts of school heads, and external factors affecting teachers' emotional intelligence, such as social support, family, community culture, and curriculum reform. However, there remains a need to examine how the ethical leadership of school heads may be associated with teachers' emotional intelligence, school performance, and well-being. This study addresses that gap by determining the relationship between ethical leadership practices of school heads and teachers' emotional intelligence in the Schools Division of Ifugao. The rationale of the study is supported by studies showing that ethical leadership affects teachers' morale, organizational behavior, work values, and professional functioning. Ethical administrative school leaders can positively affect their schools (Tenuto & Gardiner, 2018) as cited by Sam 2021. Ethical leadership positively influences teachers' emotional and social competencies (Wang & Xu, 2023), while relationship management among school principals promotes teachers' well-being and emotional climate (Buskila & Levi, 2021). School heads' instructional management, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills are also significantly related to teachers' work values (Grande et al., (2024), and ethical leadership fosters a positive school environment necessary for educational leadership (Ortiz et al., 2025). Ethical leadership also has positive effects on employees' emotional intelligence and organizational commitment (Adan & Njuguna, 2024), and the ethical leadership of school heads plays a significant role in teachers' organizational behavior, attitudes, and performance perceptions (Özdoğan & Sarier, 2024). The study is further justified by research showing the effect of teachers' emotional intelligence on teaching and learning. Teachers' emotional intelligence affects students' involvement and task orientation (Nasreen, 2021), while teachers with higher emotional intelligence show better coping mechanisms, self-efficacy, and work engagement (Geraci et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence is linked to classroom engagement and effective student interactions (Abiodullah & Aslam, 2020), resilience, emotional control, and flexibility (Konstantinos et al., 2021), and job performance and stress management (Abraham et al., 2022). However, strengthening teachers' emotion regulation competence through contextualized training remains important (Vogl et al., 2025). Since teachers' productivity is related to emotional intelligence (Dilag et al., 2021), and high emotional intelligence improves teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Anshu, 2025), the present study provides a relevant basis for an action plan that supports both ethical leadership and teachers' emotional intelligence.

This study directly aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education since it focuses on school leadership practices and teacher emotional intelligence, both of which contribute to equitable, inclusive, and high-quality educational environments. Ethical school heads promote respect, trust, fairness, and inclusiveness, which are necessary for improving teacher well-being and sustaining a supportive school climate. Emotionally intelligent teachers are better able to manage their feelings, respond thoughtfully to learners and colleagues, and provide emotional support that contributes to holistic student development. In this sense, ethical leadership and teachers' emotional intelligence support the delivery of quality education and lifelong learning. The study also indirectly supports SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being because it emphasizes teachers' emotional regulation, stress management, well-being, empathy, resilience, and workplace support. Teachers face emotionally demanding conditions, and ethical leadership can reduce stress and promote a healthier professional environment. It also supports SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions because ethical leadership is connected to fairness, accountability, transparency, justice, ethical decision-making, and responsible governance within schools. In addition, SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals is reflected in the involvement of stakeholders and the recognition that school heads, teachers, parents, and community members contribute to stronger educational systems and sustainable school improvement.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by strengthening the connection between ethical leadership and teachers' emotional intelligence as foundations for quality teaching, positive school climate, and professional development. It also contributes to institutional sustainability given that ethical leadership supports accountability, transparency, trust, and consistent leadership practices within schools. When school heads practice integrity, fairness, accountability, and ethical guidance, they help create a workplace where teachers can sustain motivation, collaboration, and professionalism. The study also supports socio-emotional and public health sustainability by addressing teachers' emotional well-being, stress management, relationship-building, and social awareness. Emotionally intelligent teachers are more capable of maintaining positive interactions with learners and colleagues, managing conflict, and responding to diverse classroom realities. In addition, the study contributes to community and governance sustainability due to schools operate within broader social environments where ethical leadership, stakeholder trust, and collaborative decision-making influence school effectiveness. Overall, the research provides a multidisciplinary basis for developing an action plan that enhances school leadership, teacher emotional intelligence, organizational climate, and the long-term quality of education in the Schools Division of Ifugao.

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## **2. Material and methods**

### **2.1 Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to describe the characteristics, perceptions, and responses of the target population and to examine the relationship between ethical leadership practices of school heads and the emotional intelligence of teachers without manipulating the variables. To further explore the ethical leadership of school heads, a qualitative component through interviews and focus group discussion was also conducted among stakeholders to validate the responses obtained from the quantitative survey.

### **2.2 Respondents and Locale of the Study**

The respondents of the study were 11 school heads and 110 Senior High School teachers in selected schools of SDO Ifugao that provides a diverse setting for examining ethical leadership and teachers' emotional intelligence. The school heads represented administrative leadership, while the teachers served as key respondents in assessing ethical leadership practices and emotional intelligence in the school setting. Stakeholders from the same schools were also included through interviews using a modified questionnaire based on the quantitative instrument to support the validation of the gathered data.

### **2.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The study used purposive sampling to ensure that only participants with direct knowledge and experience of ethical leadership practices and emotional intelligence in the school setting were included. School heads were selected based on their administrative roles in Senior High School, while teachers were included based on their teaching assignment and direct interaction with the school heads being assessed. The sampling procedure allowed the researcher to gather relevant data from participants who were directly involved in the leadership and professional environment being studied.

### **2.4 Research Instrument**

The researcher adapted and utilized survey questionnaires for the study. The first part was a self-made questionnaire based on the Khan and Javed Ethical Leadership Questionnaire, a revised questionnaire from Brown (2016), which includes the factors of Moral Person and Moral Manager and was contextualized for education. This part was intended for school heads to determine the level of their ethical leadership practice. The second part measured the emotional intelligence of Senior High School teachers and was based on Karalyn M. Tom Social-Emotional Competence Teacher Rating Scale (SECTRS). The instrument measured relationship-building, emotional regulation and self-control, social awareness and inclusive practice, interpersonal relationship, and self-awareness and professionalism. Both tools used a 4-point Likert scale, with 4 interpreted as Strongly Agree, 3 as Agree, 2 as Disagree, and 1 as Strongly Disagree.

### **2.5 Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher first identified existing school problems that required action to improve school performance, then developed and presented the research proposal for approval. After the title was approved, the researcher prepared the study, reviewed and adapted appropriate questionnaires, and submitted the finalized instrument to experts for content validation. After the instrument was ready, the researcher requested permission from the Public School District Supervisor to conduct pilot testing and subsequently sought approval from the school heads of the Senior High Schools involved. After pilot testing and reliability checking, the researcher requested permission from the Assistant Schools Division Superintendent and distributed letters to conduct the study in the Schools Division of Ifugao. Stakeholders with active participation in school meetings and activities were also identified for interviews. After data collection, the researcher gathered, organized, and analyzed the responses.

## 2.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The study used mean and standard deviation to analyze and interpret the responses. The mean was used to determine the average level of responses per indicator, while the standard deviation measured the variability of responses. The interpretation scale classified 3.26–4.00 as Strongly Agree, 2.51–3.25 as Agree, 1.76–2.50 as Disagree, and 1.00–1.75 as Strongly Disagree. An independent-sample t-test was used to determine significant differences in ethical leadership practices when grouped according to sex and years in service, while one-way analysis of variance was used to determine significant differences when grouped according to age and highest educational attainment. Pearson r was used to determine the significant relationship between the ethical leadership practices of school heads and teachers' emotional intelligence, with correlation coefficients interpreted as Very Strong for 0.80–1.000, Strong for 0.60–0.799, Moderate for 0.40–0.599, Weak for 0.20–0.399, and Very Weak for lower coefficients.

## 2.7 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards by protecting the rights and welfare of participants. Informed consent was secured to ensure that respondents understood the nature and purpose of the study before participating. The consent form explained that the survey examined the ethical leadership of school heads and teachers' emotional intelligence and that participants might experience mild discomfort when expressing personal views about ethical leadership practices. Respondents were informed of their right to refuse to answer any item or withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. The researcher also clarified that the data would be used only for research purposes and that individual responses would remain confidential and would not be disclosed to school heads or administrative personnel.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Profile of School Heads

#### 3.1.1 Demographic and Professional Characteristics

The results showed that most school heads were in the middle-age group, with the largest proportion aged 41–45 years old ( $n = 4$ , 30.77%), followed by those aged 36–40 and 46–50 years old, both with 23.08%. Most respondents were female ( $n = 7$ , 53.85%), while males comprised 46.15%. In terms of educational attainment, Bachelor's degree holders and MA graduates were equally represented at 38.46% each, while those with MA units, doctorate units, and doctorate degrees each represented 7.69%. For years in service, most school heads had more than 10 years of experience ( $n = 10$ , 76.92%), indicating that the respondents were generally experienced in school leadership. These findings suggest that the school heads were mostly mature, professionally experienced, and exposed to school management responsibilities for a substantial period. Their educational background and length of service indicate that they had developed institutional familiarity and leadership competence, which may support the consistent practice of ethical leadership in their respective schools.

### 3.2 Ethical Leadership Practices of School Heads

#### 3.2.1 Level of Ethical Leadership Practice

The findings revealed a very high level of ethical leadership practice among school heads in the Schools Division of Ifugao, with an overall mean of 3.57 and standard deviation of 0.43. All indicators were rated strongly agree, showing consistently positive perceptions of ethical leadership. The highest-rated indicator was communicating with teachers and students with respect ( $M = 3.73$ ), followed by modeling ethical behavior by doing things the right way ( $M = 3.66$ ), supporting individual initiatives ( $M = 3.65$ ), and talking with employees about ethics and school values ( $M = 3.65$ ). Other highly rated indicators included honesty, accountability, prioritizing teacher welfare, listening to teachers and staff, recognizing ethical behavior, consulting teachers before decision-making, and demonstrating compassion. The relatively lower but still strongly agreed indicators were enforcing discipline based on ethical guidelines, promoting employees based on ethical conduct, ensuring certainty in ethical decisions when the school head is absent, and making impartial and just decisions. The results indicate that school heads strongly demonstrate ethical leadership through respect, transparency, accountability, fairness, and ethical role modeling. Stakeholder responses also confirmed that school heads practice inclusive communication, participatory decision-making, and fairness, although one response from stakeholder suggested that immediate schedule changes without prior consultation could still be improved. Recent studies support these findings, as ethical leadership increases teachers' moral motivation when administrators exhibit honesty, justice, and ethical role modeling, according to Khan et al. (2020). The ethical leadership qualities of school heads, such as integrity, fairness, empathy, and accountability, shape a positive and productive school environment (Clements, 2025). Similarly, ethical leadership promotes accountability, openness, and justice (Guo et al., 2022), strengthens organizational engagement and school climate (Capuyan & Tabile, 2024), and improves organizational fairness, trust, teachers' commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction (Özdoğan & Sarier, 2024).

### 3.3 Emotional Intelligence of Teachers

#### 3.3.1 Relationship-Building

The results showed that teachers had a very high level of emotional intelligence in relationship-building, with an overall mean of 3.28 and standard deviation of 0.43. Teachers rated highest in maintaining good relationships with students ( $M = 3.54$ ), followed by being comfortable in meaningful conversation with students ( $M = 3.45$ ), creating a supportive classroom

community ( $M = 3.40$ ), and establishing positive relationships with families ( $M = 3.40$ ). They also showed strong awareness and understanding of students' feelings and emotions. However, lower but still high ratings were observed in students sharing problems with teachers ( $M = 3.11$ ), engaging in honest conversations ( $M = 3.02$ ), and seeking counsel during vacant time ( $M = 2.94$ ). These findings suggest that teachers are generally effective in building positive relationships with students, families, and the school community, although further improvement is needed in strengthening student trust, openness, and help-seeking behavior. Stakeholder responses indicated that when teachers feel supported by school heads, they are more confident in building good relationships and supportive classroom communities. This finding is supported by Daniel Goleman (2020), who asserts that trust, empathy, relationship management, and social awareness are important in developing strong interpersonal interactions. A positive school culture allows staff and students to feel appreciated, respected, and motivated (Pruitt, 2024). Ethical leadership also fosters emotional intelligence by creating an environment of integrity, respect, and trust, as shown by Luthans et al. (2021), while Nawaz et al. (2022) found that ethical leadership significantly affects teachers' interpersonal skills and capacity to establish encouraging learning environments.

### **3.3.2 Emotional Regulation and Self-Control**

The results showed that teachers had a high level of emotional intelligence in emotional regulation and self-control, with an overall mean of 3.05 and standard deviation of 0.35. The highest-rated indicators were maintaining professionalism despite personal frustration ( $M = 3.31$ ) and seeking positive outlets when stressed ( $M = 3.27$ ), both interpreted as very high. Other indicators, such as staying patient when students commit mistakes, exercising emotional self-control, remaining composed under pressure, reflecting on feelings before responding, and staying calm when addressing misbehavior, were interpreted as high. The lower-rated indicators were getting upset without understanding why and getting upset when provoked by students, though these were still within a manageable level. These results indicate that teachers generally possess emotional maturity, professionalism, and self-control, but they may still need support in identifying emotional triggers and managing stress-related reactions. Stakeholder feedback also showed that school heads who listen to teachers' ideas and criticisms help create a setting where teachers feel safe and heard. The findings are supported by Daniel Goleman (2020), who emphasized that self-awareness and self-regulation are key elements of emotional intelligence, particularly in high-stress situations like teaching. Konstantinos et al. (2021) also showed that individuals with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate greater resilience, emotional control, and flexibility. Likewise, Abraham et al. (2022) found that emotional intelligence improves well-being and job performance by enhancing employees' ability to manage emotions and stress.

### **3.3.3 Social Awareness and Inclusive Practice**

The results revealed a very high level of emotional intelligence in social awareness and inclusive practice, with an overall mean of 3.48 and standard deviation of 0.40. The highest-rated indicator was prioritizing students' safety ( $M = 3.60$ ), followed by respecting individual and group differences ( $M = 3.58$ ) and appreciating individual and group differences ( $M = 3.53$ ). Teachers also rated very high in considering ethical and legal implications, considering students' welfare when making judgments, ensuring culturally sensitive instruction, showing respect and compassion, and promoting inclusion. The comparatively lower indicators were seeking feedback from colleagues to enhance self-understanding and recognizing emotions that affect students, although both remained very high. These findings indicate that teachers demonstrate strong responsibility, respect for diversity, cultural sensitivity, and inclusive behavior. The slightly lower ratings on feedback-seeking and self-understanding suggest that reflective practice and collaboration may still be strengthened. The findings are supported by Gómez et al. (2026), who emphasized that emotional intelligence is important in inclusive education because it is positively related to intercultural sensitivity and respect for cultural differences. Ahmad et al. (2024) also stressed that emotional intelligence equips teachers to address diversity and use inclusive teaching methods. Khattak et al. (2025) further explained that emotionally intelligent teachers are sympathetic, flexible, and responsive to diverse learners, while Calandri et al. (2025) found that emotional intelligence enhances teachers' attitudes and interactions in inclusive classrooms.

### **3.3.4 Interpersonal Relationship**

The results showed that teachers had a very high level of emotional intelligence in interpersonal relationship, with an overall mean of 3.28 and standard deviation of 0.40. The highest-rated indicator was building trust through active listening with parents ( $M = 3.48$ ), followed by feeling comfortable talking to parents ( $M = 3.41$ ), considering the emotions of colleagues ( $M = 3.40$ ), and fostering positive interaction among employees ( $M = 3.40$ ). Teachers also showed very high levels of sensitivity to the needs of students and colleagues, effective collaboration with colleagues, and being respected by colleagues. Lower but still high ratings were observed in negotiating solutions effectively with colleagues, expressing feelings openly, and being asked for advice by colleagues. These findings suggest that teachers are effective in building trust, communicating with parents, collaborating with colleagues, and maintaining positive professional relationships. However, assertiveness, open emotional expression, negotiation, and peer influence may still be improved. Nwosu et al. (2023) found that teachers with high emotional intelligence are more likely to develop positive relationships with colleagues and demonstrate supportive behaviors. Arias-Pastor et al. (2023) emphasized that emotional intelligence improves interpersonal dynamics, empathy, and communication skills. Graziano et al. (2024) also highlighted that

emotional competence affects teachers' empathy and interpersonal skills, while Romero et al. (2024) observed that emotional intelligence fosters trust and cooperation. The lower communication-related indicators are consistent with Muñoz Martínez et al. (2024), who noted that teachers may be less confident in expressing emotions and engaging in negotiations.

### **3.3.5 Self-awareness and Professionalism**

The findings showed that teachers had a very high level of emotional intelligence in self-awareness and professionalism, with an overall mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.40. The highest-rated indicator was maintaining accurate and up-to-date student records with confidentiality ( $M = 3.46$ ), followed by participating in professional development activities ( $M = 3.42$ ) and reflecting on personal teaching strengths and areas for growth ( $M = 3.40$ ). Teachers also rated very high in participating in school meetings, managing classroom routines, setting professional development goals, practicing self-care, promoting diverse learning styles, contributing ideas, and preparing instructional materials. The lowest indicator was ensuring administrative requirements are met without delay ( $M = 3.22$ ), which was still interpreted as high. These findings indicate that teachers demonstrate responsibility, preparedness, ethical conduct, reflective practice, and commitment to professional growth. However, timely compliance with administrative requirements still needs attention. The qualitative example showed that when a teacher delayed submitting a lesson plan, the teacher corrected the lapse and the school head responded with appreciation and support for better time management. This indicates that supportive ethical leadership can turn administrative delay into an opportunity for improvement. The findings are supported by Matjie (2025), who emphasized that emotional intelligence enhances teachers' reflective practices, professional growth, and responsiveness to diverse learners. Aldrup et al. (2023) found a strong correlation between responsibility, empathy, professional engagement, and emotional competence. Savina et al. (2025) also noted that teachers with high emotional competency engage in ongoing learning, self-reflection, and effective professional behaviors. Landry (2019) linked emotional intelligence to better organizational strategies and student-centered methods, while Nhidza et al. (2024) noted that administrative demands may hinder timely task performance.

### **3.3.6 Summary of Emotional Intelligence Domains**

The overall emotional intelligence of teachers was very high, with a composite mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 0.32. Among the five domains, social awareness and inclusive practice obtained the highest mean ( $M = 3.48$ ), followed by self-awareness and professionalism ( $M = 3.34$ ). Relationship-building and interpersonal relationship had identical means ( $M = 3.28$ ), while emotional regulation and self-control recorded the lowest mean ( $M = 3.05$ ), although it was still interpreted as high. These results suggest that teachers possess strong emotional competencies, particularly in social awareness, inclusion, professional responsibility, and relationship-building. However, emotional regulation remains the domain with the greatest need for further enhancement. The results are consistent with Brackett et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in teaching and found that teachers with high emotional intelligence create supportive classroom environments and improve student engagement. Vogl et al. (2025) also found that emotional regulation enhances teaching efficacy, supports a positive learning atmosphere, and affects psychological well-being. A nurturing environment can improve teachers' ability to manage emotions and engage effectively with students (Nayak, 2023). Teachers with high emotional intelligence are also better equipped to cope with stress and manage relationships with students and colleagues (Galvez & Lugo, 2025). Similarly, emotionally intelligent teachers improve classroom management, teacher-student relationships, and emotional stability (Shifa & Shoukat, 2025).

## **3.4 Differences in Ethical Leadership Practices by Profile**

### **3.4.1 Sex and Years in Service**

The independent-samples t-test showed no significant difference in ethical leadership practices when school heads were grouped according to sex and years in service. Male school heads obtained a mean of 3.64, while female school heads obtained a mean of 3.55, with the difference not statistically significant,  $t(61) = 1.05$ ,  $p = .30$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.43$ . Similarly, no significant difference was found according to years in service, as school heads with 4–7 years of service obtained a mean of 3.61, while those with more than 10 years obtained a mean of 3.57,  $t(61) = 0.21$ ,  $p = .84$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.43$ . These findings indicate that ethical leadership practices are consistently demonstrated regardless of sex and years in service. Ethical leadership appears to be a professional competency that goes beyond personal and experiential differences. This is supported by Lparsons (2025), who stated that ethical leaders develop these characteristics through years of experience and training. Geribo (2025) also emphasized that ethical leadership and professional standards guide educators, administrators, and policy makers in decision-making and educational interactions, suggesting that ethical competence is strengthened through professional development rather than sex or tenure alone.

### **3.4.2 Age and Highest Educational Attainment**

The one-way analysis of variance showed no significant difference in ethical leadership practices when school heads were grouped according to age and highest educational attainment. For age, the result was not statistically significant,  $F = 1.75$ ,  $p = .14$ , although school heads aged 41–45 obtained the highest mean ( $M = 3.77$ ), followed by those aged 36–40 ( $M = 3.66$ ), 51–55 ( $M = 3.57$ ), and 56 and above ( $M = 3.55$ ). For highest educational attainment, no significant difference was

also found,  $F = 0.89$ ,  $p = .47$ . Those with doctorate degrees obtained the highest mean ( $M = 3.86$ ), followed by those with MA units, Bachelor's degrees, doctorate units, and MA graduates, but these variations were not statistically significant. These results imply that age and educational attainment do not significantly influence school heads' ethical leadership practices. Ethical leadership appears to be shaped more by shared professional standards, values, leadership experience, and organizational practices than by demographic or academic profile. The finding is parallel to Fernandez (2026), who found no significant difference in ethical leadership practices of school heads when grouped according to sex, age, years in service, and highest educational attainment. Ahmedtelba (2026) also emphasized that leadership is not automatic or constant but develops through experience, values, and conscious choice.

### **3.5 Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Teachers' Emotional Intelligence**

#### **3.5.1 Correlation of Study Variables**

The correlation analysis showed that ethical leadership practice was positively and significantly related to all domains of teachers' emotional intelligence. Ethical leadership had moderate positive correlations with interpersonal relationship ( $r = .455$ ,  $p < .01$ ), relationship-building ( $r = .447$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and social awareness and inclusive practice ( $r = .409$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It also had weak positive correlations with self-awareness and professionalism ( $r = .333$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and emotional regulation and self-control ( $r = .232$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Overall, ethical leadership practice was moderately correlated with teachers' emotional intelligence ( $r = .470$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The intercorrelations among emotional intelligence domains were also strong to very strong, with interpersonal relationship showing the strongest correlation with overall emotional intelligence ( $r = .881$ ,  $p < .01$ ), followed by self-awareness and professionalism ( $r = .828$ ,  $p < .01$ ), relationship-building ( $r = .803$ ,  $p < .01$ ), social awareness and inclusive practice ( $r = .768$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and emotional regulation and self-control ( $r = .750$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These findings confirm that ethical leadership is significantly related to teachers' emotional intelligence. School heads who demonstrate ethical leadership contribute to the development of teachers' emotional and social competencies, particularly in interpersonal relationship, self-awareness and professionalism, relationship-building, social awareness, and emotional regulation. Stakeholder responses also affirmed that ethical leadership inspires confidence and motivates stakeholders to work together toward shared goals. The findings are supported by Brown and Treviño (2022), who stated that ethical leadership promotes positive psychological outcomes such as good behavior at work and emotional competence. Cereno and Quinito (2025) also reported that school heads influence teacher development by fostering collaboration, maintaining ethical standards, and managing instructional environments. The strong intercorrelations among emotional intelligence domains are consistent with Miao et al. (2022), who found that emotional intelligence domains are strongly connected and collectively contribute to job performance and collaboration. Likewise, Luthans et al. (2021) stated that ethical leadership fosters positive psychological qualities, including emotional intelligence, by creating an environment of integrity, respect, and trust.

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## **4. Conclusion & Recommendations**

The study concludes that school heads in the Schools Division of Ifugao demonstrated a high level of ethical leadership, particularly in upholding ethical standards, promoting positive relationships, and fostering a supportive school environment. Teachers also demonstrated a very high level of emotional intelligence, especially in social awareness and inclusive practice, self-awareness and professionalism, relationship-building, and interpersonal relationships, although emotional regulation and self-control remained relatively lower. Ethical leadership practices did not significantly differ when grouped according to school heads' profile variables, suggesting that ethical leadership is shaped more by organizational values, principles, and professional development than by personal characteristics. Overall, ethical leadership was found to significantly influence teachers' emotional intelligence by promoting trust, respect, open communication, professional relationships, and a positive school climate.

It is recommended that school heads strengthen decision-making consistency, ethical discipline, respect, ethical role modeling, and support for teachers' independent but meaningful decision-making through continuous leadership training. Teachers should participate in professional development programs focused on emotional regulation, self-control, openness, trust-building, and student counseling. Educational leaders should design and implement enhancement programs on emotional and self-regulation, institutionalize ethical leadership practices, and provide support systems that address teachers' well-being and professional efficacy. The Department of Education should integrate ethical leadership and emotional intelligence training into leadership development programs, Learning Action Cell sessions, seminars, and continuous professional learning activities. Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other divisions, use qualitative methods for deeper insights, and explore related variables such as organizational culture and teachers' competency.

The study was limited to selected public senior high schools in the Schools Division of Ifugao during School Year 2025–2026; therefore, the findings may not be generalized to schools outside the covered respondents and locale. It focused only on ethical leadership practices of school heads and teachers' emotional intelligence, specifically in terms of relationship-building, emotional regulation and self-control, social awareness and inclusive practice, interpersonal relationship, and

self-awareness and professionalism. The study did not include other leadership-related variables such as leadership styles, managerial practices, teachers' work behaviors, performance outcomes, personal characteristics beyond emotional intelligence, or school heads' tenure in a particular school due to possible reassignment.

### Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards, with prior ethical approval secured before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents after explaining the purpose, procedures, and scope of the study. Confidentiality and privacy of all information were strictly maintained, and the data gathered were used solely for research purposes. The authors declare no conflict of interest, acknowledge all individuals and institutions that contributed to the completion of the study, and affirm that copyright ownership and authorship responsibilities were properly observed.

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