

Instructional Leadership Practices of Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract

This descriptive-comparative study assessed the instructional leadership practices of elementary school teachers as a basis for a proposed capacity-building plan at the medium-sized Division of Western Samar during the School Year 2025-2026. The division comprises fourteen (14) elementary schools, with a total of seventy-nine (79) elementary school teachers who served as respondents in the study, using a validated questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Mann-Whitney U test. The results revealed that teachers demonstrated a very high level of instructional leadership practices across the three domains—setting directions and academic goals, managing curriculum and instruction, and monitoring classroom instruction and providing feedback. This indicates that teachers are actively engaged in leadership roles in the classroom, setting clear goals, ensuring curriculum alignment, and using monitoring and feedback mechanisms to improve teaching and learning. Additionally, no significant differences were found across most variables, indicating consistent practices among respondents.

Keywords: *Elementary education, instructional leadership, teaching practices*

Bio-profiles

Jeanette P. Abalos earned her Bachelor's in Secondary Education, major in Technology Livelihood Education (TLE), from Leyte Colleges, and her Master of Arts in Education, major in Administration and Supervision, from STI West Negros University. She is currently working as an Elementary Public School Teacher of the Samar Schools Division Office (SSDO), San Jose De Buan Central Elementary School Department of Education (DepEd).

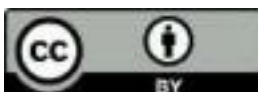
Introduction

Rationale

Education remains a fundamental driver of individual and societal development, particularly in the 21st century, where the demand for quality and relevant learning continues to increase. Teachers play a central role in achieving this goal, not only as facilitators of learning but also as instructional leaders who influence classroom practices and student outcomes. Instructional leadership among teachers involves setting clear academic goals, managing curriculum and instruction effectively, and continuously monitoring teaching and learning processes through feedback and reflection. These practices are essential in ensuring that instruction is aligned with standards and responsive to learners' needs.

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education emphasizes teacher quality through continuous professional development and adherence to standards such as the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). Recent studies highlight that teachers who demonstrate strong instructional leadership contribute significantly to improved student engagement and academic performance (Liu & Hallinger, 2020). Moreover, collaborative and reflective practices among teachers enhance instructional effectiveness and promote a culture of continuous improvement (Harris & Jones, 2022).

This study is also anchored on United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education. SDG 4 underscores the importance of qualified and competent teachers in delivering quality instruction and achieving better learning outcomes. Strengthening teachers'



instructional leadership practices supports this global agenda by improving teaching quality and fostering learner-centered environments (UNESCO, 2021).

Given these perspectives, this study aims to assess the extent of teachers' instructional leadership practices and identify areas for improvement. The results will serve as a basis for developing a capacity-building plan that enhances teachers' competencies and supports the continuous improvement of educational practices.

Literature Review

Leadership serves as a driving force in transforming shared visions into actionable outcomes, where leaders ensure that academic goals are clear, measurable, and aligned with school priorities (Fullan, 2024; Hallinger, 2023). Studies highlight that effective leadership fosters high-functioning Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), enabling collaboration and peer mentoring regardless of teachers' educational background (Williams & Anderson, 2026). Moreover, leadership practices such as goal-setting, teacher support, and active involvement in instruction significantly influence both teacher performance and student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2021; Robinson, 2021). Transformational and instructional leadership approaches further promote trust, innovation, and professional growth, although challenges such as limited time, fragmented resources, and the need for system coherence persist (Fullan & Quinn, 2025; Harris, 2024). Overall, strong leadership integrates vision, collaboration, and structured support systems to sustain school improvement and instructional quality.

Instructional leadership has been consistently shown to significantly influence student achievement by improving both teaching quality and the overall school environment. Leaders who prioritize instructional improvement support teachers through supervision, feedback, and curriculum alignment, thereby enhancing classroom practices and improving learning outcomes (Hallinger & Wang, 2020). Similarly, effective leadership strengthens teacher working conditions and promotes professional growth, enabling educators to perform at higher levels and positively impact student success (Grissom et al., 2021). Studies further reveal that when leaders focus on instructional guidance—such as lesson design and classroom strategies—they enhance student engagement and academic performance (Sebastian et al., 2017). Moreover, aligning teaching practices with school goals and fostering collective teacher efficacy increases motivation and the use of effective teaching strategies, ultimately improving student achievement (Bush, 2020; Goddard et al., 2015).

Instructional leadership practices are also shaped by teacher-related factors such as experience, educational attainment, and socio-economic status. Experienced teachers tend to demonstrate deeper reflection and more critical evaluation of leadership practices, while those with higher educational attainment often prefer collaborative and non-directive supervision (Harris & Jones, 2024; Glickman et al., 2024). Additionally, effective leadership minimizes perception gaps across demographic groups through standardized systems and consistent monitoring (Hallinger, 2024). Core dimensions of instructional leadership—setting directions, managing curriculum, and fostering a positive learning climate—remain essential in aligning teaching practices and improving outcomes (Hallinger, 2018; 2024). Furthermore, research emphasizes that effective feedback must be goal-oriented, documented, and actionable to enhance teacher development and instructional dialogue (Hattie & Clarke, 2025; Hattie & Timperley, 2025). Ultimately, transparent monitoring and capacity-building approaches strengthen trust and ensure that leadership practices are perceived as supportive rather than evaluative (Fullan & Quinn, 2026; Fullan, 2024).

Teacher demographics also shape perceptions of instructional leadership, particularly in relation to experience, income, and career stage. Veteran teachers often prefer specialized roles such as mentoring rather than generic professional development, while younger teachers tend to seek frequent feedback as a form of professional validation (Journal of Adult Education, 2026; Zheng et al., 2024). Additionally, higher-income educators may exhibit more critical perspectives on school leadership due to broader professional exposure (Sirin, 2024). Across leadership domains, strong direction-setting has been linked to greater school resilience during curriculum changes, as it clarifies institutional goals and purpose (Williams & Anderson, 2026). Meanwhile, integrating digital tools into curriculum management promotes "instructional symmetry," reducing perception gaps between novice and experienced teachers by providing equal access to planning and alignment resources (Harris & Jones, 2024).



In the Philippine context, instructional leadership is anchored on national frameworks such as the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), ensuring alignment between leadership practices and teaching performance. Studies show that leadership becomes more meaningful when teachers are actively involved in tracking student learning outcomes. However, gaps remain in the quality of instructional support despite high compliance with Department of Education (DepEd) standards (Torres, 2026). Continuous improvement efforts, such as seminar-workshops, are recommended to sustain high levels of supervision and evaluation (DepEd Leadership Support, 2026). Furthermore, effective leadership extends beyond resource provision to facilitative guidance, particularly in technology integration and 21st-century learning environments (UNESCO, 2024). Research also shows that strong instructional leadership improves classroom management, learner engagement, and organizational alignment, with high-performing schools achieving "organizational symmetry" in which leadership intent aligns with teacher perceptions (Llego, 2021; Bautista, 2025; Estremera, 2022).

Teacher-related factors such as educational attainment, experience, and income influence perceptions of instructional leadership, although standardized DepEd policies like the MATATAG Curriculum help minimize these differences by creating consistent expectations across schools (Torres, 2025). Teachers with higher academic qualifications tend to exhibit stronger evaluative capacity and more critical perspectives on leadership practices (Bautista, 2025), while structured systems reduce variability in perceptions regardless of demographic factors (Villanueva, 2024). Core leadership domains—setting directions, managing curriculum, and monitoring instruction—are strengthened through collaborative practices such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), mentoring, and school-based professional development, which enhance teacher competence and student outcomes (Torres et al., 2024; Salazar, 2022). Additionally, stakeholder involvement and goal-directed leadership contribute to institutional stability, though challenges persist in adapting to rapid technological changes in education (Tan & Reyes, 2025; Digital Transformation in Education Report, 2026). Overall, sustained mentoring, coaching, and continuous professional development remain essential in improving instructional practices and ensuring effective leadership in schools (Avalos, 2021; Dela Cruz & Mendoza, 2022; Bautista et al., 2021).

Studies on the Philippine MATATAG Curriculum highlight that instructional leadership is most evident in the standardization of lesson planning, ensuring that national policies are effectively translated into classroom practice (MATATAG Curriculum, 2025). Research in Samar Island shows that instructional leadership is highly practiced by both school heads and teachers, particularly in lesson planning and monitoring, although there remains a need for stronger technical support and innovative teaching strategies (Dimatera, 2024). Additionally, leadership style plays a crucial role, as transformational approaches tend to foster better teacher performance compared to transactional methods (Eastern Samar Division, 2022). While demographic factors such as age may influence perceptions—where younger teachers often rate leadership more favorably—competency in instructional management remains consistently high due to standardized frameworks like the PPSSH (Espartero & Bautista, 2025). Furthermore, teacher leadership, professional development, and inclusive mission-building are emphasized as key drivers in improving instructional practices and learning outcomes (Dulay, 2025; Ramos et al., 2022; Sebastian et al., 2019).

Across instructional leadership domains, evidence shows that while Filipino teachers demonstrate strong compliance with systems such as the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), gaps persist between observations, feedback, and actual professional development (Torres, 2025). Effective instructional leadership enhances teaching effectiveness by improving lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement, ultimately leading to better academic performance (Santos & Roldan, 2021). It also enables teachers to address diverse learner needs through adaptive instructional strategies (Reyes & Mendoza, 2023). Moreover, leadership practices such as supervision, feedback, and teacher empowerment significantly influence teacher performance and instructional delivery (Gonzales, 2019; Cabigao, 2021). Collaborative mechanisms such as professional learning communities further strengthen teacher competence and confidence, supporting continuous improvement in teaching and learning (Torres et al., 2024).



Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is grounded in established and contemporary theories that explain instructional leadership and its role in enhancing teaching practices and learning outcomes. Instructional Leadership Theory emphasizes educators' influence on teaching and learning through goal setting, curriculum management, and instructional supervision. The framework of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) identifies three core dimensions: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate. Over time, this perspective has expanded to include teachers as active participants in leadership processes, contributing to goal alignment, instructional improvement, and classroom monitoring. Contemporary research highlights that teachers who practice instructional leadership help improve student engagement, collaboration, and overall instructional quality (Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020).

Complementing this is Teacher Leadership Theory, which views teachers as influential leaders who support peers, foster collaboration, and contribute to school development through shared decision-making and continuous learning (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This aligns with the theory of Continuous Professional Development, which asserts that sustained training and reflective practice lead to improved teaching and better student outcomes (Guskey, 2002). Together, these theories provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding instructional leadership as a shared and evolving practice. They highlight the importance of empowering teachers, strengthening leadership capacity, and promoting ongoing professional growth to enhance instructional effectiveness and student achievement.

Objectives

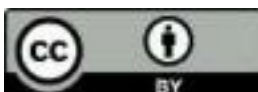
This study aimed to determine the extent of instructional leadership practices of elementary public school teachers' classes in a medium Division of Western Samar during the School Year 2025-2026. The findings of the basis served as the basis for a capacity-building plan. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: 1) the profile of the respondents in terms of age, monthly income, educational attainment, plantilla position, and length of teaching experience; 2) the extent of instructional leadership practices of the teacher according to setting directions and academic goals; managing curriculum and instruction; and monitoring classroom instruction and providing feedback; and 3) the significant difference in the extent of instructional practices of the teacher when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design, the study locale, the respondents, the data-gathering instrument, validity and reliability, the data-gathering procedure, analytical schemes, and statistical tools.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the level of instructional leadership practices of elementary school teachers in terms of setting directions and academic goals, managing curriculum and instruction, and monitoring classroom instruction and providing feedback. Descriptive research, as noted by McCombes (2019), involves systematically describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting existing conditions without manipulating variables, making it appropriate for portraying current practices and phenomena. In this study, the design was used to assess teachers' perceptions of their instructional leadership practices across the identified domains and to examine differences according to age, monthly income, educational attainment, plantilla position, and length of teaching experience. It also enabled a fact-finding approach focused on existing conditions and practices in the school context. Overall, the descriptive design provided a systematic framework for evaluating instructional leadership practices, which served as a basis for developing a capacity-building plan.



Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the seventy-nine (79) elementary school teachers from fourteen (14) public elementary schools in a medium-sized division in Western Samar during the School Year 2025–2026. These teachers served as the primary data sources, as they are directly involved in instructional delivery and expected to demonstrate instructional leadership practices in their respective classrooms. Since the total number of teachers in the identified schools was manageable, total enumeration or universal sampling was employed in this study. This means that all members of the population were included as respondents, ensuring comprehensive data collection and eliminating sampling bias. According to Etikan (2016), total enumeration is appropriate when the population size is small, allowing all individuals to be included to obtain more accurate and reliable results. Including all elementary school teachers ensured complete representation of the population, enabling the researcher to thoroughly assess the level of instructional leadership practices across the division. This approach ensured that the study's findings reflected teachers' actual conditions and practices, thereby strengthening the validity of the results and supporting the development of an appropriate capacity-building plan.

Data Gathering Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-developed questionnaire to assess the level of instructional leadership practices among elementary school teachers, aligned with the study's objectives and relevant literature. The instrument consisted of two parts: Part I gathered respondents' demographic profiles (age, income, educational attainment, plantilla position, and teaching experience), while Part II measured instructional leadership practices across three domains—setting directions and academic goals, managing curriculum and instruction, and monitoring classroom instruction and providing feedback—using a five-point Likert scale ranging from very low to very great extent. The instrument underwent expert validation by five specialists in education, yielding an overall rating of 4.83 (Excellent), confirming its validity and alignment with the study's constructs (Middleton, 2019). Reliability was established through a pilot test involving 30 teachers, with data analyzed using SPSS; the instrument achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.909, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming its suitability for data collection (Heale & Twycross, 2022; Crossman, 2019; Carlson, 2008).

Data Gathering Procedure

In conducting the study, the researcher followed a systematic procedure to gather the necessary data. First, a formal letter of permission was prepared and submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Department of Education and to the respective school heads to secure approval for the conduct of the study. Upon approval, coordination with school administrators was made to facilitate the smooth administration of the questionnaire to the respondents.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the seventy-nine (79) elementary school teachers from the selected schools. Clear instructions were provided to ensure respondents understood the study's purpose and how to complete the instrument properly. The researcher, with the assistance of designated personnel when necessary, ensured that all questionnaires were properly distributed and collected. The completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion to ensure a high response rate.

After all completed questionnaires were collected, the data were checked, organized, and encoded. The responses were then subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Appropriate statistical tools, including frequency, percentage, mean, and the Mann-Whitney U test, were used to analyze the data and answer the study's research questions.

Research Ethics Protocol



Research ethics are essential to ensuring scientific integrity, protecting human rights, and respecting participants' dignity. According to Bhandari (2022), ethical research requires that participants be treated fairly, their rights be protected, and their information be handled confidentially.

In this study, the researcher ensured that respondents' participation was entirely voluntary. The elementary school teachers were informed of the study's purpose and assured that the collected data would be used solely for academic purposes. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent and the respective school heads to conduct the study in the selected schools.

A letter of informed consent was provided to all respondents, clearly explaining their role in the study and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The researcher also ensured that respondents' identities remained strictly confidential by not requiring names and by securely handling all collected information. All data were treated with utmost confidentiality and were used only for the purpose of this research.

Analytical and Statistical Schemes

Objective No. 1 used the descriptive-analytical scheme and frequency counts and percentage distributions to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, monthly income, educational attainment, plantilla position, and length of teaching experience. This approach describes the respondents' existing characteristics.

Objective No. 2 also used the descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of instructional leadership practices of teachers in the areas of setting directions and academic goals, managing curriculum and instruction, and monitoring classroom instruction and providing feedback.

Objective No. 3 used a comparative analytical scheme and the Mann–Whitney U test to determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of instructional leadership practices among teachers grouped and compared by age, monthly income, educational attainment, plantilla position, and length of teaching experience. This approach allows comparison between groups to identify significant variations.

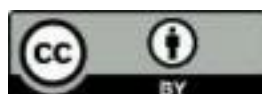
Results and Discussion

This section summarizes the study's findings, which come from careful data gathering, in-depth analysis, and thoughtful interpretation. After this, meaningful conclusions were drawn from the initial phase, offering valuable insights

Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Variables Age, Monthly Income, Educational Attainment, and Length of Teaching Experience

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	Younger (below 34 years old)	42	53.2
	Older (34 years old and above)	37	46.8
	Total	79	100.0
Monthly Income	Lower (Below 33,000 pesos)	43	54.4
	Higher (33,000 pesos and above)	36	45.6
	Total	79	100.0
Educational Attainment	Lower (College)	52	65.8
	Higher (Master's)	27	34.2
	Total	79	100.0
Length of Teaching Experience	Shorter (Below 8 Years)	49	62.0
	Longer (8 Years and Above)	30	38.0



Total	79	100.0
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Table 1 illustrates that the workforce is predominantly comprised of younger individuals, with 53.2% of respondents aged under 34 and 62% having less than eight years of teaching experience. The majority of teachers with limited experience exemplify the "Early Career" phase of the teaching profession.

Regarding monthly income, over half of the respondents (54.4%) earn less than 33,000 pesos, indicating that the majority fall into the lower-income band. The monthly income corresponds with the demographic data; as the majority of respondents are younger and less experienced, they are likely situated among entry-level salary tiers.

Regarding educational attainment, the majority of participants (65.8%) have achieved a college-level education, only 34.2% have obtained a Master's degree or above. The responses fulfill the essential criteria for teaching, although there is a distinct stagnation at the undergraduate level. This signifies that graduate-level specialization is not yet the prevailing practice among educators.

These findings suggest a significant capacity for sustained institutional growth. Nonetheless, it underscores a potential deficiency in mentoring, with a limited cohort of experienced educators (38%) tasked with overseeing a far larger contingent of novice teachers. This may require rigorous professional development programs to expedite the learning curve of the junior personnel.

Similarly, financial constraints may affect respondent motivation, retention rates, and the capacity for self-funded continued education. In studies about job happiness or performance, the "lower income" status acts as a significant mediating factor influencing teachers' perceptions of their professional quality of life. Furthermore, it signifies a prospect for scholarly progression. The notion that many have not yet engaged in graduate courses may be intimately linked to their shorter employment duration and reduced pay. The findings may indicate to the university a necessity for incentives—such as scholarships or flexible scheduling—to motivate the 65.8% to pursue further degrees, thereby enhancing the faculty's total research and teaching proficiency.

In summary, the findings indicate that respondents constitute a dynamic and youthful workforce, and their "lower income" and "lower educational attainment" represent structural barriers that may impede their transfer into "Master Teacher" roles unless institutional support is rendered.

Will (2024) asserts that early-career educators typically commence their job with considerable excitement and vigor, although they often encounter a "reality shock" during their initial years. This segment generally represents the "Beginner" to "Proficient" levels of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

A study by Prudente et al. (2024) indicates that pay is a key predictor of organizational loyalty among Filipino teachers. Howley, Reynolds, and Southgate (2016) posited that inadequate income to meet family requirements can substantially impact teachers' accountability and morale.

Furthermore, research disseminated on ResearchGate (2023) concerning State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) reveals a substantial direct correlation between postgraduate degrees and enhanced licensure performance, while indicating a "trivial" or "inverse" association for individuals possessing only a Bachelor's degree.

Level of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in the Areas of Setting Directions and Academic Goals, Managing Curriculum and Instruction, and Monitoring Classroom Instruction and Providing Feedback

Table 2

Level Of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in the Area of Setting Directions and Academic Goals

Setting Directions and Academic Goals	Items	Mean	Interpretation
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1. involves stakeholders in setting academic goals of our school's vision and mission	4.86	Very High Extent
2. clearly communicates the school's vision and mission to all faculty, staff and students.	4.58	Very High Extent
3. ensures that academic goals set by teachers are specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented, and time-bound (SMART).	4.75	Very High Extent
4. prioritizes goals that address the needs of learners in the 21 st -century teaching-learning environment.	4.43	High Extent
5. regularly reviews the school's goals for relevance, quality education and academic support system	4.52	Very High Extent
6. motivates teachers to guide the students to achieve academic goals.	4.71	Very High Extent
7. monitors regularly the progress towards the attainment of the school's vision and mission for school improvement goals.	4.67	Very High Extent
8. ensures the alignment of school goals with district or DepEd priorities.	4.57	Very High Extent
9. Facilitates teachers' implementation of programs for the attainment of the school's vision and mission through close monitoring.	4.68	Very High Extent
10. conducts regular evaluation on the effectiveness of implemented academic goals.	4.66	Very High Extent
Overall Mean	4.64	Very High Extent

Table 2 indicates that the overall mean of 4.64 (Very High Extent) demonstrates that instructional leadership is fundamental to the school's operations. The data indicates a "top-down, bottom-up" synergy.

The highest score, with a mean of 4.86, was recorded for item 1, which asserts that "involves stakeholders in setting academic goals of our school's vision and mission," indicating a shift by school instructors away from autocratic leadership. Involving stakeholders (teachers, parents, and the community) in the formation of the vision and mission fosters a sense of collective ownership. When stakeholders endorse the vision, execution transforms into a shared duty rather than a mandated chore.

The elevated grade in item 3, with a mean of 4.75, underscores the importance of ensuring that academic objectives are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented, and time-bound), indicating a significant degree of administrative proficiency. School teachers are not merely setting ambiguous goals; they are employing technical frameworks to ensure that the school's progress is measurable and attainable.

Item 4, which states "prioritizes goals that address the needs of learners in the 21st century teaching-learning environment," received the lowest mean score of 4.43, it is still categorized as "High Extent." This lowest score is significant. It indicates that although the leadership method (collaboration and goal-setting) is proficiently executed, the content (particularly 21st-century competencies such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and global citizenship) may still be undergoing complete integration.

The "Very High" level of engagement signifies a democratic educational culture. This probably results in elevated teacher morale and community backing, as stakeholders see that their input is acknowledged in the school's strategic trajectory. The minor delay in 21st-century goal-setting suggests that educators may require further specialized training in Modern Pedagogy. As the landscape transitions towards AI, digital collaboration, and international learning, leadership objectives must progress from "standardized achievement" to "future-ready competencies." With SMART goals established, the school is optimally positioned for evidence-based assessments and accrediting procedures.

Recent meta-analyses, as per Modern Instructional Leadership (Hallinger, 2011/2018), indicate that in the Southeast Asian environment, including the Philippines, the involvement of stakeholders in goal-setting by school teachers enhances "Teacher Collective Efficacy."



A recent meta-analysis by Scobbie et al. (2020) indicates that the "A" (Achievable) and "R" (Result-oriented) components of SMART goals are important in mitigating burnout. This is especially pertinent to your study's demographic (younger, lower-income educators), as explicit, attainable objectives afford them a sense of "mastery" despite their inexperience.

The study's findings are supported by Bacolod (2022), which indicates that although leadership in "Setting Directions" among Filipino school teachers is predominantly high, the implementation of ICT-driven 21st-century objectives frequently ranks lower due to resource limitations or the necessity for enhanced digital leadership training. This exactly reflects the findings where the item stating "prioritizes goals that address the needs of learners in the 21st century teaching-learning environment" obtained the lowest relative score.

Table 3

Level Of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in the Area of Managing Curriculum and Instruction

Managing Curriculum and Instruction	Items	Mean	Interpretation
1. ensures the curriculum is implemented by teachers according to the Department of Education guidelines, standards, and policies.		4.67	Very High Extent
2. ensures that teachers align their lesson plans with the most essential learning competencies.		4.70	Very High Extent
3. provides opportunities for teachers in their professional development related to teaching and learning.		4.49	High Extent
4. allocates time and resources for teachers to support effective and quality instruction.		4.47	High Extent
5. Encourages teachers to promote collaboration among their fellow teachers for lesson planning and delivery of instruction.		4.47	High Extent
6. Encourages teachers to use innovative and differentiated teaching strategies.		4.67	Very High Extent
7. monitors the teacher's delivery of instruction across grade levels and subjects.		4.53	Very High Extent
8. ensures that the teacher provides guidance on integrating technology in the teaching-learning process.		4.62	Very High Extent
9. Direct teachers to ensure the availability of learning materials and resources to be used by learners.		4.49	High Extent
10. See to it that the teachers support in improving classroom practices based on student intended outcomes.		4.58	Very High Extent
Overall Mean		4.57	Very High Extent

Table 3 reveals an overall mean of 4.57 (Very High Extent), signifying that school instructors function as "Instructional Gatekeepers." They are intricately engaged in the school's technical core—the classroom—ensuring that the curriculum aligns with national standards and that the pedagogical methods employed are creative.

The highest mean score of 4.70 was recorded for item 2, which asserts the necessity for teachers to match their lesson plans with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) and DepEd standards. This indicates that school teachers are exceptionally compliant and diligent in implementing the prescribed curriculum in classroom instruction.

The elevated score, with a mean of 4.67, emphasizes the adherence to curriculum implementation in accordance with Department of Education requirements and promotes the utilization of creative and differentiated pedagogical practices. The encouragement of "innovative and differentiated strategies" suggests



that leadership transcends mere "rules" and encompasses "results." They are urging educators to accommodate varied learner requirements.

Conversely, the lowest mean scores of 4.47 and 4.49, categorized as "High Extent," were observed in items 4 and 5, indicating a considerable decline in scores related to resource allocation, time management, and teamwork. It indicates that although educators maintain elevated standards for education, they may encounter difficulties in delivering the necessary content and temporal resources (time and tools) to uphold those goals.

The emphasis on alignment guarantees that pupils are adhering to the mandated national curriculum, essential for standardized assessments and academic uniformity. The disparity between elevated expectations for "innovation" and diminished ratings for "time and resource allocation" suggests a potential danger of teacher burnout. Educators are being urged to innovate without being provided additional time or improved resources to facilitate this process. The diminished score for "promoting teacher collaboration" indicates that instruction is perceived primarily as an individual endeavor rather than a collaborative effort. Transitioning to a Professional Learning Community (PLC) model may represent the subsequent evolutionary advancement for these schools.

The findings of the study are corroborated by a recent investigation conducted in the Division of Camarines Sur for the academic year 2025–2026, which revealed that Master Teachers exhibit a significant degree of instructional leadership that is directly associated with the enhancement of peer teaching practices. This corroborates your observation that educators function as stringent "curriculum gatekeepers," ensuring that national standards, such as MELCs, are not only theoretical but are systematically integrated into each lesson plan.

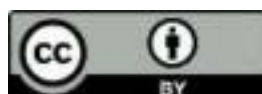
Furthermore, Education Secretary Sonny Angara (2025) recently underscored that "upskilling and reskilling" educators in contemporary pedagogical methods is a national imperative. Your observation that educators are already achieving "Very High" scores in this domain indicates that "bottom-up" innovation is transpiring prior to national policy changes.

Moreover, the principal national assessment designates "excessive work obligations" as the foremost impediment hindering instructors from participating in more profound professional collaboration. This offers a direct factual basis for the poor scores in "Collaboration" and "Time," indicating a systemic issue rather than a deficiency in teacher engagement.

Table 4

Level Of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices of Teachers in the Area of Monitoring Classroom Instruction and Providing Feedback

Monitoring Classroom Instruction and Providing Feedback		
Items	Mean	Interpretation
1. Conducts regular teacher observation in the classroom teaching and learning environment.	4.61	Very High Extent
2. provides teachers constructive feedback after classroom observation/visits.	4.54	Very High Extent
3. uses the teachers' classroom observation results for capacity building on professional development needs and initiatives.	4.62	Very High Extent
4. provides written feedback on the teacher's performance during observation for the coaching and mentoring scheme as evidence for monitoring and progression.	4.66	Very High Extent
5. Assign teachers to track student learning outcomes to guide instructional decisions.	4.53	Very High Extent
6. recognizes the teachers' exemplary teaching practices in the school through a recognition program.	4.38	High Extent
7. maintains a regular teacher's schedule of classroom monitoring.	4.44	High Extent



8. Encourages teachers to identify the effectiveness of the instructional tool used in the classroom.	4.44	High Extent
9. Give opportunity for teachers to collaborate in order to address gaps in the classroom instruction.	4.41	High Extent
10. motivates teachers to utilize the observation feedback as a means to tangible improvements in teaching quality.	4.56	Very High Extent
Overall Mean	4.52	Very High Extent

Table 4 indicates an overall mean of 4.52 (Very High Extent), underscoring a culture of Evidence-Based Instructional Supervision. The findings demonstrate that instructional leadership is not only a formality but a functioning framework for professional development, wherein the school teacher functions as a "Chief Coach" to the teaching staff.

The data indicate that the highest mean score of 4.66 was recorded for item 4, which asserts that "written feedback as evidence for monitoring" implies a shift from subjective observation to objective supervision. By providing written evidence, educators establish a "professional paper trail" that facilitates monitoring of their developmental progress over time.

The elevated grade, with a mean of 4.62 for item number 3, underscores that the utilization of observational results for capacity building indicates that "monitoring" serves diagnostic planning rather than policing. Leadership identifies specific teaching deficiencies during observations and subsequently designs professional development (PD) to address them.

The lowest mean score of 4.38, categorized as "High Extent," was observed in item 6, "recognizing exemplary practices," signifying a shift in emphasis. Leadership excels at correcting and coaching (the technical aspect) but may be overlooking the affective dimension of leadership—acknowledging achievements and offering public recognition for high-performing educators.

The study's findings emphasize that written comments and rigorous monitoring upgrade the teaching profession from a "art" to a "quantifiable practice." Educators are subjected to elevated, conspicuous requirements. Due to consistent monitoring, the professional development offered is likely extremely pertinent to the specific needs of the classroom, rather than generic "one-size-fits-all" seminars.

The diminished focus on acknowledgment and teamwork may foster a culture of "Evaluation Anxiety." When educators receive solely "coaching" without "celebration," they may perceive classroom observations as stressful evaluations instead of constructive assistance.

Comparative Analysis in the Level of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices of School Heads in the Areas of Setting Directions and Academic Goals, Managing Curriculum and Instruction, and Monitoring Classroom Instruction and Providing Feedback When Grouped According to Age, Monthly Income, Educational Attainment and Length of Teaching Experience

Table 5

Differences in the Level of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices of School Teachers in the Area of Setting Directions and Academic Goals When Grouped and Compared According to Variables

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	42	38.74	724.000	0.05	0.592	Not Significant
	Older	37	41.43				
Monthly Income	Lower	43	36.30	615.000	0.05	0.108	Not Significant
	Higher	36	44.42				
	Lower	52	39.25	663.000		0.679	Not Significant



Educational Attainment	Higher	27	41.44	667.500	0.483	Not Significant
Length of Teaching Experience	Shorter	49	38.62			
	Longer	30	42.25			

Table 5 delineates the disparities in the degree of instructional leadership practices concerning the establishment of directions and academic objectives, categorized and analyzed based on specified characteristics. The findings indicate no significant differences in teachers' responses based on age ($p = 0.592$), monthly income ($p = 0.108$), educational attainment ($p = 0.679$), and teaching experience ($p = 0.483$), as all p -values exceed the 0.05 significance threshold. The study's results suggest that the absence of a substantial difference indicates a cohesive institutional culture. Educators, irrespective of their individual demographics or professional experiences, possess a unified comprehension of the institution's vision, mission, and academic objectives.

This indicates that school teachers are fair and consistent in their communication of instructions. Leadership approaches, including stakeholder engagement, the application of SMART goals, and progress tracking, are experienced equally throughout the faculty. The results indicate that the school has effectively implemented its strategic plan. Novice educators and younger personnel regard the level of direction-setting as significantly comparable to that of their more experienced colleagues.

Recent research by Villanueva (2024) indicates that in highly structured educational settings, professional variables such as age or experience do not substantially influence a teacher's perception of "Goal-Directed Leadership." This phenomenon occurs because institutional protocols, such as DepEd's standardized dissemination of vision and mission, establish a baseline awareness that surpasses individual differences.

A 2025 study published in the Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies revealed that when educators attain a "Very High Extent" of stakeholder engagement, it frequently results in a "perceptual plateau," wherein leadership is perceived so favorably that minor demographic variations become statistically insignificant.

Furthermore, Fullan & Quinn (2025) contend in their latest publication on Coherence that "Direction-Setting" constitutes the most fundamental aspect of leadership. When executed proficiently via SMART goals, it establishes an objective framework for achievement that educators assess based on empirical data rather than subjective personal factors.

Table 6

Differences in the Level of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices of in the Area of Managing Curriculum and Instruction When Grouped and Compared According to Variables

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	<i>p</i> -value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	42	40.29	765.000	0.05	0.898	Not Significant
	Older	37	39.68				
Monthly Income	Lower	43	43.55	621.500		0.102	Not Significant
	Higher	36	35.76				
Educational Attainment	Lower	52	41.65	616.000		0.334	Not Significant
	Higher	27	36.81				
Length of Teaching Experience	Shorter	49	40.60	705.500		0.746	Not Significant
	Longer	30	39.02				



Table 6 delineates the disparities in the degree of instructional leadership practices concerning curriculum and instruction management, categorized and compared based on certain characteristics. The findings indicated no significant variations in replies based on age ($p = 0.898$), monthly income ($p = 0.102$), educational attainment ($p = 0.334$), and duration of teaching experience ($p = 0.746$), since all p -values exceed the 0.05 significance threshold. This suggests that educators, irrespective of their demographic traits, exhibit similar degrees of instructional leadership in overseeing curriculum and instruction.

The findings indicate a significant level of "system coherence," wherein the school's curriculum management strategy is implemented consistently. Educators from various demographic and professional backgrounds consistently perceive the management of learning competencies and lesson alignment. The lack of significant impact from monthly income and experience on perceptions indicates that leadership equitably allocates instructional resources and professional development opportunities, irrespective of seniority or income level. The absence of a notable difference indicates that the school has effectively institutionalized its quality assurance methods. Regardless of a teacher's age or duration of experience, they are expected to adhere to and recognize the same standards of curriculum implementation.

Hallinger (2024) observed that effective instructional leadership in contemporary times depends on the "standardization of professional expectations." Research indicates that when a school attains elevated overall performance, demographic indicators generally lose their predictive significance, as the leadership system emerges as the primary effect on teacher perception. Similarly, recent research by Harris & Jones (2024) on "Instructional Symmetry" indicates that contemporary schools employing digital curricular platforms frequently exhibit no substantial variation in perception among different experience levels. The tools for curriculum alignment and lesson planning are widely accessible, thereby equalizing the opportunities for novice and veteran educators.

Furthermore, research conducted by Torres (2025) within the Philippine context underscores that the uniform policies of the Department of Education (DepEd), such as the MATATAG curriculum, function as a "equalizer." Due to the stringent mandates from a central authority, the scope of leadership in curriculum management is uniformly understood by all staff, irrespective of their individual socioeconomic or educational backgrounds.

Table 7

Differences in the Level of Extent of Instructional Leadership Practices in the Area of Monitoring Classroom Instruction and Providing Feedback When Grouped and Compared According to Variables

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U - test	Sig. Level	p -value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	42	40.42	759.500	0.05	0.853	Not Significant
	Older	37	39.53				
Monthly Income	Lower	43	43.27	633.500	0.05	0.135	Not Significant
	Higher	36	36.10				
Educational Attainment	Lower	52	42.07	594.500	0.05	0.230	Not Significant
	Higher	27	36.02				
Length of Teaching Experience	Shorter	49	40.50	710.500	0.05	0.789	Not Significant
	Longer	30	39.18				

Table 7 illustrates the differences in the extent of instructional leadership techniques related to curriculum and instruction management, classified and contrasted according to certain features. The results revealed no significant differences in responses according to age ($p = 0.898$), monthly income ($p = 0.102$), educational attainment ($p = 0.334$), and teaching experience duration ($p = 0.746$), since all p -values surpassed the



0.05 significance level. This indicates that educators, regardless of their demographic characteristics, demonstrate comparable levels of instructional leadership in managing curriculum and instruction.

The results demonstrate a notable degree of "system coherence," whereby the school's curriculum management approach is executed uniformly. Educators from diverse demographic and professional backgrounds consistently recognize the management of learning competencies and lesson alignment. The minimal influence of monthly income and experience on perceptions suggests that leadership distributes instructional resources and professional development opportunities fairly, regardless of seniority or income level. The lack of a significant difference suggests that the school has successfully institutionalized its quality assurance practices. Irrespective of a teacher's age or length of experience, they are required to comply with and acknowledge the identical requirements of curriculum implementation.

Hallinger (2024) noted that effective instructional leadership in modern contexts relies on the "standardization of professional expectations." Research suggests that when a school achieves high overall performance, demographic markers typically lose their predictive value, as the leadership structure becomes the predominant influence on teacher perception.

Recent research by Harris & Jones (2024) on "Instructional Symmetry" reveals that modern schools utilizing digital curricular platforms often show no significant differences in perception across varying experience levels. The resources for curricular alignment and lesson planning are readily available, therefore leveling the playing field for both novice and experienced instructors.

Moreover, research by Torres (2025) in the Philippine context highlights that the standardized policies of the Department of Education (DepEd), including the MATATAG curriculum, serve as a "equalizer." The rigorous directives from a central authority ensure that the parameters of leadership in curriculum management are uniformly comprehended by all personnel, regardless of their distinct socioeconomic or educational backgrounds.

Conclusion

The study revealed that respondents were predominantly younger, early-career teachers with lower monthly income, college degrees, and shorter teaching experience; nevertheless, they demonstrated a very high level of instructional leadership practices across all domains—setting directions and academic goals, managing curriculum and instruction, and monitoring classroom instruction and providing feedback. These high levels remained consistent regardless of age, income, educational attainment, or teaching experience, with only minimal, non-significant variations, leading to the acceptance of all null hypotheses. Slight trends showed that more experienced and higher-income teachers had marginally higher consistency, while younger and less experienced teachers exhibited strong engagement and adaptability. Overall, the findings indicate that instructional leadership practices are uniformly and effectively implemented among teachers, suggesting that these practices are deeply embedded in professional standards and institutional expectations rather than influenced by demographic factors, reflecting a shared commitment to improving teaching and learning.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that school administrators continuously implement capacity-building programs to strengthen teachers' instructional leadership practices in setting directions, managing curriculum and instruction, and monitoring classroom instruction and providing feedback. Professional development activities such as seminars, workshops, and training should focus on enhancing 21st-century skills, instructional innovation, goal-setting, and technology integration, supported by regular mentoring, coaching, and structured classroom observation with feedback. Schools should also strengthen curriculum management through adequate instructional resources, improved time allocation, and collaborative practices such as Learning Action Cells (LACs), peer coaching, and team teaching, alongside continuous monitoring aligned with DepEd standards. Furthermore, feedback systems should be enhanced through regular, constructive classroom observations, while recognition programs and reflective practices may be promoted to



improve teaching quality. Finally, a comprehensive capacity-building plan should be developed and implemented, ensuring equitable access to professional development for all teachers regardless of demographic profile, with continuous monitoring and evaluation to sustain improvement in instructional leadership practices.

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Authorship Contribution Statement

Abalos: Concept and design, literature review, data collection, analysis, interpretation and editing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this paper. They affirm that no financial, personal, or professional relationships with other individuals or organizations have compromised the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research work. As a final point, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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