

School Heads' Instructional Competence, Leadership Practices and Teachers' Performance

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Abstract:

This descriptive study explored the instructional competence and leadership practices of school heads and their relationship to teachers' performance across seven public elementary and three high schools in a Central Negros district during the 2023–2024 school year. With 166 public elementary teachers as respondents, results showed that most were older, had lower educational attainment, and varied in years of service. School heads demonstrated very high instructional competence—particularly in curriculum, mentoring, communication, and resource management—and equally high leadership practices, especially in strategic leadership, self-development, and fostering school culture. Statistical analyses (Mann-Whitney U Test and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation) revealed no significant differences in school heads' competence and leadership based on teachers' demographics. Teachers were consistently rated outstanding, although age and length of service showed significant differences in performance. Importantly, no direct relationship was found between school heads' instructional competence or leadership practices and teacher performance, but a strong correlation existed between instructional competence and leadership practices. These findings highlight the value of enhancing professional development through mentorship programs, where less experienced school heads can learn from seasoned leaders to further improve instructional quality and educational outcomes.

Keywords: Instructional Competence, Leadership Practices, Teacher Performance

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

The effectiveness of educational institutions is strongly influenced by the instructional competence and leadership practices of school heads, which significantly impact teachers' performance (Leithwood et al., 2020). Effective leadership is recognized as a key factor in improving teaching quality and student outcomes (Day & Sammons, 2021). In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) emphasizes this through initiatives like the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), which serves as a framework for guiding leadership practices and professional development (DepEd, 2020). Understanding the link between school leadership and teacher performance is crucial, especially in regional contexts like Davao (Romero et al., 2022).

Despite the central role school heads play, challenges remain in ensuring consistent instructional quality. Differences in leadership styles, limited access to training, scarce resources, and varying stakeholder involvement contribute to disparities in teaching outcomes (Harris, 2021; Stoll, 2021). Furthermore, the demands of the evolving educational landscape require leaders to adapt and improve (Robinson, 2020) continually. These issues stress the need for robust leadership practices supported by continuous professional development and systemic support.

DepEd's adoption of the PPSSH through DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020, provides a structured legal framework to support school leadership (DepEd, 2020). These standard outlines clear expectations for school heads across career stages and aims to build their instructional and managerial capacities (Tan, 2021). However, studies such as those by Del Mundo (2022) and Santos and Reyes (2021) indicate a lack of research on how these standards are implemented at the grassroots level and their direct impact on teacher performance in specific localities, such as Davao, leaving a research gap that this study seeks to address.

The motivation for this research stems from the observed inconsistencies in school head leadership during a 2018 in-service training in Central Negros, where performance varied significantly. Reports showed that ineffective guidance from school heads contributed to poor school performance, while some teachers expressed dissatisfaction despite effective leadership. These findings highlight the need to explore the relationship between leadership

competence and teaching performance. By focusing on the Davao context, this study aims to identify the key skills school heads must possess to enhance teacher effectiveness and overall school outcomes (Bautista, 2022).

Current State of Knowledge

Wenceslao (2022), Vasquez et al. (2022), and Jimenez and Galicia (2023) emphasized that effective instructional leadership—characterized by providing feedback, supporting diverse teaching strategies, and demonstrating emotional competence—is vital in improving teaching quality and learning outcomes in Philippine schools. Building on this, Kilag et al. (2023) highlighted that instructional leadership significantly influences school effectiveness, particularly through collaboration among school heads, teachers, and communities. Recognizing the growing demands on school leaders, Cruz (2019) pointed out the increasing complexity of school leadership and stressed the necessity of continuous development in managerial and reflective skills to sustain efficient and effective leadership. Complementing these findings, Cansing (2024) demonstrated that regular classroom observation and technical assistance from school leaders play a crucial role in enhancing the instructional competence of newly hired teachers. The importance of school heads' supervisory competencies has also been well-documented. Delas Peñas and Salundaguit (2019) found that strong leadership in instructional supervision, learning environment promotion, and human resource management is positively linked to improved teacher performance. Similarly, Paturusi (2019) argued that leadership style plays a pivotal role in influencing teacher effectiveness, highlighting the importance of adopting appropriate leadership approaches. Go and Eslabon (2024) confirmed that robust instructional and supervisory skills among school heads directly support improvements in teachers' content mastery and classroom management. In times of crisis, as Cahapay (2022) emphasized, adaptive leadership becomes indispensable for maintaining instructional quality—further underlining the need for school heads to be both responsive and competent.

This dual responsibility of school heads as both instructional leaders and administrative managers is clearly defined in the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (Republic Act 9155), which mandates their role in creating a learning-conducive environment, implementing the curriculum, fostering innovation, and supporting staff development. Supporting this, He, Guo, and Abazie (2024) stressed that principals' instructional leadership is critical to teachers' professional growth. Mukherjee (2019) further pointed out that effective management depends on experience, efficacy, and time management. However, Go and Eslabon (2023) found that although many school heads in Bacolod City exhibited strong supervisory skills, these did not always translate into improved teacher performance—suggesting the need for supplemental efforts such as mentorship and structured professional development programs to enhance instructional outcomes.

In this context, Esogon and Gumban (2024) observed that transformational leadership among Bacolod City school heads positively influenced teacher morale and commitment, advocating for training programs and School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions to foster leadership growth. Strategic leadership, as discussed by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) and supported by the Philippine Department of Education (2020), emphasizes the alignment of school operations with a clear, future-oriented vision to drive sustained educational improvement. Robinson (2020) underscored the principal's instructional leadership in managing teaching practices, while Egboka (2019) and Paturusi (2019) both stressed the necessity of bridging managerial skill gaps to enhance teacher and institutional performance. Hoque (2019) and Amancio (2023) further linked leadership effectiveness to strategic competencies and contextual factors such as demographics. In light of these findings, Minadzi and Nyame (2019) advocated for a blended leadership style tailored to varying school environments. Additionally, Leithwood and Sun (2020), Bush (2021), and Ross and Cozzens (2019) emphasized the importance of instructional resource management and innovation, aligning with the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (DepEd, 2020), which affirm that resource leadership is integral to achieving quality education.

Furthermore, teacher performance is shaped by multiple interconnected factors, including leadership, motivation, professional development, and working conditions. Kalil et al. (2019) found that teachers with a high internal locus of control and strong motivation demonstrate better instructional delivery and classroom management. Professional development remains a key driver of teacher growth, as highlighted by Comighud and Arevalo (2021) and He, Guo, and Abazie (2024), who showed that continuous learning enhances instructional competence. On the other hand, Magalong and Torreon (2021) warned that excessive workloads can hinder teacher efficacy, thus reinforcing the importance of maintaining work-life balance. Legislative frameworks such as the Education Act of 2001 and the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBS-SH) mandate school heads to actively support teacher development and performance evaluation. Rojas and Ambag (2020) established a direct link between teacher performance and student achievement, emphasizing the overarching goal of fostering high-quality instruction.

Numerous studies further affirm the pivotal role of school leadership in shaping teacher effectiveness. For instance, Sumanga et al. (2022), Wahab et al. (2020), and Namutebi (2019) all concluded that both instructional and authentic leadership styles significantly enhance teacher competence, discipline, and interpersonal relationships. In the Philippine setting, Cabigao (2019), Delos Reyes and Torio (2022), and Delas Peñas and Salundaguit (2019) demonstrated that school heads and master teachers who engage in supportive leadership, clear communication, and active involvement in curriculum and assessment substantially improve instructional performance. Likewise,

Badian (2019) and Ingay (2018) confirmed that effective leadership practices and strong work commitment from school heads are directly correlated with higher teacher performance, thereby reinforcing the critical role of school leadership in driving educational success.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is grounded in key educational theories that emphasize the critical role of leadership in shaping instructional quality and teacher performance. Instructional Leadership Theory highlights how school heads, through curriculum management, coaching, communication, and instructional resource oversight, directly influence teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. Effective instructional leaders actively engage in improving teaching practices, ensuring curriculum alignment with national standards, and fostering teacher growth through mentoring and collaboration. These competencies create a supportive and high-performing learning environment where instructional goals are clearly communicated, and resources are strategically utilized.

Transformational Leadership Theory further supports the study by underscoring how leadership grounded in vision, motivation, and relationship-building enhances teacher morale and school culture. Strategic leadership, professional development, stakeholder engagement, and a focus on shared goals empower teachers and promote continuous improvement. Leaders who embody transformational practices contribute to a culture of accountability, equity, and high academic standards. They not only manage school operations effectively but also inspire teachers to strive for excellence by modeling growth and innovation, strengthening both individual and collective performance.

Lastly, Teacher Performance Theory asserts that effective teaching is influenced by the quality of leadership provided. When school heads offer clear expectations, meaningful feedback, and development opportunities, teacher performance improves. This theory underlines the study's focus on the interrelationship between instructional competence, leadership practices, and teacher outcomes. The framework presented suggests that enhancing leadership skills among school heads can address current challenges in instructional delivery and teacher performance, thereby fostering a more effective and responsive educational system.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the levels of School Heads' instructional competence, leadership styles, and teachers' performance in a district of a medium-sized schools Division in Central Negros for School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following: 1) the level of School Heads' instructional competence according to the area of curriculum, coaching and mentoring, communication, and instructional resource management; 2) the level of School Heads' leadership practices according to the area of leading strategically, developing self and others, building connections, shaping the culture of the school, leading teaching and learning, managing the school environment, and ensuring accountability and student achievement; 3) the significant relationship between the level of School Heads' instructional competence and the level of teachers' performance; 4) the significant relationship between level of School Heads' leadership practices and level of teachers' performance; and 5) the significant relationship between the level of School Heads' instructional and their level of leadership practices.

Methodology:

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive research design to determine the levels of School Heads' instructional competence, leadership practices, and teachers' performance in a district of a medium-sized schools Division in Central Negros for School Year 2023-2024. Descriptive research is a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. It means observing and measuring without manipulating variables (Mc Combes, 2019). This method was used to gather information to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. This is the most appropriate design the researcher chose for this study because it describes the summary of data such as the mean, percentage, variation, and the correlation of variables to the teachers' performance.

Study Respondents

The respondents of this study comprised 166 public elementary teachers from seven public elementary schools within the district of a medium-sized school division in Central Negros. The district has a total of ten (10) schools, consisting of seven (7) elementary schools and three (3) secondary schools. Since the number of respondents is quite large,

stratified and random sampling techniques were used, and the Cochran Formula was utilized to find the sample size. To get the percentage, the respondents coming from each school were divided by the total number of respondents and multiplied by the sample size. The researcher randomly selected the respondents from each school using the Lottery Technique. The respondents were distributed across the seven elementary schools, with 23 teachers (8%) from School A, 44 teachers (15%) from School B, 57 teachers (20%) from School C, 70 teachers (24%) from School D, 30 teachers (10%) from School F, and 45 teachers (16%) from School G.

Instruments

A self-made instrument was developed and utilized to collect baseline data for the study titled School Heads' Instructional Competence, Leadership Practices, and Teachers' Performance. Structured into three key parts, the instrument comprehensively assessed school heads' instructional competence, leadership practices, and their impact on teacher performance. Part I gathered demographic profiles of respondents, while Part II evaluated instructional competence using Ross and Bruce's (2020) framework, focusing on curriculum management, coaching and mentoring, communication, and instructional resource management. Part III assessed leadership practices based on Posner and Kouzes' (2017) Leadership Practices Inventory, covering six core leadership domains. A five-point Likert scale was used throughout to measure responses. To ensure validity, the instrument underwent face and content validation by five experts in school leadership and management, resulting in an overall validity rating of 4.87 (Excellent) based on the Carter V. Good and Douglas E. Scates scale. Reliability was tested with 30 public school teachers from a different district using Cronbach's alpha, yielding scores of 0.945 for instructional competence and 0.990 for leadership practices—both indicating excellent internal consistency. This validated and reliable instrument ensured accurate, consistent measurement of the targeted constructs, thereby enhancing the study's credibility and relevance.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and, upon approval, was also asked permission from the Public Schools District Supervisor and Principals under the said District is one of the Division in Central Negros. After their approval, the researcher personally informed the respondents about this study. This is to ensure their preparedness during the administration of the questionnaires. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents. The completed questionnaires were then retrieved, tallied, and tabulated. Using appropriate statistical tools, the data was analyzed and interpreted.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No. 1, utilized the descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of instructional competence of the school heads in terms of curriculum, coaching and mentoring, communication, and instructional resource management.

Objective No. 2, utilized the descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of leadership practices of school heads in terms of leading strategically, developing self and others, building connections, shaping the culture of the school, leading teaching and learning, managing the school environment, and ensuring accountability and student achievement.

Objective No. 3, used the relational analytical scheme and Spearman's rank Correlation to determine the significant relationship between the level of instructional competence and the level of teachers' performance.

Objective No. 4, used the relational analytical scheme and Spearman's rank Correlation to determine the significant relationship between the level of leadership practices and teachers' performance.

Objective No. 5, used the relational analytical scheme and Spearman's rank Correlation to determine the significant relationship between the level of school heads' instructional competence and their level of leadership practices.

Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to ethical research principles to ensure all participants' protection, confidentiality, and well-being. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, ensuring that they fully understood the purpose, scope, and voluntary nature of their participation. The study upholds the principles of beneficence, respect for persons, and justice, as outlined in ethical research guidelines. Participants' identities remained confidential, and all data was anonymized to prevent potential harm or bias. Additionally, the study secured approval from the appropriate institutional review board or ethics committee to guarantee compliance with ethical standards. Furthermore, the research ensured the data collection, analysis, and reporting. No coercion or undue influence was exerted on participants, and they had the right to withdraw at any study stage without consequences. To maintain ethical responsibility, the findings of the research were presented objectively, without fabrication or manipulation.

The study adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) in the Philippines, ensuring that all collected data is stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion:

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Level of School Heads' instructional competence according to the areas of Curriculum, Coaching and Mentoring, Communication, and Instructional Resource Management

Table 1

Level of School Heads' instructional competence according to the area of Curriculum

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. Creates a supportive environment for curriculum implementation	4.59	Very High Level
2. Involves teachers in open communication and feedback	4.56	Very High Level
3. Effectively work with teachers to develop a work plan for implementing the curriculum	4.57	Very High Level
4. Provides a tool to monitor and ensure that curriculum is being taught as intended	4.58	Very High Level
5. Ensures to have a high-quality curriculum education that prepares for the 21st century	4.58	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.58	Very High Level

The results in Table 1 indicate that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' instructional competence in the area of curriculum to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.58.

The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.59 (Item no. 1), highlights that school heads create a supportive environment for curriculum implementation, suggesting their strong role in fostering a collaborative and motivating school culture. Meanwhile, the indicator with the lowest mean of 4.56 (Item no. 2), although still very high, points to the need for slightly more open communication and feedback between school heads and teachers. Other indicators, such as collaboration in developing work plans, providing monitoring tools, and ensuring high-quality, 21st-century-ready curriculum delivery, all received very high ratings, showing that school heads are actively engaged and effective in their instructional leadership.

These findings are supported by Salazar and Villanueva (2021), who emphasized that school leaders with strong curriculum leadership promote higher teacher engagement and instructional alignment. Similarly, Dizon and Hernandez (2022) found that establishing a collaborative environment enhances curriculum effectiveness and teacher satisfaction when school heads establish a collaborative environment.

Table 2

Level of School Heads' instructional competence according to the area of Coaching and Mentoring

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. provides effective technical assistance to support my instructional supervision	4.55	Very High Level
2. Assist my teachers in the areas of their teaching that need improvement	4.52	Very High Level
3. Provides mentoring and coaching with collaborative effort	4.49	Very High Level
4. Provides constructive feedback to the teachers	4.52	Very High Level
5. Provides positive impact on instructional management	4.55	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.53	Very High Level

The results in Table 2 reveal that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' instructional competence in the area of coaching and mentoring to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.53.

The highest-rated indicators, with a mean of 4.55 (Item no. 5), show that school heads provide effective technical assistance that supports instructional supervision and positively impacts instructional management. This implies that school heads play a vital role in guiding teachers to enhance their instructional practices.

The lowest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.49 (Item no. 3)—though still within the very high category—indicates that collaborative mentoring and coaching could still be strengthened. Other indicators, such as assisting teachers in areas needing improvement and providing constructive feedback, also received very high ratings, reflecting a strong culture of support and developmental guidance within the schools.

These findings align with the study of Reyes and Francisco (2020), who emphasized that effective mentoring practices by school leaders significantly influence teaching performance and professional growth. Likewise, Bautista and Del Mundo (2023) noted that regular and collaborative coaching sessions improve teachers' instructional strategies and foster a more supportive school environment.

Table 3

Level of School Heads' instructional competence according to the area of Communication

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. Provides communication clearly and effectively	4.63	Very High Level
2. Provides updated school policies	4.64	Very High Level
3. Responds promptly to teachers' issues and concerns	4.57	Very High Level
4. Provides transparent communication such as memos, DepEd orders, and MOOE procurement	4.62	Very High Level
5. Interprets clearly the memorandum, DepEd order, and other communication	4.63	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.62	Very High Level

The results in Table 3 show that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' instructional competence in the area of communication to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.62. The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.64 (Item no. 2), reveals that school heads are highly effective in providing updated school policies, reflecting their commitment to keeping teachers informed and aligned with current guidelines. The lowest mean of 4.57 (Item no. 3)—still classified as very high—indicates that while school heads respond to teachers' issues and concerns, there is a small area for improvement in the promptness of response. Other indicators, such as the clarity and effectiveness of communication, transparency in memos, DepEd orders, and MOOE procurement, as well as accurate interpretation of official documents, also received very high ratings. This implies that school heads maintain open and well-structured communication, which is essential for smooth school operations and informed decision-making among teachers.

These findings are consistent with the work of Castillo and Javier (2021), who found that strong communication skills among school leaders foster trust, collaboration, and efficient instruction. Likewise, Garcia and Molina (2023) emphasized that when school heads consistently provide clear and transparent communication, it results in improved teacher performance and a well-informed school community.

Table 4

Level of School Heads' instructional competence according to the area of Instructional Resource Management

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. ensures that instructional resources are available and accessible.	4.59	Very High Level
2. Aligns curriculum instructional resources and materials	4.55	Very High Level
3. Allocates instructional resources effectively	4.55	Very High Level
4. Provides quality-assured and relevant instructional resources	4.56	Very High Level
5. Implements instructional resource management effectively	4.55	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.56	Very High Level

The results in Table 4 reveal that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' instructional competence in the area of instructional resource management to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.56.

The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.59 (Item no. 1), shows that school heads ensure that instructional resources are readily available and accessible, reflecting their effectiveness in supporting teaching and learning processes.

The lowest mean of 4.55 (Item nos. 3 and 5)—though still very high—suggests that there is a slightly lesser emphasis on providing quality-assured and relevant instructional materials, indicating a potential area for further enhancement. Other indicators, such as aligning curriculum with instructional materials, effective allocation, and implementation of

resource management, also received very high ratings, underscoring the school heads' capability to facilitate resource-driven instruction and support teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

These findings are supported by the study of Navarro and Dela Cruz (2021), who highlighted the importance of instructional resource availability in boosting teacher confidence and lesson delivery. Similarly, Santos and Aquino (2022) emphasized that effective instructional resource management by school heads enhances teaching strategies and classroom engagement, leading to better educational outcomes.

Level of School Heads' Leadership Practices in the Area of Leading Strategically, Developing Self and Others, Building Connections, Shaping the Culture of the School, Leading Teaching and Learning, Managing the School Environment, and Ensuring Accountability and Student Achievement

Table 5

Level of School Heads' leadership practices in the area of Leading Strategically

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. has a clear and compelling vision for our school's future.	4.61	Very High Level
2. develops and implements strategic plans to achieve the school's goals.	4.61	Very High Level
3. makes informed decisions that align with the school's vision and goals.	4.61	Very High Level
4. anticipates and responds to changes in the educational environment.	4.57	Very High Level
5. evaluates the effectiveness of strategic plans and makes adjustments as needed.	4.57	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.60	Very High Level

The results in Table 5 show that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' leadership practices in the area of *leading strategically* to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.60.

The highest-rated indicators, each with a mean of 4.61 (Item no. 3), reflect that school heads articulate a clear and compelling vision for the school, develop and implement strategic plans, and make decisions that align with their goals. These results imply that school leaders are forward-thinking, goal-oriented, and capable of guiding their institutions toward continuous improvement.

The lowest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.57 (Item nos. 4 & 5)—still very high—suggests that while school heads are responsive to change and capable of evaluating strategic effectiveness, there may be room to further strengthen their adaptability and continuous monitoring systems.

These findings resonate with the work of Ramos and Delos Santos (2021), who emphasized that strategic leadership is crucial in navigating change and achieving school excellence. Likewise, the study by Mendoza and Villanueva (2023) highlighted that school leaders who align their decisions with a shared vision significantly enhance school performance and teacher engagement.

Table 6

Level of School Heads' leadership practices in the area of Developing Self and Others

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. models continuous learning and professional growth.	4.57	Very High Level
2. gives constructive feedback that helps teachers improve their practice.	4.54	Very High Level
3. empowers teachers to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.	4.62	Very High Level
4. recognizes and celebrates the achievements of teachers and staff.	4.60	Very High Level
5. give constructive feedback that helps teachers improve their practice.	4.57	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.58	Very High Level

The results in Table 6 reveal that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' leadership practices in the area of *developing self and others* to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.58.

The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.62 (Item no. 3), indicates that school heads effectively empower teachers to assume leadership roles and responsibilities, fostering a culture of shared leadership and trust. The lowest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.54 (Item no. 2), though still very high, suggests that providing constructive feedback could be further enhanced to support teacher development.

Other indicators rated very low, as found in item no. 2, included modeling continuous learning, recognizing staff achievements, and consistently encouraging professional growth, which collectively demonstrates that school leaders value both personal and team development.

This result aligns with the findings of Reyes and Francisco (2021), who stated that empowering teachers and promoting shared leadership significantly boost morale and performance. Similarly, De Leon and Navarro (2022) emphasized that professional growth and feedback mechanisms are critical in teacher retention and instructional effectiveness.

Table 7

Level of School Heads' leadership practices in the area of Building Connections

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. builds strong relationships with teachers, students and parents.	4.59	Very High Level
2. communicates effectively with stakeholders about the school's vision and goals.	4.58	Very High Level
3. fosters a sense of community and belonging among teachers, students, and parents.	4.59	Very High Level
4. engages with local businesses and organizations to support the school's goals.	4.60	Very High Level
5. is approachable and accessible to teachers, students, and parents.	4.61	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.60	Very High Level

The results of Table 7 indicate that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' leadership practices in the area of *building connections* to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.60.

The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.61 (Item no.5), reveals that school heads are approachable and accessible to teachers, students, and parents, which implies a strong foundation of trust and open communication in the school community.

The lowest-rated indicator, though still very high at 4.58 (Item no. 2), suggests that while school heads do communicate effectively with stakeholders about the school's vision and goals, there may still be room for enhancement in strategic communication. Other highly rated indicators reflect that school heads actively build relationships, foster community engagement, and collaborate with external stakeholders such as local businesses to advance school objectives.

This finding supports the study of Delos Santos and Ramos (2021), who emphasized that strong stakeholder engagement enhances school effectiveness and student outcomes. Likewise, Cruz and Mendoza (2023) noted that building positive relationships and fostering a sense of community are essential elements of transformational school leadership.

Table 8

Level of School Heads' leadership practices in the area of Shaping the Culture of the School

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. promotes a positive and inclusive school culture.	4.59	Very High Level
2. encourages collaboration and teamwork among teachers and staff.	4.63	Very High Level
3. fosters a growth mindset and a love of learning among teachers and students.	4.61	Very High Level
4. addresses and resolves conflicts in a fair and timely manner.	4.54	Very High Level
5. celebrates diversity and promotes equity and inclusion.	4.57	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.59	Very High Level

The results of Table 8 show that elementary school teachers perceived the school heads' leadership practices in *shaping the school's culture* to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.59.

The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.63 (Item no.2), reveals that school heads encourage collaboration and teamwork among teachers and staff, suggesting that collegiality and mutual support are highly valued within the school environment. Meanwhile, the lowest-rated indicator at 4.54 (Item no. 4), though still very high, implies that while conflict resolution is addressed, it may not be as consistently emphasized as other leadership practices. Other indicators also rated very high indicate that school heads foster inclusive, growth-oriented, and equitable school cultures, reflecting their commitment to creating a nurturing environment conducive to both teaching and learning.

This result supports the findings of Santos and Dela Cruz (2022), who asserted that school culture significantly impacts teacher motivation and student performance. Similarly, Bautista and Flores (2023) emphasized that school leaders who foster inclusivity and celebrate diversity contribute positively to a sustainable and resilient learning environment.

Table 9

Level of School Heads' leadership practices in the area of Leading Teaching and Learning

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. provides instructional leadership that supports teacher development.	4.59	Very High Level
2. ensures that instructional programs are aligned with the school's vision and goals.	4.61	Very High Level
3. monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching and learning.	4.61	Very High Level
4. provides resources and support for teachers to improve student learning.	4.60	Very High Level
5. stays-up-to date with the best practices in teaching and learning.	4.61	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.60	Very High Level

The results of Table 9 reveal that elementary school teachers perceived school heads' leadership practices in the area of *leading teaching and learning* to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.60.

The highest-rated indicators, with a mean of 4.61 (Item nos. 2, 3, & 5) show that school heads effectively align instructional programs with the school's vision and goals, actively monitor the quality of instruction, and remain updated on best practices in education. These findings indicate a strong instructional leadership presence that emphasizes coherence in teaching and learning processes.

The lowest-rated indicator, still at a very high level with a mean of 4.59 (Item no. 1), reflects that school heads provide instructional leadership that supports teacher development, suggesting a consistent effort to empower teachers in improving their instructional practices.

This is consistent with the findings of Mendoza and Castillo (2021), who noted that instructional leadership enhances student achievement through strategic alignment of curriculum and pedagogy. Moreover, Villanueva and Santos (2022) emphasized that effective school leaders who stay current with educational best practices play a crucial role in improving both teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

Table 10

Level of School Heads' leadership practices in the area of Managing the School Environment

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. ensures that the school is a safe and healthy environment for teachers and students.	4.62	Very High Level
2. manages the school's budget effectively.	4.57	Very High Level
3. maintains the school's facilities and resources.	4.58	Very High Level
4. ensures that school policies and procedures are fair and consistent.	4.58	Very High Level
5. stays organized and manages time effectively.	4.61	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.59	Very High Level

The results of Table 10 indicate that the elementary school teachers perceived the leadership practices of school heads in the area of *managing the school environment* to be at a *very high level*, with an overall mean of 4.59.

The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.62 (Item no. 1), reflects that school heads ensure a safe and healthy environment for teachers and students—highlighting their strong commitment to physical and psychological safety within the school premises.

The lowest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.57 (Item no. 2), still described as very high, points to effective school budget management. Other indicators, such as maintaining school facilities and ensuring fair and consistent policies, were also rated very high, suggesting that school heads consistently demonstrate sound administrative management and uphold a conducive learning environment.

This aligns with the findings of Ramirez and Gutierrez (2020), who emphasized that a safe and well-managed school environment is critical in enhancing both teacher satisfaction and student performance. Similarly, Cruz and Lorenzo (2021) underscored the importance of consistent policy implementation and effective resource management as foundational practices in strong school leadership.

Table 11

Level of School Heads' leadership practices in the area of Ensuring Accountability and Student Achievement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
The School head...		
1. Sets high expectations for student achievement.	4.60	Very High Level
2. Monitors and evaluates student progress regularly.	4.55	Very High Level
3. Provides support and resources for teachers to improve student achievement.	4.52	Very High Level
4. Addresses and resolves issues related to student achievement.	4.54	Very High Level
5. Celebrates student achievements and progress.	4.62	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.57	Very High Level

The results from Table 11 reveal that the elementary school teachers perceive the level of school heads' leadership practices in ensuring accountability and student achievement to be *very high*, with an overall mean of 4.57.

The highest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.62 (Item no.5), reflects that school heads effectively celebrate student achievements and progress, indicating their commitment to recognizing and fostering student success.

The lowest-rated indicator, with a mean of 4.52 (Item no. 3), still rated as very high, suggests that school heads provide adequate support and resources for teachers to improve student achievement. Other highly-rated indicators include setting high expectations for student achievement, monitoring and evaluating student progress regularly and addressing issues related to student achievement, all demonstrating a robust focus on academic excellence.

This supports the findings of Garcia and Reyes (2020), who highlighted the importance of school leaders in creating environments that prioritize academic accountability and the provision of necessary resources for teachers. Additionally, Navarro and Dela Cruz (2021) emphasized that regularly monitoring student performance and celebrating achievements are critical to maintaining a high standard of education.

Relational Analysis in the Level of School Heads' Instructional Competence and Level of Teachers' Performance, Level of School Heads' Leadership Practices and Level of Teachers' Performance, and Level of School Heads' Instructional Competence and their Level of Leadership Practices

Table 12

Relational Analysis Between the Level of School Heads' Instructional Competence and the Level of Teachers' Performance

Variable	rho	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Level of School Heads' Instructional Competence	0.056	0.476	0.05	Not Significant
Level of Teachers' Performance				

The result from Table 12 reveals that there is no significant relationship between the level of school heads' instructional competence and the level of teachers' performance. The correlation coefficient (rho) is 0.056, and the p-value is 0.476, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. These findings suggest that school heads' instructional competence does not significantly influence or relate to teachers' performance, as evidenced by the p-value exceeding the threshold for statistical significance.

In conclusion, since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that no significant relationship exists between the school heads' instructional competence and the teachers' performance. This suggests that factors other than instructional competence might be more influential in determining teachers' performance.

This conclusion aligns with recent studies by Jones and Smith (2020), who found that while leadership competence is important, other factors like school climate and teacher motivation strongly influence teachers' performance. Similarly, Lee and Chang (2021) emphasized that the relationship between leadership practices and teacher performance is often indirect and influenced by multiple contextual factors.

Table 13

Relational Analysis Between Level of School Heads' Leadership Practices and Level of Teachers' Performance

Variable	rho	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Level of School Heads' Leadership Practice	0.053	0.501	0.05	Not Significant
Level of Teachers' Performance				

The result from Table 13 indicates no significant relationship between the level of school heads' leadership practices and the level of teachers' performance. The correlation coefficient (ρ) is 0.053, and the p-value is 0.501, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. These findings provide evidence to accept the null hypothesis, suggesting that the leadership practices of school heads do not significantly impact the performance of teachers.

In conclusion, the lack of a significant relationship between school heads' leadership practices and teachers' performance implies that other factors may be influencing teacher effectiveness. Leadership practices may not directly translate into improved performance unless supported by other institutional and individual factors.

This finding is consistent with studies by Watson and Thompson (2021), who emphasized that leadership practices, while crucial, often indirectly influence teacher performance due to the presence of other mediating factors such as school culture and resource availability. Additionally, Roberts and Evans (2020) noted that a broader range of elements, including professional development opportunities and teacher autonomy, influences teacher performance.

Table 14

Relational analysis between the level of School Heads' instructional competence and their level of leadership practices

Variable	ρ	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Level of School Heads' Instructional Competence	0.947	0.000	0.01	Significant
Level of School Heads' Leadership Practice				

The result from Table 14 shows a significant relationship between the level of school heads' instructional competence and the level of their leadership practices. The correlation coefficient (ρ) is 0.947, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.01. These results provide strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that school heads' instructional competence is closely linked to their leadership practices.

In conclusion, the strong positive correlation between instructional competence and leadership practices suggests that effective school leadership is rooted in a school head's competence in instructional matters. School heads who demonstrate high instructional competence tend to exhibit more effective leadership practices.

These findings align with the work of Jones and Brown (2020), who found that instructional competence directly influences the quality of leadership in schools, as it provides the necessary foundation for guiding teachers and improving student outcomes. Similarly, Stewart and Miller (2021) highlighted that school leaders with strong instructional knowledge are better equipped to implement leadership practices that foster educational improvements.

Conclusions:

The study found that the majority of public elementary teachers in a medium-sized school division in Central Negros during SY 2023–2024 were older and had lower educational attainment, with service length evenly split. School heads demonstrated very high instructional competence and leadership practices across all domains, consistently unaffected by demographic factors. Teachers' performance was rated outstanding overall, though it varied significantly by age and length of service but not by education level. Statistical analyses showed no significant relationships between school heads' instructional competence or leadership practices and teacher performance; however, a strong positive correlation existed between instructional competence and leadership practices themselves. Based on these findings, the study recommends targeted professional development for older and less-educated teachers, continuous capacity-building for school heads, inclusive leadership training regardless of demographics, and the promotion of mentorship and collaborative practices. It also suggests exploring additional factors influencing teacher performance beyond instructional competence and leadership, integrating leadership with instructional coaching, and conducting further research with larger samples to validate and extend the results.

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