

School Head's Instructional Leadership Practices in Public Schools

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ABSTRACT

This mixed methods study examined the instructional leadership practices of public elementary school heads in Talakag I District, Division of Bukidnon. Anchored on the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads and the theory of deliberate practice, it assessed the extent to which school heads performed four competency strands assessment for learning, program development and adaptation, implementation of programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision identified the difficulties they encountered, and described how they addressed these challenges. Fifteen school heads from 17 public elementary schools participated through a survey using the DepEd instructional leadership evaluation instrument and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while qualitative data underwent thematic narrative analysis. Findings revealed very high levels of instructional leadership across all strands, with overall means from 4.25 to 4.53 “Always Practiced”, indicating consistent use of assessment data, curriculum review, program implementation, and clinical supervision with feedback and technical assistance. Despite this, school heads reported challenges such as teacher resistance to change, competing administrative demands, limited time for classroom observation, and difficulties sustaining innovation. To overcome these, they maximized Learning Action Cells and other professional development activities, strengthened collegial supervision and mentoring, encouraged collaboration among teachers, and modeled openness to change. The study concludes that while instructional leadership is generally strong, targeted support is still needed to help school heads manage workload, deepen teacher buy-in, and sustain instructional improvements.

Keywords: instructional leadership, school heads, professional development

INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership practices of school heads play a vital role in fulfilling the principal duties to guarantee high-quality education and learning, learners' development, and instructors' professional advancement. In their capacity as instructional leaders, school heads work with teachers to spot patterns and to share new ideas and approaches that will improve their ability to instruct students. They must continue to communicate openly with teachers in order to get support and criticism, particularly when it comes to instruction. To put students' accomplishment goals front and center, school managers must plan for necessary program modifications using data.

Republic Act mandates heads as instructional leaders. 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, to assume accountability, authority, and responsibility for: establishing a teaching and learning-friendly environment in the classroom; putting the curriculum into practice and holding teachers accountable for better learning outcomes; creating the school education program and school improvement plan; providing projects, programs, and services that offer fair opportunities for all community members to learn; introducing creative and novel modes of instruction to achieve better learning outcomes; promoting staff development; and forming school and community networks (Section 7 of the Philippine Congress, 2001).

The techniques of instructional leadership used to be very different from what they are today. Teaching and learning methods require fresh approaches and a new way of thinking in the twenty-first century. The education system needs to change in order to meet the ever-increasing demands of modern globalization and guarantee that education aims to give future generations the greatest education possible for the twenty-first century. Planning all of these different programs, though, won't be successful if school heads can't manage them well. While weak and disturbed school heads in leadership are expected to sabotage this great agenda, competent school heads with instructional leadership skills are expected to assist the government in achieving the goal of the nation's education transformation (Ibrahim, 2017).

It's possible that instructional leadership methods in the study area are similar to those in other parts of the area. There have been rumors that some school heads struggled to identify their responsibilities. Instead of carrying out their duties as outlined in their job descriptions, they gave teachers and coordinators more authority. Some received awards for being top achievers, while others received them for being low performers. While some people have occasionally visited classrooms to observe, others haven't done so very often. They were sometimes so preoccupied with paperwork that they forgot about their primary responsibility, which is to oversee education.

They neglected to fulfill their primary responsibility of giving students a high-quality education by closely observing teachers and ensuring that all subject areas' abilities were met. Instead, they were overly preoccupied with distributing funds to make their schools more aesthetically pleasing. Some educators, particularly the more senior ones, favored the status quo and opposed change. School heads would eventually find it difficult to force them to embrace all DepEd initiatives.

Hallinger (2019) claimed that teachers will make adjustments and become more dedicated to their work when they consider instructional leadership. The educational setting is the finest place for a well-thought-out change when the instructional leaders exhibit a favorable attitude toward change (Busher, 2020). In addition to being prepared for change, school heads should be working to enhance their expertise to effectively handle the changes that will occur. It would be hard for school heads to successfully execute the reforms if they had the necessary expertise (Malakolunthu et al., 2021). In this sense, school heads who engage in instructional leadership should serve as role models for educators, helping them to make changes by enhancing their expertise (Leithwood et al., 2006). There have been reports of ineffective schools and poor educational outcomes in the District of Talakag I, Division of Bukidnon. This could be the result of ineffective instructional leadership strategies used by school heads, which have an impact on both the academic achievement of students and the effectiveness of instructors. Assessing school heads on related instructional leadership abilities and giving concerned officials the information, they need for school heads' professional development are necessary steps toward determining how well the heads of the schools performed their jobs as instructional leaders.

The Department of Education (2012) and the Educational Development Project Implementing Task Force collaborated to introduce the interrelated principles of instructional leadership, which serve as the primary foundation for this study. The National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads include it among its domains. Four competency strands, including evaluation for learning, creating new programs or modifying old ones, putting plans for instructional improvement into action, and instructional supervision, define instructional leadership as a competency. Only managing the procedures and processes for tracking student accomplishment, making sure a variety of assessment methods are used to evaluate student performance, evaluating the efficacy of extracurricular and curriculum programs and/or teacher-led instruction, and developing and overseeing school policies that guarantee student advancement are all included in assessment for learning. Managing the introduction of curriculum initiatives in accordance with policies, collaborating with teachers on curriculum reviews, enhancing the offerings based on local needs, overseeing curriculum innovation and enrichment through the use of technology, and forming teams to support instructional innovation programs toward curricular responsiveness are all part of implementing programs for instructional improvement. According to DepEd (2012), instructional supervision entails creating an instructional supervisory plan, carrying out instructional supervision using the appropriate strategy, assessing lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management, giving teachers timely, accurate, and specific feedback regarding their performance in a collegial manner, and offering teachers technical assistance and expertise.

Additionally, the purposeful practice idea, first proposed by Ericsson and associates, serves as the foundation for this study. Ericsson and the corporation have been researching this notion and applying it to various situations for nearly thirty years. According to its initial premise, intentional practice is necessary for the best learning outcomes and performance enhancements. Deliberate practice, according to recent arguments by Ericsson and Harwell (2019), is just participating in scheduled activities to increase performance. It is presumed that school heads have received organized training from their district, division, regional, or national organization. This study makes the assumption that school heads have improved and become more deliberate in their efforts the more they have exercised instructional leadership responsibilities. Consequently, it is necessary to implement their best learning and eventually enhance their instructional leadership techniques. The study examined the difficulties in implementing instructional leadership and strategies for resolving these difficulties through the prism of this theory.

Great teaching techniques are established by school leaders. They are able to create inclusive and stimulating learning environments for the entire school, utilize the skills and motivations of educators and parents, and offer comprehensive, customized, and long-lasting teacher preparation. Educational leaders are essential in determining how an institution will develop in the future. They offer a roadmap outlining the goals of the system or institution by establishing a clear vision. Through involving parents and community members, leaders fortify the support network for students, fostering a favorable learning atmosphere. Student progress is greatly impacted by involved parents and a caring community because these environments give pupils regular resources and encouragement. By creating objectives, defining high standards, setting up classrooms, distributing resources, fostering a healthy and orderly learning environment, and interacting with community members, parents, and school personnel, school leaders also indirectly affect student progress.

Research Problem

The instructional leadership techniques of public elementary school heads in the District of Talakag I in the Division of Bukidnon were evaluated in this study. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. To what level do public elementary school heads engage in instructional leadership activities related to the following competency strands? (assessment for learning, program development and adaptation, program implementation for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision)
2. What difficulties do public school heads face when putting instructional leadership into practice?
3. How did the administrators of public schools overcome the difficulties they faced when implementing instructional leadership?

METHODS

This study had employed a mixed-methods research design by combining the qualitative data from the interviews and the quantitative data from the survey questionnaire. This was conducted in the District of Talakag I of the Department of Education in the Division of Bukidnon. The district has 17 public elementary schools with 17 public elementary school heads. While the study focused on Talakag District I to ensure depth of qualitative insights and feasibility within the research timeline, this sample size represents a limitation in terms of external validity and generalizability. The 15 participating school heads constitute approximately 88% of the district's school leadership population, providing robust within-district representation. However, instructional leadership practices may vary across different geographic, socioeconomic, and organizational contexts within Bukidnon and the wider Philippine education system. To address this limitation, future research should extend the sample to encompass multiple districts within the Division of Bukidnon (e.g., Talakag District II, neighboring districts such as Baungon, Libona, or Manolo Fortich) or even expand to other divisions within Region X. A multi-district or regional sample would strengthen the external validity of findings and allow for comparative analysis of instructional leadership practices across varied school contexts, including differences in school size, remoteness, teacher experience levels, and resource availability.

However, only 15 were involved in the survey and participated in the face-to-face interviews. This was due to the unavailability of the school heads. The data were collected within the second quarter of SY 20222023. The study utilized an instructional leadership evaluation instrument developed by the Department of Education (2012), anchored on the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads. This validated instrument comprises four competency strands: (1) Assessment for Learning (5 items), (2) Program Development and Adaptation (4 items), (3) Implementation of Programs for Instructional Improvement (5 items), and (4) Instructional Supervision (5 items), yielding a total of 19 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never Practiced to 5 = Always Practiced).

The original DepEd instrument underwent rigorous content validation by a panel of education experts, including DepEd officials, school superintendents, and university faculty specializing in educational leadership, ensuring alignment with the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads. For the present study, a pilot test was conducted with five school heads from a neighboring district (not included in the final sample) to assess instrument clarity and internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for each competency strand to determine reliability:

- Assessment for Learning: $\alpha = 0.89$
- Program Development and Adaptation: $\alpha = 0.87$
- Implementation of Programs for Instructional Improvement: $\alpha = 0.91$
- Instructional Supervision: $\alpha = 0.90$
- Overall instrument reliability: $\alpha = 0.94$

These alpha values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) and indicate excellent internal consistency, confirming that the instrument reliably measures instructional leadership practices among school heads in the study context. The high overall reliability ($\alpha = 0.94$) demonstrates strong inter-item correlation and suggests that the instrument's items consistently assess the intended constructs.

Demographic data were collected from all 15 participants, including age, years of service as school head, total years in teaching profession, highest educational attainment, and size of school (based on student enrollment). Table 1 presents the demographic profile of participants, which provides context for understanding potential variations in instructional leadership practices.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participating School Heads (n=15)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age Range	30-39 years	3	20.0
	40-49 years	7	46.7
	50-59 years	5	33.3
Years as School Head	1-3 years	4	26.7
	4-6 years	6	40.0
	7-10 years	3	20.0

	More than 10 years	2	13.3
Total Years in Teaching	11-15 years	2	13.3
	16-20 years	5	33.3
	21-25 years	4	26.7
	More than 25 years	4	26.7
Highest Educational Attainment	Master's Degree	11	73.3
	Doctoral Units	3	20.0
	Doctorate Degree	1	6.7
School Size (Enrollment)	Small (1-99)	5	33.3
	Medium (100-299)	7	46.7
	Large (300+)	3	20.0

Note: Demographic data provide contextual understanding of the participant pool and allow for comparative analysis of instructional leadership practices across different experience levels and school contexts.

The quantitative data were analyzed using the Mean and SD, while the interview responses were analyzed using the thematic narrative analysis of Riesman (2018). In addition to descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships among the four instructional leadership competency strands, and one-way ANOVA was used to explore whether demographic variables (years of service as school head, educational attainment, school size) significantly influenced instructional leadership practice levels. Post-hoc tests using Tukey's HSD were applied where significant F-values were obtained. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. These additional analyses provide deeper insights into the patterns and predictors of instructional leadership effectiveness.

The researcher has reviewed the transcripts, categorized the passages and apparent storylines, and investigated the parallels and commonalities. The researcher was able to discover the themes in the second stage after completing the first step, which involved attentively monitoring the data to find apparent narratives that addressed the issues. The researcher immersed themselves thoroughly in the transcripts and stories. In the final stage, they were able to finalize the topics and extract the narratives for the outcome's discussion.

Scale	Range	Qualitative Description	Extent of Practices
5	4.20 – 5.00	Always Practiced	Very High
4	3.40 – 4.19	Often Practiced	High
3	2.60 – 3.39	Occasionally Practiced	Moderate

2	1.80 – 2.59	Seldom Practiced	Low
1	1.00 – 1.79	Never Practiced	Very Low

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instructional Leadership Practices by Demographics

A comparative analysis of instructional leadership practices across demographic variables revealed nuanced patterns. School heads with more than 10 years of experience (M = 4.61, SD = 0.41) demonstrated slightly higher overall instructional leadership practice levels compared to those with 1-3 years of experience (M = 4.38, SD = 0.52), though ANOVA indicated this difference was not statistically significant (F = 1.87, p =

0.18). Similarly, educational attainment showed a trend where school heads with completed doctoral degrees (M = 4.72) scored higher than those with master's degrees (M = 4.48), but the small sample size of doctorate holders limits generalizability of this finding.

School size emerged as a more notable factor. School heads in small schools (1-99 students) reported higher mean scores in Instructional Supervision (M = 4.68, SD = 0.39) compared to those in medium (M = 4.51, SD = 0.48) and large schools (M = 4.42, SD = 0.61), likely due to smaller teacher teams enabling more frequent classroom observations and personalized feedback. Conversely, school heads in larger schools scored slightly higher in Program Development and Adaptation (M = 4.49, SD = 0.52) compared to smaller schools (M = 4.31, SD = 0.58), possibly reflecting greater access to resources and professional learning opportunities in larger institutions.

Pearson correlation analysis revealed strong positive correlations among all four competency strands (r = 0.68 to 0.81, p < 0.01), suggesting that school heads who excel in one dimension of instructional leadership tend to perform well across all dimensions. The strongest correlation was between Instructional Supervision and Assessment for Learning (r = 0.81, p < 0.001), indicating that school heads who actively monitor classroom instruction also emphasize data-driven decision-making and assessment utilization.

Table 2 illustrates the scope of instructional leadership methods in assessment for learning.

Table 2. The Level of Instructional Leadership Practices in Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Utilize assessment results to improve learning.	4.67	.48	Always Practiced
2. Create and manage a school process to ensure student progress is conveyed to student and parents / guardians regularly.	4.53	.64	Always Practiced
3. Manage the processes and procedures in monitoring student achievement.	4.47	.51	Always Practiced
4. Assess the effectiveness of curricular/ co-curricular programs and/or instructional strategies	4.47	.64	Always Practiced
5. Ensure utilization of a range of assessments to assess student performance.	4.40	.63	Always Practiced
Overall Mean	4.51	.58	Always Practiced

School heads consistently demonstrated instructional leadership levels of practice in Assessment for Learning (AfL) with all indicators averaging above 4.51 (Always Practiced). Understanding the need of reliable assessment in initiatives to enhance teaching and learning is essential for instructional leadership. Administrators who have prepared carefully are ready to guarantee that high-quality assessments are used by teachers in an efficient manner. Together with their instructors and students, school administrators therefore establish an efficient teaching and learning environment. Scholars from throughout the world concur that instructional leadership is helpful in developing environments that are conducive to teaching and learning (Pustejovsky et al., 2019; Hallinger et al., 2015). Additionally, school administrators devote a lot of their time to curriculum development, assessment, and implementation (Jita, 2020). When school managers care about both teaching and learning, there is a greater chance that learning will improve. Teachers' capacity building is mostly influenced by instructional leaders. Additionally, they are the main force behind students' academic success and the accomplishment of intended educational goals (Hallinger, 2019). To guarantee high-quality teaching and learning, establish stakeholder responsibility, and enhance education, school administrators should appropriately evaluate and assess instructors (Nolan & Hoover, 2018). In contrast, school administrators are said to devote much of their time to administrative tasks and little time to monitoring teacher supervision or teaching and learning. This was discovered in a study on managing to acquire instructional leadership (Hoadley et al., 2017).

Table 3. The Level of Instructional Leadership Practices in Developing Programs and or Adapting Existing Programs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Assist in implementing an existing a coherent responsive school wide curriculum.	4.53	.51	Always Practiced
2. Address deficiencies and sustain successes responsive school wide curriculum.	4.53	.51	Always Practiced
3. Develop a culture of functional literacy.	4.47	.51	Always Practiced
4. Develop/adapt a research-based school program.	4.40	.84	Often Practiced
Overall Mean	4.38	.59	Always Practiced

Table 3 demonstrates the scope of instructional leadership methods in creating or modifying Department of Education-mandated programs or in creating programs at the school level. School heads consistently demonstrated instructional leadership levels of practice in Developing Programs and or Adapting Existing Programs, with all indicators averaging above 4.38 (Always Practiced). The overall findings showed that public school administrators have consistently demonstrated a high level of proficiency in this instructional leadership ability. Among the national level programs that are being undertaken are lecture and seminar series, to mention a few. It is recommended that participants relay the trainings to their fellow educators. Certain programs take the shape of distant learning and scholarships. In these programs, educators work together to create classes and study pedagogy and subject matter. The teaching circles and the Small Learning Action Cell (SLAC) are two instances of these. For this reason, administrators in schools must modify their current policies or implement new ones that facilitate teacher collaboration. Teachers can learn most effectively when they collaborate with peers and colleagues, even while they have the capacity and duty to take charge of their own education.

The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, also known as Republic Act No. 10533, series of 2013, encourages these methods (Philippine Congress, 2013). The DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 issued by the department to reiterate the policy on the Learning Action Cell (LAC) as the Kto12 Basic Education Program School-Based Strategy for improving teaching and learning. Lobo (2016) stated that it is critical that educators in all educational

systems take into account the ultimate objective of their work and the strategies they might use to further their careers and effectively prepare students for an unpredictable and uncertain environment. Sahlberg (2019) shows that educators are using a skills-based approach to teaching globally to get pupils ready for postschool professions and active citizenship. Desta et al. (2018) suggested that one of the main ways in which teachers' professional development trainings and seminars contribute to less everyday difficulties is by imparting information and skills to them.

Murchan et al. (2019) advised that when the methods, methodology, and process are ready, teaching can be fruitful. This is the area where senior teachers cannot be given more responsibility by school administration. School administrators must spend time teaching and coaching teachers, supporting and evaluating them to ensure that they collaborate well so that they are fully equipped with strategies and pedagogies, even though some teachers are designated as coordinators for programs or school activities that offer them opportunities. To enhance teachers' abilities and skills, some school administrators conducted a school-based training program as a supplement. O'Connor (2013) stated that collaboration is advantageous since it gives teachers opportunities and experiences that would improve instruction, supports this.

Table 4. The Level of Instructional Leadership Practices in Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Work with teachers in curriculum review.	4.33	.38	Always Practiced
2. Manage curriculum innovation and enrichment with the use of technology.	4.27	.46	Always Practiced
3. Enrich curricular offerings based on local needs.	4.27	.46	Always Practiced
4. Manage the introduction of curriculum initiatives in line with DepEd policies (e.g. BEC, Madrasah)	4.20	.68	Always Practiced
5. Organize teams to champion instructional innovation towards curricular responsiveness.	4.20	.77	Always Practiced
Overall Mean	4.25	.57	Always Practiced

Table 4 shows the scope of the methods used to carry out plans for improving instruction. It is evident that school administrators have consistently applied this competency strand to a great degree. This demonstrates that they continuously carried out strategies to enhance instruction. Teachers and school administrators have worked together to execute the curriculum and find more effective solutions to the present issues. By principles, they are the first personnel responsible for the management of the curriculum. Additionally, administrators at schools need to make sure that teachers are aware of curriculum modifications, particularly those that pertain to helping students develop 21st-century abilities. Teachers must have access to instructional resources in order to guarantee efficacy. They must offer the chance to participate in the development and review of the curriculum. They might hire educators to carry out research that offers insightful criticism and encourages communication between educators and administrators. Aside from class observations, they must support teachers in this regard and give careful consideration to each LAC session, brief meeting, and conference. Based on local demands, school managers must enhance the curriculum options. This prompts them to assist educators in assessing the various aptitudes, educational requirements, and learning preferences of students. These enable educators to create solutions and meet the various demands of their students. The stakes for the school administrator's capacity to recognize good teachers and instructional strategies were increased by earlier research. It was discovered that there is a significant correlation between learner achievement development and classroom-based indicators of teaching effectiveness (Kane et al., 2020).

As can be seen from these observations, school administrators were excellent at overseeing curriculum innovation and felt that by utilizing technology and innovation to enhance the curriculum, they were improving it. They have always urged educators to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) to help them meet students' 21st-century needs. In order to meet the demands of today's students, teachers should be well-versed in the newest techniques and cutting-edge technologies. School administrators should collaborate with educators and solicit their suggestions in order to develop prompt remediation and intervention, particularly for ICT-related issues. According to Papa (2021), it is the primary duty of school administrators to develop into capable leaders in the field of technology, with the ability to influence the successful acceptance and use of this medium. In order to oversee technology-related activities in schools, including integration-related choices and policies, they must take on the position of technology leaders (Dexter, 2021). There has been a push for teachers and school officials to embrace new technology and keep up with its advancements. Additionally, educational innovation must address issues in the classroom and keep an eye on how society is developing.

High-quality innovation guarantees learning competency and improves learning faster for students. Research conducted in recent years has demonstrated a somewhat positive correlation between the work of school administrators and the enhancement of education in the schools, which in turn leads to improved student accomplishment. School effectiveness can be attained via hard work and the formulation of objectives and expectations through the use of technology, which stimulates administrators' and teachers' original and creative ideas. Orr and Orphanos (2019) claimed that one of the most important elements of putting an instructional improvement program into action is the instructional leadership practices of administrators. Furthermore, a great deal of what and how many of them learned successful leadership was influenced by their experiences. These experiences therefore make it possible for them to operate efficiently.

Additionally, improvements to the educational system brought about by shared leadership can inspire students and foster their academic development (Hallinger & Heck, 2015). Because of this, school administrators have a greater impact on school improvement when they share leadership and have a direct impact on teachers and instruction (Louis et al., 2020). Louis et al. (2020) asserted that in order for teachers to feel successful and productive at work, they require more than just support; they also need to be involved in efforts to improve their schools. It was discovered that the school system has some influence over teaching and learning because of the pleasant sentiments of achievement it fosters. To oversee and continue educational reforms, they had strong power beliefs. Better student achievement can be fostered by school administrators' activities and improvement plans (Sammons et al., 2014).

Table 5. The Level of Instructional Leadership Practices in Instructional Supervision

Indicators	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Prepare and implement an instructional supervisory plan.	4.67	.48	Always Practiced
2. Evaluate lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management.	4.60	.51	Always Practiced
3. Conduct instructional supervision using appropriate.	4.53	.64	Always Practiced
4. Provide in a collegial manner timely, accurate and specific feedback to teachers regarding their performance.	4.53	.52	Always Practiced
5. Provide expert technical assistance and instructional support to teachers.	4.53	.49	Always Practiced
Overall Mean	4.53	.52	Always Practiced

The degree to which instructional monitoring is practiced is shown in Table 5. Once more, the overall findings showed that school administrators have consistently used a high degree of instructional leadership in instructional supervision. These findings imply that either they routinely carried out clinical supervision to enhance teaching and learning, or they always gave instructional supervision to teachers. They have always used their instructional supervisory plan to oversee the curriculum. They also planned class observations. It's possible that teachers received instructional materials from school authorities. In the end, this contributed to the latter becoming visually and creatively engaging for students. It's possible that the former inspired master teachers to participate in instructional supervision planning.

In a cooperative effort, they might have talked with educators about tracking students' academic progress and taken steps to enhance it. Arong and Ogbadu (2022) stated that instructional supervision gives schools the chance to successfully enhance teachers' professional development and enable them to effectively oversee the teaching and learning processes. Tyagi (2020) placed a strong emphasis on direct supervision, which develops a plan for educators and administrators. By doing so, they were able to discover knowledge and competency gaps and pool their combined skills in teacher assessment. This offers the substantial assistance required for the professional growth of instructors. They can often stop by classrooms to watch instructors in action and offer them comments following their observations.

They might use instructor feedback to help them become better educators and raise the standard of instruction in the classroom. Congcong and Caingcoy (2020) advised to make proper and efficient use of a variety of feedback mechanisms. According to their statement, "School heads can enhance classroom observation and feedback by implementing both more frequently to give teachers more chances to learn and develop their roles, abilities, and skills (Congcong et al., 2020, p. 249).

Too et al. (2022) asserted that learners' academic performance and the instructional supervisory actions of school administrators had a beneficial link. Examining the lesson plans of the teachers was one aspect of the instructional oversight. Indeed, school administrators have always used clinical supervision in light of the outcome. "While there are various approaches to observation, the clinical supervision model is a widely recognized and standard method for observing teachers in the classroom" (Glickman et al., 2014, p. 246). In order to completely comprehend and enable communication with the teachers, school administrators engage in observation and conferences. During the pre-observation conference, administrators paid attention to the teachers on purpose. Administrators are in charge of oversight and monitoring (Yunas et al., 2013; Philippine Congress, 2001). School administrators were questioned on how they assumed the job of an instructional leader and how they carried out instructional leadership during the one-on-one interviews. The extent of their instructional leadership techniques in the survey may be triangulated based on their answers to this question. The following themes emerged from the shared replies.

Actual Practices in Instructional Leadership Roles

Providing technical assistance

One of the most important professional services that school administrators offer to teachers is technical help. It is designed to assist and direct them in recognizing issues and selecting appropriate fixes for efficient teaching. Teachers must always receive technical know-how from school administration in the form of guidance or assistance. A few of them counseled educators to see and take note of other educators' strengths. Therefore, this type of indirect technical support. One shared: "Giving instructors technical support on how to handle their teachings and resolve issues in the classroom is a major part of what it means to be an instructional leader (Participant 1)."

It is determined that offering technical support is essential to ensuring successful program execution and improved learning outcomes. It ought to affect the teachers' effectiveness and, above all, the students' overall well-being. One participant, a man, said that he observed classes as a way to exercise instructional leadership. He went on to say that he had to be in the classroom, where the teachers are, or wherever the activity is happening.

He underlined that the only way he could assess or rate the teachers' competence, expertise, and limitations was to see their teaching style and approach. As a result, he was in a position to support, encourage, and help educators as they refined their delivery methods. "I always make a point of providing my teachers with technological Support and closely monitoring how they provide education to the students" (Participant 11).

One of them developed the practice of constantly monitoring teachers' IMs and lesson plans in order to carry out this duty. Like the other participants, participant 10 also carried out the identical actions; however, this participant thought that by doing so, she provided her teachers with a sense of security and the impression that someone was keeping an eye on and directing them as they worked. Students get the impression that their school administrator cares about and is interested in their education as a result of this. Examining the class plan, the teachers' IMs, and assigning TAs to the various topics in the plan (Participant 10); ...offering of technical support (Participant 5); By empowering teachers. And I need to empower them to give meaningful learning experiences for pupils (Participant 3); Inculcate to the mind of the teacher that we need to upgrade teaching practices, especially in dealing with the 21st- century learners (Participant 6).

Giving teachers technological support is essential if school administrators want to ensure that their jobs are carried out in an efficient and effective manner. In order to help them handle issues, enhance their effectiveness as teachers, and give them tools, tactics, and teaching methodologies, technical assistance should constantly be given. The consistent application of important strategies for delivering and assessing the learning objectives planned for each lesson leads to successful teaching (UNESCO, 2014). Accordingly, the technical support can give educators access to knowledge about current educational trends, enable them to share success stories, and teach them how to maintain positive outcomes. Giving this support is a fundamental responsibility of administrators. This, in turn, makes it possible for teachers to participate more actively in the process of improving instruction and to focus on the significance of instructional problems and cutting-edge tactics that need to be investigated (Kelley & Peterson, 2017). School administrators hold a crucial role in the administration of education. They can be viewed as experts in offering technological support, particularly for enhancing the educational environment that promotes student development and learning (Alemayehu, 2018).

Conducting clinical supervision

It was true that school administrators had engaged in clinical monitoring. They observed teachers in action in the classrooms to achieve this. Because it focuses on the classroom and interacts directly with the processes of teaching and learning, they thought it would have an effect on improving instruction. Participants expressed that they watched teachers closely both during and after the class observation, noting their performance. By doing this, they make it simpler for themselves to give teachers insightful criticism by having open lines of communication. Teachers were led and motivated to improve their teaching performance by the comments. I helped the teachers realize that they could solve the issues they had discovered (Participant 9); I also continuously mentor and assist them in providing children with a high-quality education (Participant 2); I establish open and honest communication with all of us to make it work and serve our clients well, directly addressing any issues that may arise (Participant 4); I also visit their classrooms and engage in conversation with them (Participant 3). It is a tool that lets us know whether or not the competency is being attained, regardless of whether the teacher should move on to the following session (Participant 10).

The accounts suggested that clinical supervision helps educators to advance or modify their methods in order to become more proficient and productive educators. The results also demonstrate how clinical supervision improved classroom management effectiveness. Clinical monitoring aided teachers in developing their instructional strategies and performance (Zepeda, 2017). This was likewise the case with earlier research showing that teachers' teaching achievement rose under clinical supervision (Thomas, 2018). The majority of teachers view clinical supervision favorably, according to the survey. The study's conclusion is that supervision helps teachers improve both as individuals and as educators. Observed teachers also acknowledged that they became more proficient teachers as a result of supervision. The results of this study corroborate the assertion made by Radi (2017) that a conversation between a teacher and a school administration is necessary in order to obtain feedback from class observations. Collegially, the teachers' strengths and flaws with regard to methodology, approach, and instructional materials employed can be addressed through the conversation.

Innovating teaching and learning

Interestingly, a lot of participants said that when it came to working with students, differentiated education was preferable. By catering to each learner's needs, supporting the learning processes, and keeping an eye on class observations, they hope to optimize the learners' growth. According to participant 2, a common misconception among educators is that diversifying instruction entails assigning more work to some kids or the opposite. One of them gave teachers new ideas and approaches to better comprehend varied instruction. "Introducing creative concepts in teaching and learning to assist learners become more prepared for the actual world" (Participant 2).

According to participant number six, each learner has a unique level of intelligence. According to her, educators should figure out what motivates each student and act as a catalyst to create lessons that enable each student to reach their full potential. She also said that in order to accommodate and set up students for success, teachers should employ a variety of tactics. "By giving students diverse tactics that suit their learning ability by employing differentiated instruction activities" (Participant 6).

According to earlier research, school administrators help instructors by providing them with the knowledge and techniques they need to change their lessons so that students can master the material (Guskey, 2020). According to Ponnusamy (2018), teachers' performance is impacted by the instructional leadership of school administrators. It was underlined that educators who receive strong administrative support will directly impact students' academic success. Teachers in the classroom can be given more authority by school administration as they differentiate instruction. It was stated in Michalopoulos et al. (2020) that youngsters, whether or whether they are comparable to the instructor or other students, offer a variety of valuable cultural and language experiences to the classroom. Each youngster learns in a unique way as a result. A good lesson is tailored to the needs and learning preferences of each student.

On Challenges in Practicing Instructional Leadership

Dealing with teachers' attitudes

A few people acknowledged that dealing with teachers was difficult. They never denied that some teachers had negative attitudes toward classroom observation, which presents several difficulties for them when adopting class monitoring. School administrators need to take care of the daily school supervising plan in order to proceed. Some teachers, though, object to being watched or supervised in the classroom. They display an unfavorable attitude about it. Administrators' changes can be undone by these teachers. They said: "The teachers have a negative outlook on instructional oversight (Participant 3), Some instructors, particularly the older ones, feel that they are superior to you because of their experiences (Participant 2); I sense that professors were unfavorable if you had to schedule them for observation since they are not used to it (Participant 10); Teachers, as they are the primary role models who will attend to the needs of the students by providing them with appropriate guidance that will result in improved child development (Participant 1); naturally, those with higher education are more difficult to work with. Of course, it's the instructors; after all, some of them hold doctorates, so there's little doubt that their standards for command and responsibility differ (Principal 9)."

They have observed that because they felt they already understood everything, professors are more difficult to work with. In actuality, a large number of them took their time studying the material and earned a degree. They believe they already know everything there is to know about teaching. According to the participants, supervisory supervision is a valuable way for teachers to continue learning. It is also undeniable that certain educators possess a restricted background and understanding of educational theories and methods. As a result, it is reasonable for the managers of the schools to support them by offering direction in utilizing suitable teaching tactics. From the standpoint of human resource management and development in education, the effectiveness of the education system relies greatly on teacher quality (Omebe, 2023). The main responsibility of instructional leadership is to create a teaching team that is capable of achieving academic success for students. Teachers and school officials need to realize that their roles in educating the students should be collaborative. Collaborative leadership among educators appears to have an impact on student achievement through the development of effective instructors and the creation of academic structures (MacBeath & Cheng, 2018). The results are in line with Tuytens et al. (2010)'s research, which found that teachers' perceptions and influence are greatly influenced by the structure a

principal provides and the level of trust they have in their school administration. Research has also shown that instructional leadership strategies have a direct impact on how effective feedback is. They therefore have a direct impact on teachers' professional development (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). School officials acknowledged that they had to strike a balance between sustaining a cooperative and supportive school climate and adhering to a potentially divisive regulation that required changes to the manner and subject matter of teacher evaluation. Increasing classroom instruction by positively influencing teachers' knowledge and competency is one of the goals of instructional leadership practice (Gu, 2014).

Conflicting schedules and activities

Finding time is difficult, according to a female participant, because there are so many administrative duties associated with running a school and implementing DepEd initiatives. Even though the school offers training and seminars to help administrators and teachers hone their skills, finding the time to complete related jobs like monitoring is a challenge. In a similar vein, a few participants listed time management as a difficulty in their leadership. In addition to overseeing education, school administrators also participate in training sessions and seminars. It's true that time is a limited resource. The participants struggled to decide how to divide their time between these conflicting demands. "Well, to be specific...time management. It's really difficult since lectures can occasionally generate scheduling conflicts (Principal 2). time restriction on the principal's part. Memos asking quick attendance even when everything is scheduled provide a challenge (Participant 10); managing my time is a challenge since, although I occasionally observe classes, there are other tasks, particularly those related to national initiatives that require immediate action or implementation (Participant 11); Because our department hosts a lot of seminars. We've got a plan for instructional supervision. It is merely a scheme. We are unable to execute it at times. Time is the biggest obstacle, thus I used to take video lessons with my teachers (Participant 2). Serving others is the main goal of instructional leadership, according to participant 12.

There are numerous duties associated with school management. It takes time to manage school operations, supervise lesson plans, and foster teacher relationships (Hornig et al., 2020). Because of this, increasing productivity requires finding methods to do more with the time and resources that are available. Improving time management skills is one method to achieve this objective. While ignoring time management in particular, research on educational administration has shown how important time allocation and organization are for school administrators. School administrators' time was focused on organizational management and school operations, according to studies on how they used their time. These studies used class observations and other supervisory works. All of these forecast student success as well as other academic outcomes (Hornig et al., 2020; May et al., 2022). Additional research reveals that principals' time was linked to better student outcomes when it came to certain instruction-related responsibilities like coaching and teacher professional development. However, they also contributed significantly to the completion of administrative tasks and many planned and unplanned meetings throughout the day.

Teachers are resisting change

A few people brought up teachers who were resistant to change. School administrators must ascertain the reasons behind teachers' reluctance to change, as it is a significant factor in reform failure. The participants saw that some teachers misunderstand or reject the criticism provided by school officials during their observations of the classes in order to improve their instruction. They went so far as to say that conventional educators had doubts about the emerging educational trends. In actuality, a large number of them really want to hear nothing about innovation, change, new teaching methods, and so forth. They often feel compelled to participate in processes of transformation and progress. "Teachers refuse to adopt a facilitative teaching approach, and few of them still teach in the traditional manner (Participant 5). In particular, some teachers are unwilling to adjust to the new trends in the teaching and learning process and do not comprehend the behavior of the millennial generations of learners. Furthermore, in light of the difficulties I previously discussed, some educators may object to receiving technical support from other educators if it means that they will have to change their pedagogical approaches. This is understandable given that educators already have a lot on their plates (Participant 6)."

This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Al Ateeqi (2019), which found that not all educators support the use of "interactive teaching methodologies that promote creativity and innovation in teaching." Instead, some educators continue to adhere to traditional methods and teaching pedagogies. In order for meaningful change to occur in education, educators must be willing to take chances and try out new approaches when creating lesson plans and engaging classroom interactions. In the process of doing so, they will discover which digital tools best support the learning outcomes they hope to achieve for their students. Nonetheless, educators need to be capable of navigating, analyzing, and comprehending the complexity and evolution of digital technology. Although they still frequently use digital tools, teachers mostly use social media and perform basic internet searches (Thompson, 2013). Fullan (2020) also made the encouraging discovery that instructional leaders, or school administrators, should constantly remind teachers that they are a part of the educational system and should embrace changes. School systems operate in this way. According to Opfer et al. (2021), modifications implemented by educators in their work therefore influence modifications in students. A shift in belief is influenced by teachers' experiences with changing their practices and by changes they see in their students. Opfer et al. (2021) advise that in order to sustain the change in practice, this process should occur continuously and regularly affect teachers' beliefs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon applying deliberate practice theory to the findings, it can be inferred that school administrators have demonstrated a high degree of knowledge and comprehension regarding their roles as instructional leaders in four areas: instructional supervision, program development and/or adaptation, program implementation for instructional improvement, and assessment for learning. Although these administrators are capable of carrying out their instructional leadership responsibilities to an exceptional degree through day-to-day practice, they also acknowledged that they face difficulties due to teachers' pessimistic attitudes, resistance to change, and competing schedules within their schools, divisions, regions, and even with national activities. The Department of Education's continuous professional development program enabled them to put their newly gained knowledge and abilities to use in clinical supervision, teacher aid, and innovative teaching and learning.

These administrators have tried their utmost to meet content and performance standards of the basic education curriculum, adjust and adapt the programs of the agency. The following recommendations were made in light of the aforementioned conclusions: (1) The continue of the department on its current programs and activities at the national, regional, division, and district levels in order to best train school administrators for their instructional roles in school-based administration. (2) The school administrators may work with their district supervisors as their direct mentors and with co-school administrators, especially in addressing challenges in performing instructional leadership roles to ensure optimal school performance among teachers and learners. This is to maintain progress and even surpass the current performance of school administrators in practicing instructional leadership roles; (3) The Department of Education, at various levels, may provide programs for educators who struggle with their attitudes and are reluctant to adapt or try new things in the classroom. This will assist school administrators in dealing with these issues; and (4) In order to prevent disruptions to schoolbased activities and schedules, the Department of Education at the national, regional, division, and district levels may give school administrators advance notice of their events, particularly their clinical and supervisory responsibilities to teachers. (6) Future researchers may conduct longitudinal studies investigating the direct and mediating relationships between school heads' instructional leadership practices and student learning outcomes (e.g., National Achievement Test scores, classroom-based assessment results, 21st-century skills development).

The study acknowledged the small number of participants, particularly with regard to the quantitative data. It is advised that future researcher carry out a comparable study with a larger sample size and a more complex design to guarantee higher levels of external validity and results that can be applied to other contexts.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into instructional leadership practices in Talakag District I, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size ($n=15$) and single district focus limit the generalizability of findings to other contexts within Bukidnon or the Philippines. Future research should employ

larger, multi-district or regional samples to strengthen external validity and enable more robust statistical analyses, including structural equation modeling to test relationships among leadership dimensions, school climate factors, and outcomes. Second, the study relied on self-reported data from school heads, which may be subject to social desirability bias.

Triangulation with teacher perceptions, classroom observation data, and student achievement metrics would provide a more comprehensive and objective assessment of instructional leadership effectiveness. Third, while the study identified high levels of instructional leadership practice, it did not directly measure the impact of these practices on student learning outcomes. A critical direction for future research is to establish empirical linkages between specific instructional leadership behaviors (e.g., frequency and quality of classroom observations, types of feedback provided, professional development facilitation) and student performance indicators (e.g., standardized test scores, learning competency mastery rates, dropout and retention rates). Longitudinal designs tracking changes in leadership practices and corresponding student achievement over multiple school years would be particularly valuable.

Additionally, qualitative case studies examining how exemplary school heads translate instructional leadership competencies into tangible improvements in teaching quality and student learning would enrich understanding of the mechanisms through which leadership influences outcomes. Finally, comparative studies across urban, rural, and remote school contexts could illuminate how geographic and resource factors moderate the relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness.

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