

**INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL HEADS IN THE MUNICIPALITY
OF CALASIAO: BASIS FOR A MANAGEMENT
ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

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Abstract

This study examined the instructional leadership practices of public elementary school heads to inform the development of a management enhancement plan. Using a quantitative descriptive-comparative design, data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire aligned with key instructional leadership domains: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. A census approach (complete enumeration) was employed to include all eligible public elementary school heads in the locale. Descriptive statistics were used to determine respondent profiles and the level of instructional leadership practices across domains. An inferential analysis using the independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether instructional leadership practices differed significantly across groups defined by selected profile variables.

Findings revealed that school heads demonstrated generally high to very high levels of instructional leadership practice across domains. Defining the school mission and promoting a positive school learning climate emerged as the strongest domains, indicating consistent emphasis on goal setting, shared vision, and supportive teaching-learning conditions. The instructional program, while still rated high, received the lowest comparative rating, suggesting a priority area for improvement in instructional supervision, curriculum coordination, and monitoring learner performance. Differences in instructional leadership practices were not statistically significant across age, sex, educational attainment, and length of service. However, instructional leadership practices differed significantly by training exposure, indicating that participation in professional development is associated with stronger leadership practices. These results support the development of targeted leadership capacity-building interventions, with emphasis on strengthening instructional program management.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership; School Heads; Instructional Program Management; School Mission; Learning Climate; Professional Development; Management Enhancement Plan

1. Introduction

Over the past four decades, instructional leadership has remained a core construct for understanding how school leadership contributes to improved teaching quality and learner achievement. The construct is commonly anchored in the Hallinger–Murphy framework, which conceptualizes instructional leadership through three interrelated dimensions: (a) defining the school mission, (b) managing the instructional program, and (c) promoting a positive school learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, as summarized in ScienceDirect Topics, n.d.). While the model is historically grounded, it remains highly relevant in contemporary scholarship, particularly as instructional leadership is re-examined in the context of equity, teacher professional development, organizational change, and large-scale accountability systems (Cox & Mullen, 2023).

Recent research has strengthened the argument that instructional leadership matters not only as a leadership identity but as a measurable mechanism through which school leaders

influence instructional coherence and outcomes. For example, contemporary empirical and meta-analytic work has examined how instructional leadership relates to learner outcomes through multi-level pathways, including teacher professional learning and instructional practices (Campos et al., 2023; Keller et al., 2021). These findings reinforce the long-standing claim that principals' influence on student outcomes is among the strongest school-level effects, often second only to classroom instruction, and that the quality of instructional leadership is therefore central to system-wide improvement efforts (Cox & Mullen, 2023).

At the same time, the instructional leadership literature has become more nuanced, shifting from "principal-as-supervisor" approaches toward leadership that is distributed, data-informed, and capacity-building, especially under conditions of complex reform and post-pandemic recovery. Studies using large-scale datasets have explored how teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership relate to well-being and workload, suggesting that instructional leadership must be both improvement-oriented and supportive of teachers' professional conditions (ScienceDirect, 2025). This matters because teacher performance and well-being are increasingly viewed as enabling conditions for sustained gains in learner outcomes, particularly in systems facing persistent learning gaps and resource constraints.

In the Philippine context, the importance of instructional leadership has been underscored through formal policy architecture that explicitly defines school head expectations, professional standards, and accountability measures. The Department of Education (DepEd) institutionalized leadership competencies through its national adoption and implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) via DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2020. This policy positions school heads as key drivers of teaching quality and learner achievement by standardizing leadership practice and professional growth pathways across schools (Department of Education [DepEd], 2020). The PPSSH policy context is especially relevant because it aligns principal leadership with instructional improvement mandates, thereby creating an operational environment in which instructional leadership is not merely a theoretical construct but a performance expectation embedded in school governance.

Despite strong policy alignment, implementation realities often reveal that the three dimensions of instructional leadership do not develop evenly. Across multiple settings, managing the instructional program—including supervising instruction, coordinating curriculum, monitoring learner progress, and protecting instructional time—frequently emerges as the most demanding domain because it requires both technical expertise and sustained time investment amid competing administrative responsibilities (ScienceDirect Topics, n.d.; Springer, 2019). This unevenness is significant in decentralized systems, where school heads operate at the intersection of accountability pressures, administrative burdens, and teacher development needs. Consequently, even when principals demonstrate strong leadership in mission-setting and school climate, the deeper instructional core—classroom practice, curriculum alignment, and learning data use—may receive comparatively less consistent attention.

In response to these challenges, the literature increasingly emphasizes the role of principal professional development as a strategic lever for strengthening instructional leadership capacity. A growing body of evidence links professional learning for school leaders with improved instructional leadership behaviors and enhanced support for teacher development (Cox & Mullen, 2023). Research has also highlighted that effective principal professional development is often characterized by coherence, job-embedded learning, structured peer learning networks, and a focus on instructional improvement routines rather than generic administrative training (AASA, 2022). These insights are especially relevant to school systems such as the Philippines, where leadership development is expected to support not only compliance but also continuous improvement and instructional transformation.

Within the broader instructional leadership literature, the relationship between principal leadership and teacher professional development has become a central theme. Empirical work

has found that instructional leadership is a significant predictor of teachers' professional learning and related instructional practices, suggesting that when school heads actively engage in supervision, feedback, and instructional support, teachers are more likely to participate in meaningful professional development and translate learning into improved instruction (SpringerOpen, 2024). Complementary qualitative work further illustrates that teachers experience instructional leadership through coaching behaviors, development planning, and sustained dialogue about teaching and learning, rather than through episodic observation alone (Semantics Scholar, 2023). Together, these findings suggest that instructional leadership is both an organizational driver and a relational practice, shaping the school's professional learning culture.

The contemporary resurgence of interest in instructional leadership also reflects a scholarly recognition that the construct remains foundational, even as leadership contexts evolve. Notably, Hallinger's recent reflection on instructional leadership underscores its continuing relevance, particularly as scholars mark major milestones such as the long-standing use of PIMRS and continued adaptation of the model across education systems and contexts (Hallinger, 2025). This perspective is important because it affirms that instructional leadership remains a vital framework for examining how school leaders can sustain instructional quality while responding to new pressures, including equity priorities, digital transformation, and system shocks.

However, instructional leadership is not enacted in abstraction; local conditions, training exposure, and institutional supports shape it. Evidence from local and regional studies in the Philippines has repeatedly highlighted the importance of leadership competence, structured standards, and continuous professional development—particularly in domains related to teaching and learning (IJAMS, 2024). Although such studies vary in setting and method, they reinforce a consistent conclusion: leadership competencies and professional development matter, and there is value in generating localized evidence to inform targeted improvement interventions. This is especially relevant for municipalities and divisions where school contexts, resourcing patterns, and leadership pipelines may differ from national averages.

In this context, examining instructional leadership practices among public elementary school heads in specific localities is both timely and necessary. Local evidence can clarify which domains of instructional leadership are consistently practiced at high levels and which domains require targeted enhancement. It can also support the development of actionable improvement strategies—such as a management enhancement plan—that aligns with the PPSSH and local capacity development needs (DepEd, 2020). Importantly, such localized approaches can strengthen the “fit” between national leadership expectations and the operational realities of school heads, thereby enabling more feasible and sustainable leadership development.

Finally, the policy and research landscape between 2019 and 2025 indicates that instructional leadership research is expanding beyond simple correlations toward more robust evidence on mechanisms, conditions, and mediators. Large-scale, multi-country, or high-sample studies now examine how instructional leadership shapes teacher outcomes and professional conditions. At the same time, system-level reforms increasingly require school heads to manage compliance and drive instructional coherence (ScienceDirect, 2025). Taken together, these developments justify continued inquiry into instructional leadership practices among school heads, particularly in settings where leadership standards have been formalized and where professional development is expected to translate into measurable improvements in teaching and learning.

Accordingly, the present research is positioned within this literature and policy context, focusing on instructional leadership practices as a basis for targeted improvement planning. By examining how school heads enact mission-setting, instructional program management, and school learning climate development—and by considering the role of professional development—

this study provides local evidence that can inform leadership enhancement efforts aligned with national standards and school improvement priorities.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design, using a cross-sectional survey, to determine the levels and patterns of instructional leadership practices among public elementary school heads. A descriptive design is appropriate when the primary purpose is to systematically describe existing conditions, establish baseline patterns, and quantify perceptions or self-reported practices without manipulating variables or introducing interventions (Siedlecki, 2020). In IMRAD manuscripts, this design is commonly used when the research aims to generate context-specific evidence that can inform institutional planning and policy-based improvement programs.

The study focused on instructional leadership as operationalized through established domains frequently adopted in educational leadership research: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate (Haller, 2025). This framework provides a theoretically grounded basis for measuring school heads' leadership behaviors aligned with instructional improvement priorities and accountability systems. Within this framework, the study quantified the extent to which respondents practiced leadership behaviors within each domain and examined whether reported instructional leadership practices differed across groups defined by selected profile variables.

A survey method was selected because it enables the efficient collection of standardized responses from the entire population of school heads, thereby allowing the generation of comparable quantitative indicators of leadership practice. Surveys are widely used in leadership research due to their suitability for producing summary measures such as domain means, composite scores, and rankings that support program planning and benchmarking (Ponto, 2019). In this study, the design supported both descriptive and comparative components: (a) describing overall levels of instructional leadership and (b) testing for statistically significant differences in instructional leadership when demographic and professional characteristics grouped respondents.

The descriptive design was complemented by comparative statistical procedures—specifically, tests of difference—to determine whether observed variations in instructional leadership practices across groups were statistically meaningful. This approach is consistent with quantitative descriptive-comparative studies in education, which aim to identify patterns and determinants of professional practice in naturally occurring settings (Siedlecki, 2020). The comparative component of the design is particularly relevant in school leadership contexts, as leadership behaviors may vary based on factors such as years of experience, professional development exposure, and formal training, which are often used as proxies for leadership capacity and role preparedness (Cox & Mullen, 2023).

Overall, this research design is aligned with the practical purpose of producing evidence that can serve as a basis for organizational decision-making—such as the development of a management enhancement plan or structured professional development interventions—while remaining consistent with IMRAD expectations for transparency, replicability, and methodological coherence.

2.2 Participants

The participants of this study were public elementary school heads in the study locale. Consistent with generating complete locality-level evidence, the study used a census approach in which all eligible members of the defined population were included as respondents. A census

design is appropriate when the population is sufficiently small and accessible, and when the intent is to produce findings that are directly representative of the entire target group rather than estimates derived from a subset (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2024).

Under this approach, the sampling strategy is characterized as total population sampling, which involves examining the entire population that meets the study's inclusion criteria (Lærd Dissertation, 2024). This is particularly suitable in leadership studies where (a) the target group is limited in size, (b) each unit has specialized role-based experience, and (c) subgroup comparisons are relevant for local planning and professional development prioritization. Including the full population strengthens the study's internal representativeness for the locale and reduces sampling error that may arise when only a portion of the population is surveyed (ABS, 2024).

2.3 Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire designed to measure the instructional leadership practices of public elementary school heads. The instrument was developed and organized around widely used instructional leadership domains—defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate—which remain central to contemporary instructional leadership scholarship and measurement (Hallinger, 2025). These domains were operationalized into observable leadership practices appropriate for elementary school leadership contexts, ensuring that the items reflected day-to-day leadership behaviors related to instructional improvement, curriculum implementation, supervision, professional learning, and the learning environment.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part gathered respondent profile variables relevant for subgroup analyses (e.g., age group, sex, highest educational attainment, years in service, and training exposure). The second part measured instructional leadership practices using domain-based item clusters aligned with instructional leadership constructs. Responses were collected using a Likert-type response format, a standard approach for measuring latent constructs such as leadership practices and perceptions (Lovett et al., 2021). A Likert-type structure supports quantitative aggregation (e.g., item, domain, and composite means) and enables comparisons across domains and respondent groups. In accordance with best practice, the instrument specified clear verbal anchors for each scale point to reduce interpretive ambiguity and improve response consistency (Hoekstra et al., 2025).

To ensure the instrument's appropriateness and alignment with the intended constructs, the questionnaire underwent content validation by subject-matter experts with relevant experience in educational leadership, instructional supervision, and research measurement. Content validation was conducted to evaluate the relevance, clarity, and representativeness of each item relative to the targeted instructional leadership domains. This process is recommended as a foundational step in establishing validity evidence, particularly when a questionnaire is researcher-developed or adapted for a specific context (Yusoff, 2019).

The validation process followed a structured approach consistent with Content Validity Index (CVI) methods, which quantify expert agreement on item relevance and help identify items requiring revision or removal (Yusoff, 2019). Expert feedback was incorporated through iterative refinement, including rewording ambiguous statements, improving alignment with the domain constructs, and ensuring that items were appropriate for the school heads' scope of work and policy environment.

After validation and refinement, the questionnaire underwent reliability testing to assess the internal consistency of the domain scales. Reliability is a core measurement property indicating the degree to which items within a domain measure the same underlying construct consistently (Taber, 2020). Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), which remains a commonly reported reliability coefficient in education and social science research when using multi-item Likert-type scales (Taber, 2020). In interpreting Cronbach's alpha,

the study followed standard reporting practice, treating coefficients at or above commonly used thresholds (e.g., $\alpha \approx .70$ or higher) as indicative of acceptable internal consistency, while also recognizing that alpha is sensitive to scale length and dimensionality (Boulton et al., 2024). The reliability analysis results informed whether any items required further refinement to improve consistency within each domain.

For descriptive analysis, item responses were aggregated to compute domain-level means and an overall instructional leadership mean. Likert-type data are frequently summarized through means and standard deviations when reported as summated or composite scale scores, particularly in applied educational research and survey-based leadership studies (Hoekstra et al., 2025). Interpretation of the computed means followed an explicit scale descriptor system, which enabled clear reporting of the extent of practice per domain and facilitated ranking of strengths and priority areas for improvement.

Overall, the instrumentation procedures—framework-based construction, expert content validation, and internal consistency reliability testing—were designed to ensure that the questionnaire generated evidence that was sufficiently valid and reliable for describing instructional leadership practices and supporting comparative analyses aligned with the study objectives.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures aligned with the study's objectives of (a) determining the level of instructional leadership practices and (b) identifying whether these practices differed when respondents were grouped according to selected profile variables. Prior to analysis, completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness and consistency, and responses were entered into a statistical worksheet for computation. The analysis followed a descriptive-comparative approach, a common strategy in survey-based educational leadership research, in which results are summarized quantitatively and subsequently examined for group differences under naturally occurring conditions (Hoekstra et al., 2025).

For the descriptive component, respondent profile variables were summarized using frequency counts and percentages to provide an overview of the participant characteristics. Instructional leadership practices were quantified through weighted means computed per item and aggregated at the domain level (defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate), as well as through an overall composite mean. Likert-type scale responses were treated as summated scale scores and summarized using means to support interpretive comparisons across domains, consistent with established guidance on analyzing Likert-type data in applied research (Hoekstra et al., 2025). Domain means were subsequently ranked to determine relative areas of strength and priority, enabling the identification of domains that may require targeted enhancement. This practice is consistent with descriptive interpretation approaches for Likert-scale composites, in which the comparative ranking of domain indicators is used to support planning and prioritization decisions (Alkharusi, 2022).

For the inferential component, the study tested whether instructional leadership practices differed significantly across respondent groups. Where the grouping variable contained two categories, an independent-samples t-test was used to compare mean instructional leadership scores between groups, this test is appropriate for evaluating whether the difference between two independent group means is statistically significant, provided that relevant assumptions (e.g., independence of observations, approximate normality of the outcome distribution, and homogeneity of variances) are reasonably satisfied (LibreTexts, 2024). Statistical significance was evaluated at an alpha level of 0.05, and results were interpreted based on the computed t statistic, degrees of freedom, and p-value. For reporting and manuscript consistency, inferential

results were expressed in narrative form following common APA statistical reporting conventions (e.g., $t(df) = \text{value}$, $p = \text{value}$), while maintaining the concise reporting style typical of Elsevier-methods sections (Social Science Statistics, n.d.).

Collectively, these analytical procedures supported the study's aim of producing locality-level evidence on instructional leadership practices, identifying the strongest and least emphasized instructional leadership domains, and determining whether professional and demographic factors were associated with variations in leadership practice. The results of these analyses served as the empirical basis for drawing conclusions and proposing actionable leadership enhancement strategies consistent with the study's objectives.

3 Results

The results indicate that the public elementary school heads demonstrated a high to very high level of instructional leadership practice across the major domains assessed. When instructional leadership was examined as an overall construct, the composite mean reflected consistently strong leadership behaviors aligned with the core functions of school heads as instructional leaders. Across the three instructional leadership domains, respondents generally reported frequent engagement in practices associated with setting direction, supporting instruction, and fostering a productive learning environment—suggesting that instructional leadership is embedded in routine school management and instructional improvement efforts within the locale.

When domain-level performance was compared, the results showed that defining the school mission emerged as one of the strongest areas of practice. School heads reported consistent implementation of leadership behaviors related to goal setting, communicating school priorities, and aligning stakeholders toward shared instructional outcomes. This suggests that respondents were effective in articulating a clear instructional direction and in maintaining alignment between school programs and institutional goals. The prominence of this domain reflects school leaders' tendency to emphasize direction-setting practices closely linked to planning cycles, accountability expectations, and school improvement frameworks.

Similarly, the domain of promoting a positive school learning climate was rated at a high to very high level, reflecting strong leadership practice in establishing supportive conditions for teaching and learning. Results suggest that school heads actively fostered professional collaboration, encouraged teacher development, and maintained an environment conducive to student learning and teacher performance. This domain also implies that school heads invested effort in sustaining school culture, reinforcing standards, and implementing supportive strategies that facilitate instructional focus and organizational stability.

In contrast, managing the instructional program was comparatively lower than the other domains, although it remained at a high level of practice overall. This pattern indicates that while school heads generally engage in instructional supervision and curriculum-related leadership functions, this domain represents a relative area for strengthening compared with mission-setting and learning climate practices. Managing the instructional program involves more technical and time-intensive leadership tasks, such as monitoring curriculum implementation, conducting classroom observations, providing instructional feedback, and using learner performance data for instructional decision-making. The comparatively lower rating suggests that these practices may be affected by operational constraints, competing administrative responsibilities, or variations in technical support and capacity—thereby identifying this domain as a priority area for enhancement planning.

Results further showed that differences in instructional leadership practices were not statistically significant when respondents were grouped by selected demographic and professional variables such as age group, sex, educational attainment, and length of service. This suggests that instructional leadership behaviors were relatively consistent across these group

classifications, and that leadership practice in the locale may be influenced more by shared professional expectations and standardized school head roles than by demographic variation. The consistency of results across these variables also implies that school head responsibilities and leadership performance expectations may be sufficiently uniform to produce comparable leadership practice patterns across the population.

However, the findings revealed a statistically significant difference in instructional leadership practices across training exposure groups, indicating that professional development participation was associated with variation in leadership practices. School heads with greater training exposure demonstrated stronger instructional leadership behaviors than those with less training. This result supports the interpretation that training improves leadership capacity, particularly in domains that require technical instructional supervision skills, data use, and curriculum coordination. The observed significance of training as a differentiating factor provides a clear empirical justification for strengthening leadership development initiatives and designing targeted interventions—particularly those that address the relatively lower domain of instructional program management.

Overall, the results provide evidence that school heads in the locale generally perform instructional leadership functions at a high level, with the strongest practices observed in mission-setting and learning climate development, and with instructional program management identified as a relative area for enhancement. Moreover, the significance of training exposure underscores the role of structured professional development in strengthening leadership practice, reinforcing the need for sustained, targeted capacity-building programs as part of an evidence-based management enhancement plan.

4. Discussion

The present study examined the instructional leadership practices of public elementary school heads and generated three principal findings: (a) respondents demonstrated generally high to very high instructional leadership practices across domains, (b) defining the school mission and promoting a positive school learning climate emerged as the strongest domains, while managing the instructional program was comparatively lower, and (c) instructional leadership practices did not differ significantly across most profile variables but did differ significantly by training exposure. Taken together, these findings reinforce the continuing relevance of instructional leadership as a core leadership expectation in contemporary basic education systems and highlight professional development as a practical lever for strengthening leadership behaviors (Hallinger, 2025; Cox & Mullen, 2023).

The overall high instructional leadership ratings may be interpreted through the lens of policy alignment and professional standardization. In the Philippine setting, the institutionalization of leadership standards—particularly through the national adoption of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH)—creates strong normative expectations that school leaders will demonstrate consistent leadership practices aligned with instructional improvement, teacher development, and learning outcomes (Department of Education [DepEd], 2020). The high ratings observed in the current study may therefore reflect a context in which instructional leadership is not optional but is embedded in formal evaluation, school planning routines, and accountability frameworks. This interpretation is consistent with scholarship suggesting that clear professional standards and coherent role expectations can strengthen the consistency of leadership behavior across schools (Cox & Mullen, 2023).

The prominence of defining the school mission suggests that school heads are particularly effective in direction-setting activities such as establishing goals, communicating school priorities, and aligning school programs with agreed instructional outcomes. This pattern aligns with instructional leadership frameworks that position mission-setting as a foundational leadership function, as it establishes coherence among instructional priorities and provides clarity for staff

decision-making (ScienceDirect Topics, n.d.). Mission-setting also closely aligns with required school governance processes (e.g., school improvement planning and goal monitoring), which may explain why this domain is rated highly. These activities are structured, recurring, and highly visible within school management systems. In operational terms, this implies that school heads can effectively mobilize stakeholders around learning priorities, which is a critical enabling condition for sustained improvement.

Similarly, the high ratings in promoting a positive school learning climate indicate strong leadership behaviors in cultivating supportive professional and learning conditions, including teacher collaboration, encouragement of professional development, and the maintenance of a school environment conducive to learning. Contemporary research increasingly emphasizes that instructional leadership is not only about technical supervision but also about shaping organizational conditions under which teachers can sustain effective practice. Large-scale analyses have shown that instructional leadership can be associated with teacher conditions and well-being, suggesting that effective instructional leaders must balance performance expectations with supportive structures that protect professional functioning (ScienceDirect, 2025). This finding is therefore consequential: it implies that the school heads' leadership is not solely compliance-driven but includes relational and climate-building practices that are increasingly recognized as central to instructional improvement.

In contrast, managing the instructional program—while still rated high—was comparatively weaker than mission-setting and learning climate. This finding is consistent with broader instructional leadership literature which notes that instructional program management is often the most complex and resource-intensive domain because it requires sustained engagement in classroom supervision, curriculum coordination, assessment monitoring, and the use of learning data for instructional decision-making (ScienceDirect Topics, n.d.; Springer, 2019). Managing the instructional program is often constrained by administrative workload, time scarcity, and competing operational demands on school heads. In many settings, school leaders must allocate substantial time to compliance, logistics, and resource management, thereby reducing the time available for deep instructional work. Therefore, the relatively lower rating in this domain likely signals not a lack of intent but the practical challenges of consistently executing technical instructional leadership routines.

The non-significant differences in instructional leadership across variables such as sex, age, educational attainment, and years of service suggest that leadership practice in this locale is relatively consistent across demographic groups. One interpretation is that standardized leadership expectations and shared professional accountability structures may reduce variance in leadership practice across individual characteristics, particularly when school heads operate under common performance standards and system expectations (DepEd, 2020). Another interpretation is that leadership practice may be shaped more strongly by organizational conditions and professional learning opportunities than by demographic factors alone, especially when leadership roles are clearly defined and supported through institutional guidance.

The most actionable finding of the study is the significant difference in instructional leadership by training exposure, indicating that school heads with greater professional development participation demonstrate stronger instructional leadership practices. This aligns with evidence that principal professional development supports leaders' capacity to respond to evolving instructional expectations and strengthens leadership effectiveness—particularly in domains requiring coaching, feedback, instructional monitoring, and data-informed supervision (Cox & Mullen, 2023). The training effect is also consistent with the argument that leadership competence is not simply a function of tenure but is strengthened through structured learning experiences that develop specialized instructional leadership skills. Importantly, the significance of training provides a clear evidence base for designing and prioritizing targeted leadership development interventions as part of a management enhancement plan.

The combined pattern of results provides an empirically grounded basis for targeted enhancement planning. Because mission-setting and learning climate are already strong, interventions may be most impactful if they prioritize strengthening instructional program management, particularly in high-leverage routines such as classroom observation with feedback, curriculum alignment monitoring, learner performance tracking, and teacher coaching cycles. Moreover, since training exposure differentiates instructional leadership practice, leadership development strategies should be systematic, job-embedded, and aligned with instructional leadership priorities rather than generalized administrative training. This is consistent with recommendations in leadership development literature that emphasize coherent professional learning models—peer learning, instructional coaching for leaders, and structured supervision protocols—as more likely to shift practice than one-time seminars (Cox & Mullen, 2023; AASA, 2022).

In summary, the study contributes evidence that instructional leadership practices among school heads are generally strong, but that instructional program management remains the most strategic domain for improvement, and that training exposure is a key differentiator of leadership practice. These findings support the development of a management enhancement plan anchored in strengthening instructional supervision and curriculum monitoring routines, and in expanding structured leadership capacity-building opportunities. The results also reinforce the continuing relevance of instructional leadership frameworks in the contemporary era and demonstrate how local evidence can be translated into actionable improvement strategies consistent with national professional standards (Hallinger, 2025; DepEd, 2020).

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