

Leadership instructional management practices and challenges of elementary school teachers

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Abstract

This study assessed the leadership instructional management practices and challenges encountered by elementary teachers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. Anchored in instructional and transformational leadership theories, the research employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design involving 270 teachers and school heads in Vinzons District via total enumeration. Findings revealed that leadership was perceived as "Very Effective" across all PPST domains (Weighted Means=4.19–4.29), particularly in Content Knowledge and Learning Environment. Conversely, teachers reported "Challenging" difficulties (WM=3.58–3.95), most notably in Assessment and Reporting (WM=3.95) due to excessive documentation. Spearman's rho analysis confirmed significant positive correlations between leadership effectiveness and teacher challenges across all domains ($p < .05$), with the strongest association in Assessment ($p = .564$), indicating that increased leadership demands concurrently raise teacher burdens. The study concludes that while leadership is robust, it necessitates systemic support to mitigate administrative strain. In response, the Comprehensive School-Based Instructional Leadership and Support Pilot (CSILSP) was proposed to streamline assessment, institutionalize coaching, and manage workloads. It is recommended that school administrators adopt simplified documentation templates and protected planning routines to align high leadership standards with sustainable teacher well-being.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, teacher challenges, PPST domains, workload and documentation, school-based intervention

1. Introduction

In the evolving educational landscape, elementary teachers are expected to transcend traditional knowledge delivery and embrace leadership instructional management roles (Hallinger and Kovačević, 2019). This shift necessitates a development approach that integrates sound teaching practices with the leadership support of School Heads. Strengthening these practices is essential for linking leadership effectiveness with teaching performance and learner outcomes within a supportive school environment.

While leadership principles are often generalized across educational levels, elementary educators face distinct challenges that are frequently overlooked in secondary or higher education research (Patterson, 2024; Abubakre et al., 2021). This study addresses this gap by evaluating specific leadership instructional management across domains like content knowledge, pedagogy, and learner diversity. By focusing on these areas, the research provides a specialized evaluation of the components critical for effective elementary education.

The role of the School Head is central to this ecosystem, as mandated by Republic Act No. 9155 and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020). Under Domain 3 of the PPSSH, School Heads are explicitly required to function as instructional leaders. They must provide the

technical assistance, instructional supervision, and curriculum relevance necessary for teachers to perform their duties efficiently.

Modern demands, including the rise of digital literacy and competency-based education, further complicate the interaction between school leadership and teachers. School Heads are now challenged to lead digital transitions, ensuring their workforce is equipped to handle 21st-century educational requirements. This study explores how enhanced leadership instructional management can better prepare teachers to meet these evolving technological demands.

In the Philippines, the urgency for thorough instructional management is heightened by systemic issues such as high learner-teacher ratios and limited resources. As noted by Llego (2020), significant disparities in access to professional development and teaching materials necessitate enhanced leadership support. Effective School Heads must optimize learning environments and instructional methods to compensate for these local constraints.

The study aligns with the national MATATAG agenda, which focuses on teacher training, improved learning conditions, and strengthened school leadership to address critical deficiencies in the educational system (DepEd, 2024). This alignment ensures that the research contributes directly to national goals for delivering high-quality elementary education and professionalizing the teaching workforce.

Specifically, the Schools Division of Camarines Norte serves as a unique context due to its Instructional Leadership Training (ILT) program, which emphasizes early-grade literacy. These initiatives rely heavily on School Heads to mentor teachers and cascade training. Such efforts reflect a localized commitment to equipping educators with leadership skills that directly improve instructional quality.

Ultimately, this study determines current leadership practices to identify effectiveness and growth areas, focusing on the relationship between leadership success and the challenges teachers encounter. The resulting measures aim to enhance instructional models and provide actionable insights for sustainable professional development. These findings are expected to promote higher standards of teaching quality within the Philippine elementary school system.

1.1. Objective of the Study

This study aimed to determine the leadership instructional management practices and the challenges encountered by elementary school teachers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. Specifically, it assessed the level of leadership effectiveness across the seven domains, including content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages, and professional growth, while identifying the specific difficulties teachers faced. Furthermore, the study analyzed the significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and these challenges to propose a targeted intervention for enhancing instructional management.

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between leadership instructional management practices and the challenges encountered by elementary school teachers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. Data were gathered through structured Likert-scale surveys assessing the seven domains, including Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, and Assessment and Reporting. Descriptive statistics were utilized to document teachers' perceptions of leadership effectiveness, while Spearman's rho was applied to analyze significant associations between these practices and the instructional challenges faced, providing empirical evidence of how leadership standards interact with professional demands.

2.1. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The study utilized a total enumeration sampling technique, involving all 270 public elementary school teachers and school heads in the Vinzons District, Division of Camarines Norte, as respondents. This population provided a comprehensive perspective on leadership instructional management practices and teaching performance within the local educational context. Eligibility was restricted to personnel with at least one year of service to ensure sufficient exposure to the district's professional environment. By including the entire population of teachers and school leaders, the study eliminated sampling bias and captured a complete, multidimensional dataset reflecting the diverse experiences and challenges inherent in the district's public elementary school system.

2.2. Data Gathering Procedures

Data were collected using an adopted and modified structured questionnaire divided into two parts: the level of leadership instructional management effectiveness across seven PPST domains and the challenges encountered by teachers, both measured via a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument underwent rigorous content validation by a panel of five experts and achieved high internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.707 to 0.978. Following administrative approval from the Schools Division Superintendent and district supervisors, the survey was administered in-person to eligible respondents. The process adhered strictly to ethical protocols, ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality throughout the study.

2.3. Statistical Treatment of Data

Data management and analysis were conducted using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 21. To address the first two research questions regarding the level of leadership effectiveness and the challenges encountered by teachers, descriptive statistics were employed. Specifically, the weighted mean was utilized to quantify respondent perceptions across the seven PPST domains, allowing for the identification of prevailing strengths in leadership practices as well as the specific constraints hindering instructional delivery.

For the third research question, a preliminary Shapiro–Wilk test indicated that the data did not follow a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, the non-parametric Spearman's rho rank correlation was applied to determine the significant relationships between the level of leadership effectiveness and the reported teacher challenges. This statistical approach provided empirical evidence of how variations in leadership management practices were associated with the degree of difficulties faced by the faculty. The formula for Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum d_i^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management Practices

The effectiveness of leadership instructional management practices along Content Knowledge and Pedagogy was rated as Very Effective (OWM = 4.29), with the highest rating observed in modeling exemplary content application (WM = 4.37). This confirms that school heads effectively demonstrate pedagogical standards to enhance teacher capability, a finding corroborated by Gümüş et al. (2020), Liu et al. (2021), Qadach

et al. (2020), and Mancio (2023), who collectively emphasize that strong instructional modeling fosters a collaborative culture and drives teaching quality. Conversely, the slightly lower rating in leading strategies for critical thinking (WM = 4.21) implies a need for more structured support in developing higher-order thinking skills, aligning with observations by Ho et al. (2020) and Ocampo (2022), who note that systematic leadership is crucial for refining complex instructional strategies through professional collaboration.

Table 1. Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management along Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Modelling exemplary practices to improve the applications of content knowledge within and across curriculum teaching areas.	4.37	Very Effective
2.	Modelling a comprehensive selection of effective teaching strategies that promote learner achievement in literacy and numeracy.	4.33	Very Effective
3.	Leading colleagues in reviewing, modifying, and expanding the range of teaching strategies that promote critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills	4.21	Very Effective
4.	Showing exemplary skills in and advocating the use of Mother Tongue, Filipino, and English in teaching and learning to facilitate the learners' language, cognitive, and academic development and to foster pride in their language, heritage, and culture.	4.26	Very Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.29	Very Effective
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Very Effective		
3.40 – 4.19	Effective		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Effective		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Effective		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Effective		

The leadership instructional management practices within the Learning Environment domain were perceived as Very Effective (OWM = 4.29), with the highest ratings equally attributed to maintaining safe school premises and implementing positive discipline (WM = 4.29). This reflects a proactive leadership style where School Heads effectively conduct safety audits and model non-violent classroom management, a practice that conforms to Gümüş et al. (2020) and Tamadoni et al. (2024), who argue that mastery of organizational safety and policy knowledge is essential for stable learning conditions. Furthermore, this hands-on support in behavioral management aligns with Ho et al. (2020) and Oco (2022), who highlight that balancing structure with flexibility directly influences teacher confidence in handling instructional challenges. Ultimately, these results confirm that local leaders successfully foster supportive school climates, corroborating Qadach et al. (2020) and Lundqvist et al. (2023), who emphasize that learning-oriented leadership is central to enhancing teacher engagement and achieving a shared vision for student success.

Table 2. Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management along Learning Environment

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Applying comprehensive knowledge of and acting as a resource person for, policies, guidelines and procedures that relate to the implementation of safe and secure learning environments for learners	4.29	Very Effective
2.	Providing leadership in applying a wide range of strategies in the implementation of positive and non-violent discipline policies/procedures to ensure learning-focused environments	4.29	Very Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.29	Very Effective
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Very Effective		

3.40 – 4.19	<i>Effective</i>
2.60 – 3.39	<i>Moderately Effective</i>
1.80 – 2.59	<i>Less Effective</i>
1.00 – 1.79	<i>Not Effective</i>

The leadership instructional management practices in the domain of Diversity of Learners were rated as Very Effective (OWM = 4.21), with the highest effectiveness observed in leading differentiated strategies (WM = 4.27), indicating that school heads actively guide teachers in managing heterogeneous classes through readiness-based grouping. This finding aligns with Lundqvist et al. (2023) and Liu et al. (2021), who emphasize that learning-oriented leadership strengthens teachers' capacity to tailor instruction and cultivate collaborative practices. Conversely, the slightly lower ratings in strategies for learners with disabilities and those in difficult circumstances (WM = 4.17) reflect gaps in specialized technical support for inclusive education, a reality that supports Tamadoni et al. (2024) and Ocampo (2022), who note that resource constraints often limit comprehensive responses to complex learner needs. Overall, the results underscore a strong commitment to equity, corroborated by Gümüş et al. (2020) and Mancio (2023), who affirm that structured leadership guidance is essential for enhancing teachers' ability to address diverse student profiles.

Table 3. Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management along Diversity of Learners

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Leading colleagues to evaluate differentiated strategies to enrich teaching practices that address learners' differences in gender, needs, strengths, interests, and experiences	4.27	Very Effective
2.	Leading colleagues in designing, adapting, and implementing teaching strategies that are responsive to learners with disabilities, giftedness, and talents	4.17	Effective
3.	Modeling a range of high-level skills responsive to the special educational needs of learners in difficult circumstances, including geographic isolation; chronic illness; displacement due to armed conflict, urban resettlement, or disasters; child abuse and child labor practices	4.17	Effective
4.	Showing comprehensive skills in delivering culturally appropriate teaching strategies to address the needs of learners from indigenous groups	4.23	Very Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.21	Very Effective
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	<i>Very Effective</i>		
3.40 – 4.19	<i>Effective</i>		
2.60 – 3.39	<i>Moderately Effective</i>		
1.80 – 2.59	<i>Less Effective</i>		
1.00 – 1.79	<i>Not Effective</i>		

The domain of Curriculum and Planning was rated as Very Effective (OWM = 4.26), driven by the highest-rated indicator of setting achievable, competency-aligned learning outcomes (WM = 4.34). This reflects the capability of school heads to guide teachers in unpacking competencies for daily lessons, a practice corroborated by Cheng (2022) and Mancio (2023), who emphasize that strong curriculum leadership ensures coherent planning and instructional alignment. Conversely, the lowest rating was observed in modeling ICT and resource development (WM = 4.17), attributed to technical constraints and gaps in specialized digital skills among leaders, a finding aligned with Tamadoni et al. (2024) and Abragan et al. (2022), who note that resource limitations often hinder leaders' capacity to model high-quality technology integration. Overall, the results confirm that leaders effectively prioritize structured planning, a conclusion supported by Gümüş et al. (2020) and Comighud et al. (2020), who assert that curriculum-centered leadership is critical for positive teacher performance and instructional management.

Table 4. Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management along Curriculum and Planning

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Modelling exemplary practice and leading colleagues in enhancing current practices in the planning and management of developmentally sequenced teaching and learning processes	4.26	Very Effective
2.	Setting achievable and appropriate learning outcomes that are aligned with learning competencies	4.34	Very Effective
3.	Modelling exemplary skills and leading colleagues in the development and evaluation of teaching and learning resources, including ICT, for use within and beyond the school	4.17	Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.26	Very Effective
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Very Effective		
3.40 – 4.19	Effective		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Effective		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Effective		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Effective		

The domain of Assessment and Reporting was rated as Very Effective (OWM = 4.23), primarily driven by the strong leadership capacity to evaluate assessment policies and ensure curriculum alignment (WM = 4.24). This indicates that school heads effectively use valid assessment tools, a practice corroborated by Cheng (2022) and Comighud et al. (2020), who emphasize that systematic alignment between standards and evaluation enhances instructional accountability. However, the slightly lower rating in mentoring for data analysis (WM = 4.21) suggests a need for more structured support in interpreting learner data for targeted intervention, a gap confirmed by Ocampo (2022) and Ho et al. (2020), who note that teachers often require deeper guidance to utilize assessment results effectively. Ultimately, the overall high functionality of this domain reflects a robust commitment to assessment literacy, supported by Liu et al. (2021) and Salleh and Mitul (2021), who identify data-driven decision-making and assessment monitoring as core elements of contemporary school improvement.

Table 5. Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management along Assessment and Reporting

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Leading initiatives in the evaluation of assessment policies and guidelines that relate to the design, selection, organization, and use of effective diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment consistent with curriculum requirements	4.24	Very Effective
2.	Providing advice on, and mentoring colleagues in the effective analysis and use of learner attainment data	4.21	Very Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.23	Very Effective
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Very Effective		
3.40 – 4.19	Effective		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Effective		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Effective		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Effective		

The domain of Community Linkages and Professional Engagement was rated as Effective (OWM = 4.19), with the highest effectiveness observed in consolidating networks to strengthen parent and community relationships (WM = 4.24). This reflects the strong capability of school heads to mobilize stakeholders for programs like school feeding, a practice corroborated by Qadach et al. (2020) and Cheng (2022), who emphasize that robust school-community ties foster a shared vision and support instructional goals. Conversely, the lowest

rating was in the regular review of professional codes and laws (WM = 4.11), reflecting a reactive approach where legal literacy and ethical standards are not consistently revisited unless issues arise. This result is explained by Gümüş et al. (2020) and Altae (2022), who note that administrative priorities often overshadow the proactive reinforcement of professional ethics. Ultimately, the findings confirm that leaders successfully prioritize stakeholder engagement to sustain resource mobilization, a conclusion supported by Ho et al. (2020) and Oco (2022), who highlight that strong professional and community relationships are essential for positive school performance.

Table 6. Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management along Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Modelling exemplary practice and empowering colleagues to establish and maintain effective learning environments that are responsive to community contexts	4.17	Effective
2.	Leading in consolidating networks that strengthen relationships with parents/guardians and the wider school community to maximize their involvement in the educative process	4.24	Very Effective
3.	Leading colleagues in the regular review of existing codes, laws, and regulations that apply to the teaching profession, and the responsibilities as specified in the <i>Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers</i> .	4.11	Effective
4.	Complying with and implementing school policies and procedures consistently to foster harmonious relationships with learners, parents, and other stakeholders.	4.23	Very Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.19	Effective
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Very Effective		
3.40 – 4.19	Effective		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Effective		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Effective		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Effective		

The domain of Personal Growth and Professional Development was rated as Effective (OWM = 4.19), primarily driven by the high perception of school heads as role models who uphold the dignity of the teaching culture (WM = 4.33). This confirms that local leaders effectively exemplify professional standards to inspire motivation, a behavior corroborated by Van der Hoven et al. (2021) and Salleh and Mitul (2021), who emphasize that authentic leadership strengthens professional identity. However, the lower rating in leading PPST-based development reforms (WM = 4.06) suggests that professional planning is often treated as compliance rather than deep customization due to resource gaps, a reality supported by Mancio (2023) and Ocampo (2022), who note that structural limitations hinder sustained pedagogical reforms. Ultimately, while leaders function as strong ethical advocates, the results highlight a need for more systematic learning structures, aligning with Lundqvist et al. (2023) and Qadach et al. (2020), who argue that sustained professional growth requires embedding shared mechanisms beyond mere support behaviors.

Table 7. Test for Significant Relationship Between the Level of Intercultural Competence and the Leadership Skills of Educational Leaders

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
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1.	Acting as a role model and advocate for upholding the dignity of teaching and learning culture within and beyond the school	4.33	Very Effective
2.	Taking a leadership role in supporting colleagues' engagement with professional networks within and across schools to advance knowledge and practice in identified areas of need	4.19	Effective
3.	Leading reforms in enhancing professional development programs based on an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers	4.06	Effective
Overall Weighted Mean		4.19	Effective
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Very Effective		
3.40 – 4.19	Effective		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Effective		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Effective		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Effective		

3.2. Challenges Encountered By Elementary School Teachers in Leadership Instructional Management Practices

The challenges encountered in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy were rated as Challenging (OWM = 3.58), primarily driven by external pressures from standardized testing and performance evaluations (WM = 3.70). This indicates that accountability measures often compel teachers to prioritize testing over deep pedagogical mastery, a reality corroborated by Tamadoni et al. (2024) and Altae (2022), who highlight that policy shifts and administrative demands create significant instructional stress. Meanwhile, teachers also struggled with aligning strategies to leadership directives and a lack of structured professional development (WM = 3.54), often due to SLAC sessions being utilized for administrative tasks rather than upskilling. These gaps are supported by Mancio (2023) and Ocampo (2022), who note that inconsistent instructional support hinders the implementation of updated strategies. Consequently, the persistence of these difficulties underscores the need for sustained mentoring, aligning with Comighud et al. (2020) and Liu et al. (2021), who emphasize that performance expectations must be matched with sufficient support structures to be effective.

Table 8. Challenges Encountered along Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	I experience difficulty in aligning my teaching strategies with leadership directives.	3.54	Challenging
2.	Limited access to technology or learning materials hinders my ability to meet instructional goals.	3.56	Challenging
3.	The lack of structured professional development programs poses a challenge to improving my instructional practices.	3.54	Challenging
4.	External pressures, such as standardized testing and performance evaluations, add stress to my instructional and leadership tasks.	3.70	Challenging
5.	I struggle to integrate innovative teaching methods due to inadequate instructional support.	3.57	Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean		3.58	Challenging
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Highly Challenging		
3.40 – 4.19	Challenging		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Challenging		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Challenging		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Challenging		

The challenges encountered in the domain of Learning Environment were rated as Challenging (OWM = 3.83), with insufficient parental involvement identified as the most significant hurdle (WM = 3.97). In the local context of Camarines Norte, economic activities like fishing and farming often prevent parents from participating in school-based reinforcements, forcing teachers to bear the sole responsibility for student motivation, a finding corroborated by Qadach et al. (2020) and Comighud et al. (2020), who emphasize that weak home-school ties hinder instructional outcomes. Additionally, the challenge of managing large-class dynamics and the lack of specialized management training (WM = 3.63) further strain the learning climate, aligning with Ocampo (2022) and Tamadoni et al. (2024), who note that systemic constraints often limit the availability of modern, workshop-based training. Ultimately, the results underscore a critical need for leadership practices to bridge the gap between school expectations and community realities, as suggested by Cheng (2022) and Ho et al. (2020), who stress that participatory mechanisms and supportive structures are essential for building learning-focused cultures.

Table 9. Challenges Encountered along Learning Environment

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	I find it challenging to motivate students and maintain an engaging learning environment.	3.94	Challenging
2.	I struggle with managing classroom behavior while balancing leadership responsibilities.	3.79	Challenging
3.	Limited resources hinder the effective implementation of instructional practices in my school.	3.81	Challenging
4.	Insufficient parental involvement in students' education creates challenges in achieving learning outcomes.	3.97	Challenging
5.	A lack of classroom management training impacts my ability to create a positive learning environment.	3.63	Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean		3.83	Challenging
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Highly Challenging		
3.40 – 4.19	Challenging		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Challenging		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Challenging		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Challenging		

The challenges encountered in addressing the Diversity of Learners were rated as Challenging (OWM = 3.80), with the most significant difficulty being the differentiation of instruction to accommodate varying student needs (WM = 3.96). In the local context of Vinzons District, this is particularly evident in multigrade classrooms where a lack of specialized modules often forces a "one-size-fits-all" approach, a finding corroborated by Ocampo (2022) and Tamadoni et al. (2024), who assert that contextual and resource constraints hinder teachers' capacity to adapt instruction effectively. Furthermore, although the lack of a clear instructional leadership framework was the lowest-rated challenge (WM = 3.67), it remains a source of confusion, especially when contextualizing lessons for indigenous (Manide) learners without a specific policy roadmap, aligning with observations by Mancio (2023) and Qadach et al. (2020) that leadership clarity and a shared vision are essential for instructional coherence. Ultimately, these results underscore the urgent need for leadership practices to provide concrete technical assistance and resources for inclusive education, as supported by Gümüş et al. (2020) and Van der Hoven et al. (2021), who argue that empowering leadership and targeted training are vital for enhancing teacher confidence in responding to diverse learner needs.

Table 10. Challenges Encountered along Diversity of Learners

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	I encounter difficulties in adapting teaching strategies to address the diverse needs of learners.	3.71	Challenging
2.	The lack of a clear framework for instructional leadership creates confusion in implementing teaching strategies.	3.67	Challenging
3.	Differentiating instruction to accommodate students with varying learning needs is challenging.	3.96	Challenging
4.	Cultural and linguistic differences among students make it difficult to implement inclusive teaching practices.	3.77	Challenging
5.	I find it difficult to access special education resources and support for students with disabilities.	3.89	Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean		3.80	Challenging
<i>Rating Scale</i>			
<i>4.20 – 5.00</i>		<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	
<i>3.40 – 4.19</i>		<i>Highly Challenging</i>	
<i>2.60 – 3.39</i>		<i>Challenging</i>	
<i>1.80 – 2.59</i>		<i>Moderately Challenging</i>	
<i>1.00 – 1.79</i>		<i>Less Challenging</i>	
		<i>Not Challenging</i>	

The challenges in Curriculum and Planning were rated as Challenging (OWM = 3.86), with the overwhelming workload associated with instructional and leadership responsibilities emerging as the most acute difficulty (WM = 3.96). Locally, this manifests as a struggle to balance ancillary tasks, such as canteen management or ICT coordination, with daily lesson preparation, a reality corroborated by Tamadoni et al. (2024) and Ocampo (2022), who highlight that excessive professional expectations beyond manageable workloads severely impede instructional quality. While insufficient administrative support was the lowest-rated indicator (WM = 3.76), it remains a concern during complex transitions like the MATATAG curriculum when "hands-on" technical assistance is lacking, aligning with observations by Qadach et al. (2020) and Oco (2022) that effective leadership support and a shared vision are vital for sustaining instructional efficiency. Ultimately, these results underscore the urgent need for "workload de-clogging" through leadership practices that ensure protected planning time, a necessity supported by Liu et al. (2021) and Gümüş et al. (2020), who emphasize that supportive leadership structures are fundamental to a teacher's capacity to adapt to evolving educational demands.

Table 11. Challenges Encountered along Diversity of Learners

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Frequent changes in policies or guidelines create challenges in maintaining consistency in teaching practices.	3.93	Challenging
2.	Insufficient administrative support affects the implementation of leadership and instructional activities.	3.76	Challenging
3.	The workload associated with leadership and instructional responsibilities is overwhelming.	3.96	Challenging
4.	Limited autonomy in planning instructional activities restricts my ability to address student needs.	3.77	Challenging
5.	The absence of standardized instructional materials affects lesson planning and delivery.	3.89	Challenging

Overall Weighted Mean		3.86	Challenging
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Highly Challenging		
3.40 – 4.19	Challenging		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Challenging		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Challenging		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Challenging		

The challenges in Assessment and Reporting were rated as Challenging (OWM = 3.95), with excessive paperwork and documentation identified as the most acute barrier (WM = 4.20, Highly Challenging). This reflects the local reality in Camarines Norte, where teachers spend late nights encoding data into School Forms and the Learner Information System (LIS), often sacrificing qualitative item analysis for administrative compliance, a situation corroborated by Comighud et al. (2020) and Tamadoni et al. (2024), who noted that policy-driven administrative tasks amplify workload pressures at the expense of instructional focus. While limited decision-making was the lowest-rated challenge (WM = 3.79), it underscores a lack of professional agency when implementing standardized, top-down tools, aligning with observations by Qadach et al. (2020) and Gümüş et al. (2020) on the need for participatory leadership. Ultimately, these findings highlight an urgent need for leadership to digitize and streamline reporting, a conclusion supported by Ho et al. (2020) and Comighud et al. (2020), who emphasize that reducing bureaucratic loads and securing professional learning time are vital for transforming assessment into actionable instructional improvement.

Table 12. Challenges Encountered along Assessment and Reporting

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	I face challenges in balancing teaching responsibilities with leadership tasks.	3.86	Challenging
2.	Insufficient time for collaboration with colleagues impacts my ability to manage instructional tasks effectively.	4.00	Challenging
3.	Limited opportunities to participate in decision-making processes impact my instructional effectiveness.	3.79	Challenging
4.	A lack of clear assessment guidelines makes it difficult to evaluate student performance effectively.	3.91	Challenging
5.	Excessive paperwork and documentation requirements hinder my focus on instructional improvement.	4.20	Highly Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean		3.95	Challenging
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Highly Challenging		
3.40 – 4.19	Challenging		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Challenging		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Challenging		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Challenging		

The domain of Community Linkages and Professional Engagement was rated as Challenging (OWM = 3.86), with the lack of access to relevant training opportunities emerging as the most significant hurdle (WM = 4.00). This reflects the reality in remote areas of Camarines Norte, where "cascaded" training often lacks technical depth, a finding corroborated by Mancio (2023) and Lundqvist et al. (2023), who emphasize that accessible, ongoing professional learning is essential for effective leadership. While the lack of recognition or incentives was the lowest-rated challenge (WM = 3.79), it underscores the risk of "passion fatigue" when extra-curricular community efforts are not formally rewarded, aligning with observations by Van der Hoven et al.

(2021) and Salleh and Mitul (2021) on the importance of recognition in sustaining teacher motivation. Ultimately, the results highlight a need for decentralized training and formalized incentive systems, a conclusion supported by Qadach et al. (2020) and Ho et al. (2020), who argue that building both the structures and incentives for professional learning communities is vital for sustainable school improvement.

Table 13. Challenges Encountered along Community Linkages and Professional Engagement

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	Inconsistent communication from school leaders creates challenges in implementing instructional goals.	3.86	Challenging
2.	Lack of access to relevant training opportunities affects my professional growth.	4.00	Challenging
3.	The lack of recognition or incentives for teachers' efforts affects my motivation to excel in leadership and instructional roles.	3.79	Challenging
4.	Limited collaboration between schools and the community reduces opportunities for student learning support.	3.87	Challenging
5.	Minimal involvement in school decision-making affects my sense of professional engagement.	3.80	Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean		3.86	Challenging
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
4.20 – 5.00	Highly Challenging		
3.40 – 4.19	Challenging		
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Challenging		
1.80 – 2.59	Less Challenging		
1.00 – 1.79	Not Challenging		

The domain of Personal Growth and Professional Development was perceived as Challenging (OWM = 3.76), with high levels of stress and burnout emerging as the most significant impediment to professional functioning (WM = 4.06). Locally, this burnout is intensified during peak documentation months when administrative reports are prioritized over teacher well-being, a finding corroborated by Tamadoni et al. (2024) and Ocampo (2022), who both highlight that implementation capacity declines when professional demands outpace available supports.

Table 14. Challenges Encountered along Personal Growth and Professional Development

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	I find it difficult to balance professional development requirements with daily instructional responsibilities.	3.59	Challenging
2.	Limited mentoring and coaching opportunities hinder my career growth.	3.66	Challenging
3.	High levels of stress and burnout affect my ability to perform leadership and instructional roles effectively.	4.06	Challenging
4.	I struggle to keep up with new teaching methodologies due to a lack of continuous training.	3.71	Challenging
5.	Financial constraints prevent me from pursuing further professional development opportunities.	3.80	Challenging
Overall Weighted Mean		3.76	Challenging
<i>Rating Scale</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>		

4.20 – 5.00	Highly Challenging
3.40 – 4.19	Challenging
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately Challenging
1.80 – 2.59	Less Challenging
1.00 – 1.79	Not Challenging

While the difficulty of balancing professional development with daily responsibilities was the lowest-rated challenge (WM = 3.59), it remains a notable burden for teachers pursuing graduate studies without "protected time," a reality conformed by Lundqvist et al. (2023) and Mancio (2023). Ultimately, these results underscore that leadership must integrate mental health and wellness programs with systemic supports to ensure that growth is sustainable rather than a source of further strain, as emphasized by Qadach et al. (2020) and Liu et al. (2021).

3.3. Relationship Between the Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management Practices and the Challenges Encountered by Teachers

The relationship between the level of leadership instructional management effectiveness and the challenges encountered by teachers was analyzed using the Spearman rho rank correlation, following a Shapiro–Wilk test, which confirmed that the data did not follow a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$). Results revealed positive and significant correlations across all domains, indicating that as leadership effectiveness increases, the challenges faced by teachers also tend to rise. In the context of Vinzons District, this suggests that high leadership standards do not necessarily equate to professional ease; rather, effective leaders who push for excellence often inadvertently increase the stress and workload of their staff. This finding aligns with Cheng (2022), who explained that effective school-based management often creates more dynamic, complex, and demanding environments that require teachers to operate with higher levels of responsibility and adaptability.

Table 15. Test for Significant Relationship between the Level of Effectiveness of Leadership Instructional Management and the Challenges Encountered by Teachers

Level of Effectiveness	Challenges Encountered		Remarks
	ρ	p -value	
Content Knowledge and Pedagogy	.286*	.016	Significant
Learning Environment	.264*	.027	Significant
Diversity of Learners	.370**	.002	Significant
Curriculum and Planning	.518**	.000	Significant
Assessment and Reporting	.564**	.000	Significant
Community Linkages and Professional Engagement	.520**	.000	Significant
Personal Growth and Professional Development	.411**	.000	Significant

*Correlation is significant @ 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant @ 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The highest correlations were observed in Assessment and Reporting ($p = .564$, $p = .000$), Community Linkages ($p = .520$, $p = .000$), and Curriculum and Planning ($p = .518$, $p = .000$). These results illustrate that "Very Effective" leadership practices, such as rigorous monitoring of learner progress or the consolidation of stakeholder networks, directly translate into increased teacher burdens, including excessive paperwork and the management of after-school community engagements. These patterns corroborate Tamadoni et al. (2024), who emphasized that school-level improvements often introduce pressures related to compliance and accountability, and Ho et al. (2020), who found that leadership promoting collaborative learning communities inherently increases teachers' workload and engagement requirements. Similarly, effective curriculum leadership that requires highly detailed, contextualized lesson planning is perceived as a significant preparation burden by teachers handling large class sizes in Camarines Norte.

Moderate to weak, yet still significant, correlations were found in Personal Growth and Professional Development ($p = .411$), Diversity of Learners ($p = .370$), Content Knowledge and Pedagogy ($p = .286$), and Learning Environment ($p = .264$). The moderate relationship in personal growth aligns with Lundqvist et al. (2023), who argued that learning-oriented leadership requires continuous adaptation, while the challenges in learner diversity reflect the persistent lack of differentiated resources noted by Abragan et al. (2022). Conversely, the lower correlation strengths in pedagogy and environment suggest that when school heads provide strong instructional modeling and supervisory support, teachers feel better guided and may experience fewer direct challenges in these specific areas compared to more administratively intensive domains (Ocampo, 2022; Comighud et al., 2020). Ultimately, the study confirms that effective leadership does not eliminate professional difficulties but instead reshapes and elevates the expectations placed on teachers, a finding that underscores the interconnectedness of leadership actions and teacher experiences within the instructional environment.

3.4. Proposed Intervention to Enhance the Leadership Instructional Management Practices

Based on the study's findings, which indicate that high leadership effectiveness paradoxically correlates with increased teacher challenges in documentation, workload, and instruction for diverse learners, the Comprehensive School-Based Instructional Leadership and Support Pilot (CSILSP) is proposed as a systemic intervention. This program aims to mitigate teacher burnout by streamlining administrative tasks through digitized assessment templates and institutionalizing "protected planning time" to manage curriculum-related burdens. The CSILSP further integrates targeted professional development via hands-on SLAC workshops, a centralized repository for inclusive instructional resources, and "Family-School Learning Contracts" to bolster parental engagement. By transitioning from top-down directives to routine collaborative support, this evidence-based model ensures that robust instructional leadership translates into enhanced pedagogical quality and sustainable professional practices, ultimately aligning high administrative standards with improved teacher well-being and learner outcomes.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that while leadership instructional management in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte is Very Effective across all PPST domains, this high level of effectiveness is significantly and positively correlated with increased teacher challenges, particularly regarding administrative workload, documentation, and professional burnout. This relationship suggests that rigorous leadership standards, while providing strong instructional guidance, simultaneously intensify the professional demands and stress experienced by faculty. Consequently, the persistent nature of these challenges, driven by systemic pressures and diverse learner needs, necessitates the implementation of the Comprehensive School-Based Instructional Leadership and Support Pilot (CSILSP). This intervention provides a vital structural framework to reconcile high leadership expectations with sustainable professional practices, ultimately transforming instructional effectiveness into improved teacher well-being and enhanced learner outcomes.

To address the identified challenges and sustain leadership effectiveness, it is recommended that school heads institutionalize streamlined documentation templates and a weekly clerical consolidation hour to mitigate administrative strain. The Schools Division Office should facilitate context-relevant professional development and establish instructional coaching cadres to align teacher capacity with high leadership expectations. Additionally, school management should implement protected collaborative planning, redistribute non-instructional tasks, and maintain a shared resource bank to foster a culture of collective workload management. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of the Comprehensive School-Based Instructional Leadership and Support Pilot (CSILSP) using a quasi-experimental design to determine its scalability and impact on teacher well-being and learner outcomes.

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