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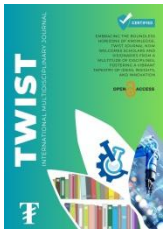

Administrator' Instructional Leadership Practices and Teachers' Pedagogical Competence among the Public Elementary School of Bislig City Division

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Abstract
This study aimed to determine the extent of instructional leadership practices of school administrators and the level of pedagogical competence of teachers in public elementary schools in Bislig City Division during the school year 2012–2013. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved 313 teachers and 37 full-fledged school administrators selected through lottery sampling and determined using Slovin's formula. The instructional leadership practices were measured based on the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH), particularly the Instructional Leadership domain, while the teachers' pedagogical competence was assessed using the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). Findings revealed that both teachers and administrators perceived the school heads to be very effective in all four indicators of instructional leadership, specifically in Assessment for Learning, Program Development or Adoption, Implementation for Instructional Improvement, and Instructional Supervision. However, a significant difference was noted between the ratings of school heads and teachers regarding instructional leadership practices. In contrast, the pedagogical competence of teachers was consistently rated as very effective in all seven domains: Diversity of Learners, Curriculum Content and Pedagogy, Planning, Assessing and Reporting Outcomes, Learning Environment, Community Linkages, Social Regard for Learning, and Personal Growth and Development. Notably, there was no significant difference in ratings between teachers and administrators in this area. A significant positive relationship was found between the instructional leadership practices of school administrators and the pedagogical competence of teachers. Among the instructional leadership indicators, Assessment for Learning emerged as the strongest predictor of pedagogical competence, as represented by the model $Y = 0.452x_1$. The study concludes that while administrators perform well in instructional leadership, greater emphasis must be placed on instructional supervision. Furthermore, teachers must enhance their understanding of instructional leadership and develop more meaningful classroom-community linkages. Continued research, especially qualitative studies, is recommended to deepen insights into this relationship.

Keywords
Instructional Leadership, Pedagogical Competence, Public Elementary Schools, Assessment for Learning, Instructional Supervision, School Administration, Teacher Development

INTRODUCTION

Becoming an instructional leader is a complex and multifaceted responsibility. School principals are often described as wearing many hats, functioning as managers, administrators, instructional leaders, and curriculum leaders, sometimes all in a single day. Balancing these roles can be challenging, and often, managerial and administrative tasks receive more attention, leaving instructional leadership duties to others within the administrative hierarchy (van der Lans et al., 2021). This occurs despite the fact that the core mission of every school is teaching and learning.

Republic Act 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, redefined the roles of field offices and schools in the Philippines. It aimed to decentralize the education system, encourage shared decision-making, and empower school principals. The Act established a framework for strengthening leadership roles and promoting school-based management grounded in transparency and accountability. It mandates that school heads, principals, school administrators, and teachers-in-charge must exercise both instructional leadership and effective administrative

management. As such, education in the Philippines is undergoing a transition in how instructional supervision is understood and implemented (BESRA Philippines Manual, 2002; Saro et al., 2022).

A growing body of literature underscores the importance of instructional leadership in improving student learning. Effective educational outcomes rely heavily on strong instructional leadership. Leadership experts argue that without effective leadership, organizations including schools are likely to falter. Reeves (2011), in his book Leading Change in Your School, emphasizes the need for a coherent educational improvement strategy that combines both management and teaching expertise. He asserts that high expectations and random acts of good practice are insufficient without a system-wide strategy guided by top talent and effective instructional practices designed to elevate student achievement.

The role of the principal as an instructional leader is critical. Unlike general administration, instructional leadership focuses on actions that directly influence teaching quality and student learning. This includes setting clear instructional goals, allocating resources, managing the curriculum, overseeing lesson plans, and evaluating teachers. Instructional leadership places high value on instructional quality and works to actualize that vision. It differs from managerial roles by prioritizing teaching and learning as the school's central function (Anub, 2020).

The concept of instructional leadership has evolved to emphasize deeper engagement in the core processes of teaching and learning. As the focus shifts from teaching to learning, some advocate for the term "learning leader" over "instructional leader." In learning-centered schools, leaders prioritize adult learning, maintain high expectations, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and secure community support. Fullan (2008), in his article Leadership Development: The Larger Context, highlights that principals should be "leading learners," engaging in professional learning alongside teachers. This kind of active involvement enhances their instructional credibility and influence. While direct planning, coordination, and evaluation of instruction may play a lesser role, they still significantly impact student outcomes.

Holmes (2009), in The Learning Journey Continues: Instructional Leadership Differing Roles, Differing Objectives, emphasizes the advisory and performance management aspects of instructional leadership. Jones (2010) defines instructional leadership practices as the combination of strategies and activities used to influence instruction, asserting that such practices are only effective when leaders have clear targets. Ruffin (2007) similarly notes that the principal's primary role remains centered on ensuring student learning.

At the core of instructional leadership is the principle that learning must be the top priority. Instructional leaders must engage with students, explore effective teaching strategies, and make informed curricular decisions. They must be attentive to issues related to curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment. Teachers, in turn, must continuously improve their knowledge and skills. While many studies focus on teachers' classroom performance, Selvi (2008) argues that teacher competencies have expanded due to educational reforms and evolving scientific insights.

In this context, Bislig City Division, located in the Caraga Region, has been proactive in promoting school empowerment through School-Based Management. However, principals often face difficulties balancing their new administrative and fiscal responsibilities with their instructional leadership duties. This study aims to examine the extent to which principals exercise instructional leadership and assess the competence levels of teachers. It also seeks to capture the perspectives of both teachers and school administrators on effective educational leadership and instructional competence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A positive and responsive learning environment is fundamental to the success of educational institutions. Whitaker et al. (2009) emphasized that school climate, reflecting an institution's organizational structure, defines its unique identity and can determine its overall effectiveness. Effective schools consistently maintain climates that are pleasant, orderly, and promote high expectations from both teachers and students. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) asserted that a supportive learning environment attends to the affective, cognitive, and physical needs of learners. They noted that such an environment not only ensures safety and inclusivity but also encourages shared decision-making, flexible classroom arrangements, and access to a variety of resources that support diverse learning needs.

The increasing diversity among students demands differentiated and culturally responsive teaching practices. The Department of Education (DepEd) through the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) highlights that educators must recognize and respond to the individual differences among learners (NCBTS Manual, 2006). Hoover (2009) reinforced this by emphasizing the need to understand learning differences to bridge the achievement gap. More recent studies agree with this position. The study Banks and Banks (2019) emphasized the significance of multicultural education, where diversity is not only acknowledged but celebrated, contributing to academic success and improved learner engagement (Saro et al., 2022a).

Teachers are now expected to differentiate instruction to meet the varying needs of learners, a sentiment echoed by Tomlinson (2017), who noted that effective differentiation entails setting clear learning goals, pre-assessing student knowledge and interest, and implementing tailored instruction strategies. This approach allows students to remain motivated while working at their own pace, and supports learners who may require scaffolded tasks, extended processing time, or alternative forms of assessment (Florian & Spratt, 2021). Differentiated instruction also involves using questioning techniques at varied levels of complexity, which is crucial for supporting English language learners and those with learning disabilities (Subban & Round, 2021).

The integration of student diversity into pedagogical practices must also extend to the digital realm. Celano and Neuman (2010) stressed the need to provide equitable access to technology, especially for students in underprivileged communities. This concern remains relevant today. According to Warschauer and Matuchniak (2020), addressing the digital divide is critical in preventing the reinforcement of social inequalities in education. Equal technological access is now seen as an essential component of inclusive education.

Gender diversity presents another dimension of differentiation. Eliot (2010) warned against reinforcing gender stereotypes in the classroom and suggested adopting practices that ensure equal opportunities for both boys and girls. This view is supported by recent research from Sadker and Zittleman (2022), which found that gender bias whether conscious or unconscious can significantly affect student participation, confidence, and academic performance. Hence, gender-responsive pedagogy must be a core part of classroom practice.

Cultural responsiveness is also essential in today's educational landscape. Freeman et al. (2008) argued that understanding cultural differences is vital for meaningful teaching. More recently, Gay (2018) emphasized the need for culturally responsive teaching practices that respect students' backgrounds and integrate their cultural experiences into the curriculum. Educators must avoid stereotyping, respect linguistic diversity, and build upon learners' prior knowledge and values to ensure academic success. This aligns with Willis and Nieto's (2010) framework for inclusive teaching, which highlights the significance of mutual respect, flexible grouping, and fair behavior management in multicultural classrooms.

Furthermore, the role of teachers in creating an inclusive environment is anchored in ethics. The Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers in the Philippines explicitly mandates the impartial treatment of learners, regardless of background (Professional Regulation Commission, 2017). In practice, this involves avoiding deficit-based thinking and recognizing the strengths embedded in cultural diversity (Murillo & Smith, 2008; Nieto, 2017).

In sum, a positive school climate, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive pedagogy are central to effective teaching in the 21st century. As learning environments evolve, educators must be equipped with the skills and dispositions necessary to cater to the holistic needs of diverse learners. Doing so not only upholds ethical teaching standards but also ensures that all students regardless of background are given equal opportunities to thrive.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study focused on the extent to which school administrators exercised their instructional leadership practices and the level of teachers' competence among public elementary schools in the Bislig City Division. The intention was to improve the system of instructional supervision and enhance teachers' competence. To provide substance and a firm grounding to this study, various theories and concepts on instructional leadership and teacher competence were reviewed. The study sought to analyze the interplay between school leadership and teaching effectiveness by examining how leadership practices impacted teacher performance.

Instructional leadership had long been considered a core function of effective school leadership. According to Jones (2010), instructional leadership involved the development of a shared vision for quality instruction, fostering relationships, and empowering staff to innovate, provide peer feedback, and share best practices. Marsh, as cited in Ruffin (2007), offered two perspectives on instructional leadership: a process-oriented view, which emphasized involving teachers in decision-making and improvement efforts; and a comprehensive view, which encompassed both direct and indirect influences on instruction. These perspectives illustrated that instructional leadership was not limited to administrative oversight but extended to deep engagement with teaching and learning practices.

Sinvhad (2009) defined instructional leadership as a set of behaviors aimed at improving classroom instruction, including informing teachers of innovative strategies and helping them reflect on their instructional capabilities. Jantzi and Leithwood, as cited in the same source, emphasized six dimensions of instructional leadership: articulating a vision, promoting group goals, offering individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation, modeling effective practices, and maintaining high expectations. Kelly (2010) supported this by stating that a principal's leadership was vital in building distributed leadership across the school, suggesting that strong leadership influenced both teacher and student outcomes by fostering a collaborative professional community.

In addition, Hallinger, as cited in Ruffin (2007), stated that instructional leaders must be well-versed in curriculum and instruction to directly guide teachers toward instructional improvement. Fink and Resnick (2008) stressed that educational leadership should aim to develop both intellectual and social capital, enabling leaders to nurture a professional culture committed to teaching and learning. Lashway, as cited in Jenkins (2009), further explained that principals needed specific skills such as interpersonal communication, instructional observation, planning, and research-based evaluation to fulfill their roles effectively. Jenkins (2009) also emphasized that principals needed to move beyond bureaucratic roles and prioritize teaching and learning to create meaningful educational environments.

Halverson (2006) argued that modern instructional leadership required guiding schools to shift from internal accountability models to systems responsive to external demands. He stated that leaders needed to work collaboratively with teachers to improve student outcomes without narrowing learning to mere testing. Instructional leaders were expected to introduce data-driven practices, challenge outdated systems, and justify changes to both teachers and the larger school community. Grounded in these theories, the conceptual framework of the study viewed instructional leadership practices such as assessment of learning, program development and implementation, and instructional supervision as the independent variables. Meanwhile, the dependent variables were the domains of teacher competence

aligned with the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS), including diversity of learners, curriculum and pedagogy, assessment practices, learning environment, community involvement, social regard for learning, and professional growth.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary concern of this study was to determine the extent to which the school administrators exercised their instructional leadership practices and the level of pedagogical competence of teachers among the public elementary schools in Bislig City during the school year 2012–2013. Specifically, the study attempted to address the following concerns:

1. To what extent did the school administrators demonstrate the following instructional leadership practices, as rated by both school administrators and teachers in the public elementary schools of Bislig City during the school year 2012–2013?
    - 1.1 assessment for learning;
    - 1.2 developing programs and/or adopting existing programs;
    - 1.3 implementing programs for instructional improvement; and
    - 1.4 instructional supervision?
2. Is there a significant difference in the ratings on the extent of the exercise of instructional leadership practices between the school administrators themselves and the teachers?
3. What is the level of competence of teachers in the following areas, as rated by both school administrators and teachers themselves?
    - 3.1 diversity of learners;
    - 3.2 curriculum content and pedagogy;
    - 3.3 planning, assessing and reporting learning outcomes;
    - 3.4 learning environment;
    - 3.5 community linkages;
    - 3.6 social regard for learning; and
    - 3.7 personal growth and development?
4. Is there a significant difference in the ratings of the level of competence of teachers as rated by the administrators and the teachers themselves?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of instructional leadership practices and the level of teachers' pedagogical competence in the public elementary schools in Bislig City Division?
6. What prediction model may be designed based on the results of the study?

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design

The researcher employed a descriptive correlational method to gather the necessary data for analysis and interpretation. The study is descriptive in that its objective is to describe the extent to which school administrators exercise instructional leadership practices and the level of competence of teachers in the public elementary schools of the Bislig City Division. It is correlational because the study aims to determine if there is a significant relationship between the ratings of teachers and administrators regarding the teachers' level of competence and the extent of instructional leadership exercised by the administrators.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study included all 37 full-fledged principals and school heads within the division. Using the Slovin formula, the researcher identified a sample group of 313 teachers to represent the target population. The study aimed to examine the significant differences between the ratings of teachers and administrators regarding the level of competence and the extent of instructional leadership performance. To achieve this, a stratified sampling method was employed to identify the teacher-respondents. To ensure equal opportunity for every teacher to be included, random sampling through a lottery system was used. Additionally, since the study sought to explore whether there were significant differences between teachers' ratings of their administrators' instructional leadership practices and administrators' ratings of teachers' instructional competence, stratified sampling by schools was also applied. In Bislig I District, there were 11 school administrators and 88 teachers, totaling 99 respondents (28.00%). In Bislig II District, there were 14 school administrators and 81 teachers, totaling 95 respondents (27.00%). In Mangagoy I District, there were 6 school administrators and 88 teachers, totaling 94 respondents (27.00%). Finally, in Mangagoy II District, there were 6 school administrators and 56 teachers, totaling 62 respondents (18.00%). The overall total consisted of 37 school administrators and 313 teachers, amounting to 350 respondents (100%).

Research Instruments

The instrument used to rate the extent of the administrators' performance was based on the domains of the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBS-SH). The researcher found the NCBS-SH to be a reliable tool for assessing school administrators' performance because it is grounded in the principles of impartiality, coherence, validity,

responsiveness, and functional applicability. The NCBS-SH consists of seven domains: (1) School Leadership, (2) Instructional Leadership, (3) Creating a Student-Centered Learning Climate, (4) HR Management and Operations, (5) Parent Involvement and Community Partnerships, (6) School Management and Operations, and (7) Personal and Professional Attributes and Interpersonal Effectiveness. Each domain contains specific strands that clearly define its focus.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher specifically focused on the second domain, Instructional Leadership. This domain includes four strands: (1) Assessment for Learning, (2) Developing and/or Adopting Programs, (3) Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement, and (4) Instructional Supervision. Each administrator, including principals and school heads, rated their own performance in these strands, and teachers also provided their ratings. To assess and validate these responses, the study used a criterion continuum based on the Likert Scale. The scale was used to measure the frequency of instructional leadership practices among administrators. The scale was as follows: a score of 5 (4.5 - 5.00) represented "Exceptionally Effective," meaning practices were carried out in an outstanding manner at all times; a score of 4 (3.5 - 4.49) was "Very Effective," indicating practices were carried out in a very significant manner often; a score of 3 (2.5 - 3.49) was "Moderately Effective," meaning practices were carried out occasionally in a meaningful manner; a score of 2 (1.5 - 2.49) was "Least Effective," indicating practices were carried out in a limited way only; and a score of 1 (1.0 - 1.49) was "Not Effective," indicating the practice was not carried out at all.

To assess the teachers' level of competence, the study utilized the domains and strands outlined in the National Competency-Based Standards for Teachers (NCBTS). Both school administrators and teachers were asked to rate the teachers' performance based on these standards. The researcher chose to use the NCBTS because it is aligned with the goal of transforming Filipino teachers into globally competitive professionals, as outlined in the NCBTS Manual (2006). The NCBTS Framework is divided into seven domains: (1) Social Regard for Learning, (2) Learning Environment, (3) Diversity of Learners, (4) Curriculum, (5) Planning, Assessing, and Reporting, (6) Community Linkages, and (7) Personal Growth and Professional Development. Similar to the assessment of administrators, the study used a Likert Scale to measure the frequency of instructional competencies among teachers. The scale used the same descriptions, where a score of 5 (4.5 - 5.00) indicated "Exceptionally Effective," a score of 4 (3.5 - 4.49) represented "Very Effective," a score of 3 (2.5 - 3.49) was "Moderately Effective," a score of 2 (1.5 - 2.49) indicated "Least Effective," and a score of 1 (1.0 - 1.49) represented "Not Effective."

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher secured a letter of permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study and administer the questionnaires. Once the request was approved, the researcher personally approached the school administrators and teacher-respondents, requesting them to complete the instrument. The participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential.

Statistical Treatment

The researcher employed several statistical treatments. For Problems 1 and 3, which aimed to determine the extent of instructional leadership practices and the level of pedagogical competence of teachers, the mean was calculated. For Problems 2 and 4, which sought to find the significant difference in the ratings on the extent of instructional leadership practices and the level of pedagogical competence of teachers between school administrators and teachers, the t-test was used. For address Problem 5, which aimed to determine the significant relationship between the extent of school administrators' instructional leadership practices and the teachers' pedagogical competence, correlation analysis was applied. Finally, for Problem 6, to obtain the prediction model based on the study's results, regression analysis was utilized.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical considerations to ensure the rights and well-being of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and any potential risks involved. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. The confidentiality of their responses was strictly maintained, with all data anonymized and securely stored to prevent unauthorized access. Furthermore, the study ensured transparency and integrity by accurately reporting findings, adhering to ethical guidelines in data collection and analysis, and respecting the privacy of all individuals involved. These measures were taken to protect participants and maintain the trust and credibility of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. To what extent did school administrators demonstrate instructional leadership practices, specifically assessment for learning, development of programs and/or adoption of existing programs, implementation of programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision, as rated by both the school administrators themselves and the teachers in the public elementary schools of Bislig City during the school year 2012–2013?

Table 1 indicate a grand mean of 4.19, which falls under the qualitative description "Very Effective." This implies that both teachers and principals generally perceive instructional leadership practices as very effective within their schools. This grand mean reflects a strong implementation of leadership practices focused on teaching and learning, aligning with the view that effective instructional leadership is critical for enhancing educational quality (Hallinger, 2020). Local studies have similarly emphasized that effective instructional leadership in the Philippines significantly supports school performance and learning outcomes (Sebastian et al., 2021). Such results suggest that leadership in the observed context is responsive to current educational demands, contributing positively to the teaching-learning environment.

Table 1 Summary of Findings on the Level of Instructional Leadership Practices

Parameters	Mean Score		Overall Mean	Qualitative Description
	Teacher	Principal		
Assessment for Learning	4.40	4.42	4.41	Very Effective
Development of Programs and/or Adopting Existing Programs	4.16	4.20	4.18	Very Effective
Implementation of Programs for Instructional Improvement	4.04	4.32	4.18	Very Effective
Instructional Supervision	3.59	4.39	3.99	Very Effective
Overall	**4.05**	**4.33**	**4.19**	**Very Effective**

Legend: Exceptionally Effective (EE), Very Effective (VE), Moderately Effective (ME), Least Effective (LE), Not Effective (NE)

Among the parameters evaluated, Assessment for Learning received the highest mean score from both teachers (4.40) and principals (4.42), resulting in a grand mean of 4.41, labeled as "Very Effective." This reflects the crucial role of assessment in guiding instructional decisions and fostering student learning. International research asserts that effective use of assessment for learning (AfL) strategies enables teachers to tailor instruction according to students' needs (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Saro et al., 2022b). The study of Corpuz (2023) affirms that continuous assessment and feedback loops are widely practiced and valued by Filipino educators to monitor and improve student progress. This strong emphasis on AfL suggests that school leaders prioritize evidence-based instruction and support teachers in using data to enhance learning outcomes.

The second highest rating was observed in the parameter "Development of Programs and/or Adopting Existing Programs," with a grand mean of 4.18, as rated by teachers (4.16) and principals (4.20). This indicates that schools are proactive in either creating innovative instructional programs or adapting established ones to suit local contexts. According to DuFour and Fullan (2020), effective leaders are those who recognize the importance of adapting best practices and aligning programs with school goals. In Philippine schools, this practice is seen as essential to contextualizing instruction for diverse learners (Delos Santos, 2019). The slightly higher rating from principals suggests their more direct role in decision-making and strategic planning of such programs.

Also receiving a 4.18 grand mean is the parameter "Implementation of Programs for Instructional Improvement," with teacher and principal ratings of 4.04 and 4.32 respectively. Although it shares the same overall mean as the previous parameter, the larger gap in perception between teachers and principals may suggest differences in how implementation is experienced across roles. Principals, often as program initiators, perceive the implementation process as highly effective, while teachers being on the receiving end, may encounter challenges in execution. A study by Bush and Glover (2018) stresses that while school leaders may design excellent programs, their impact heavily relies on teacher engagement and capacity-building. In the local scene, Villanueva (2020) highlights that success in instructional reforms depends on continuous collaboration and professional support systems, suggesting a need for more inclusive implementation practices.

Lastly, the parameter "Instructional Supervision" received the lowest overall mean of 3.99, with teachers rating it at 3.59 and principals at 4.39. While still categorized as "Very Effective," the wide discrepancy in ratings signals a perceptual gap between how supervision is conducted and how it is received. Teachers may feel that supervision tends to be evaluative rather than supportive, while principals may view it as an integral component of instructional leadership. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2021), effective supervision should be developmental, fostering a culture of coaching rather than compliance. Locally, Garcia and Salazar (2022) report that many teachers prefer formative feedback and collaborative walkthroughs rather than traditional observation checklists. Thus, bridging this perceptual divide is essential to ensuring that supervision genuinely enhances teaching practices.

Problem 2. Is there a significant difference in the ratings on the extent of the exercise of instructional leadership practices between the school administrators themselves and the teachers?

Table 2 presents the findings of the statistical test comparing the perceptions of school administrators and teachers regarding the extent of instructional leadership practices. The construct assessment for learning yielded a T-value of 3.342 and a P-value of 0.002, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is a statistically significant difference in the ratings between school administrators and teachers on this construct. This finding implies a divergence in how administrators view their assessment-related leadership actions compared to how teachers experience or perceive them. According to Hallinger (2020), such discrepancies are common and often reflect gaps in communication, expectations, or the practical implementation of policies at the classroom level.

This may suggest that while administrators may believe they are effectively guiding assessment practices, teachers might not fully recognize or benefit from these efforts.

Table 2 Test for the Significant Difference in the Ratings of Instructional Leadership Practices

Construct	Ratings		Decision	Interpretation
	T-value	P-value		
Assessment for Learning Development of Programs and/or Adoption Existing Programs Implementation Programs for Instructional Improvement Instructional Supervision	3.342	0.002**	Reject H_o	Significant

Legend: *significant difference at the 0.05 level, **significant difference at the 0.01 level

Although the table only provides complete statistical data for the assessment for learning construct, the inclusion of other areas, such as development of programs and/or adoption of existing programs, implementation programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision suggests a broader scope of inquiry. If these constructs similarly result in significant differences upon further analysis, it would indicate systemic gaps in instructional leadership perceptions. This supports the study of Gumasing and Sarmiento (2022) which emphasized the need for synchronized perceptions between administrators and teachers to ensure the effectiveness of school leadership practices. When misalignments occur, it can lead to challenges in program implementation, reduced teacher morale, and ultimately, a decline in student learning outcomes.

The presence of significant differences, such as that observed in assessment for learning, emphasizes the importance of shared vision and collaborative professional development. As Bush and Glover (2019) argued, instructional leadership should be inclusive and dialogic, where feedback mechanisms between teachers and school heads are strong and continuous. The study of Llego and Asuncion (2023) stressed the need for capacity-building programs that bridge the perception gap between school leaders and their teaching staff, particularly in light of educational reforms under the MATATAG Curriculum. Therefore, these findings advocate for enhanced instructional leadership training, improved communication structures, and regular performance evaluations involving both parties to cultivate a more unified and effective learning environment.

Problem 3. What is the level of competence of teachers, as rated by both school administrators and the teachers themselves, in the areas of diversity of learners, curriculum content and pedagogy, planning, assessing and reporting learning outcomes, learning environment, community linkages, social regard for learning, and personal growth and development?

Table 3 reveal a grand mean of 4.21, indicating that, overall, the level of pedagogical competence among teachers based on ratings from both the teachers themselves and school administrators is "Very Effective." This consistent result implies a strong alignment between the self-assessment of teachers and the observations made by school heads. Such alignment reflects a healthy professional culture where mutual respect, clarity in expectations, and shared understanding of instructional standards are present. As highlighted by Acosta and Manguiat (2022), congruence in evaluation between educational stakeholders supports constructive feedback mechanisms and drives performance improvement. This also confirms assertions by van der Lans et al. (2021) that collaborative teacher evaluation processes can strengthen competence and instructional delivery.

Table 3 Summary of Findings on the Level of Pedagogical Competence

Parameters	Mean Score		Overall Mean	Qualitative Description
	Teacher	Principal		
Diversity of Learners	4.23	4.19	4.21	Very Effective
Curriculum Content and Pedagogy	4.12	4.12	4.12	Very Effective
Planning, Assessing and Reporting Learning Outcomes	4.15	4.15	4.15	Very Effective
Learning Environment	4.33	4.25	4.29	Very Effective
Community Linkages	4.08	4.01	4.05	Very Effective
Social Regard for Learning	4.38	4.34	4.36	Very Effective
Personal Growth and Development	4.29	4.30	4.29	Very Effective
Overall	**4.23**	**4.19**	**4.21**	**Very Effective**

Legend: Exceptionally Effective (EE), Very Effective (VE), Moderately Effective (ME), Least Effective (LE), Not Effective (NE)

Among the various parameters, Social Regard for Learning received the highest mean score at 4.36, rated as “Very Effective.” This score reflects the strong ethical commitment of teachers toward their profession, emphasizing integrity, punctuality, and respect in their teaching roles. The social regard for learning is deeply rooted in cultural and moral values, which are often reinforced by the Department of Education’s Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers. According to Austria and Albay (2021), teachers tend to view teaching not only as a job but as a vocation that embodies service and

moral responsibility. The study by Mishra and Koehler (2019) affirm that educators with high ethical standards promote positive learning environments and influence students' attitudes toward education.

Following closely is Learning Environment with an overall mean of 4.29, again rated "Very Effective." This score demonstrates teachers' ability to manage classrooms effectively, promote safety, foster collaboration, and adapt to students' socio-emotional needs. The importance of creating a positive learning atmosphere has become more apparent in the post-pandemic recovery phase, where students' mental health and engagement have been significantly affected. Abulencia and Tamayo (2023) emphasize that teachers have enhanced their classroom management strategies by integrating socio-emotional learning and positive reinforcement techniques. Meanwhile, McGivney and Brookhart (2020) assert that classroom environments significantly affect student motivation, with well-managed classrooms improving academic performance and decreasing behavioral problems.

Additionally, the Personal Growth and Development also garnered a high mean rating of 4.29, signaling that teachers are highly committed to continuous professional learning and self-improvement. This includes attending seminars, pursuing graduate studies, and adapting to curriculum changes such as the MATATAG Curriculum. In a study by Reyes and Javillonar (2022), professional development was identified as a key factor in raising instructional quality in public schools. More so, Darling-Hammond et al. (2019) emphasize that teachers who actively seek growth opportunities become more reflective and adaptive, which, in turn, contributes to student achievement. The alignment of scores from both raters in this parameter reflects a shared recognition of the value of lifelong learning among educators.

The Diversity of Learners parameter scored a mean of 4.21, categorized as "Very Effective." This suggests that teachers are well-versed in differentiated instruction and inclusive education strategies. With the growing diversity in classrooms ranging from learners with disabilities to students from varying cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds this competence is critical. Cruz and Villanueva (2021) observed that teachers are increasingly implementing learner-centered approaches that consider multiple intelligences and varied learning styles. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2019) argue that inclusive teaching practices not only benefit students with special needs but also elevate the quality of instruction for all learners.

The next parameter, Planning, Assessing, and Reporting Learning Outcomes, received a mean of 4.15, indicating a "Very Effective" level of competence. This reflects teachers' ability to align learning objectives with appropriate assessment tools and report student performance clearly. With the implementation of new assessment frameworks in the Philippines, such as performance-based assessments and standards-based grading, this area is essential. According to Bautista and Dela Cruz (2020), many public-school teachers are becoming more adept at designing varied assessments and utilizing results to guide instruction. Moreover, Brookhart (2018) notes that effective assessment practices require clarity, fairness, and consistency to genuinely support student learning.

Furthermore, the Curriculum Content and Pedagogy had a mean score of 4.12, still within the "Very Effective" bracket. This score highlights the teachers' mastery of subject matter and their ability to utilize instructional strategies appropriate to the content and learners' needs. The MATATAG Curriculum's emphasis on foundational skills and spiraled progression requires teachers to be flexible and responsive. Medina and Salazar (2023) and Saro et al. (2024) point out that successful pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) involves the integration of content expertise and pedagogical innovation, such as inquiry-based learning and contextualization. Also, Shulman and Silver (2020) emphasize that strong PCK contributes to instructional clarity and student comprehension.

On the other hand, Community Linkages received the lowest, though still strong, mean rating of 4.05, which is categorized as "Very Effective." This parameter involves the teacher's capacity to engage with parents, local stakeholders, and community organizations to support student learning. While teachers excel in classroom-related competencies, this slightly lower score suggests that external collaboration is an area for improvement. Pascual and Ramirez (2024) emphasize the importance of building strong school-community relationships to sustain inclusive and relevant education. Likewise, Epstein (2018) argues that family and community involvement enhances student outcomes by reinforcing learning outside the classroom. Strengthening this area may include more structured outreach programs, parent education initiatives, and inter-agency partnerships.

Problem 4. Is there a significant difference in the ratings of the level of competence of teachers as rated by the administrators and the teachers themselves?

The findings in Table 4 address Problem 4, which investigates whether there is a significant difference in the ratings of teachers' level of competence as evaluated by the school administrators and by the teachers themselves. Based on the data presented, the construct yields a t-value of -0.308 and a p-value of -0.760. Given that the p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the decision is to accept the null hypothesis (Ho), leading to the interpretation that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of both groups regarding this particular area. This suggests a shared understanding between school administrators and teachers on how effectively teachers address learner diversity, which is a cornerstone of inclusive education practices. According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2019) and Saro et al. (2022b), such alignment reflects the institutionalization of inclusive pedagogical approaches where teachers are consistently supported in attending to diverse learners.

Table 4 Test for the Significant Difference in the Ratings of Instructional Leadership Practices

Construct	Ratings		Decision	Interpretation
	T-value	P-value		
Diversity of Learners Curriculum Content and Pedagogy Planning, Assessing and Reporting Learning Outcomes Learning Environment Community Linkages Social Regard for Learning Personal Growth and Development	-0.308	-0.760	Accept H_o	Not Significant

Legend: *significant difference at the 0.05 level, **significant difference at the 0.01 level

Although the table does not display statistical results for the other constructs it can be inferred that the same interpretation may apply across all parameters, particularly if their p-values follow a similar trend. The consistent acceptance of the null hypothesis would indicate that there is no statistically significant disagreement between the two groups of raters. This alignment may reflect the presence of a coherent and well-monitored professional development system within schools. As Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2019) argue, when school systems provide structured evaluation and feedback mechanisms, teacher competence tends to be both observed and self-perceived with relative accuracy and alignment.

Furthermore, the lack of significant difference may also highlight a transparent and collaborative school culture, wherein administrators and teachers engage in regular dialogue about instructional practices and professional growth. The study by Acosta and Manguiat (2022) emphasized that congruence in evaluation ratings often correlates with mutual trust and consistent school leadership practices. When both parties recognize similar competencies in areas such as planning, community linkages, and professional development, it reflects shared expectations and a unified vision of teaching standards. Thus, the data implies that professional relationships, evaluative clarity, and institutional supports are likely strong within the schools surveyed.

Problem 5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of instructional leadership practices and the level of teachers' pedagogical competence in the public elementary schools in Bislig City Division?

The findings presented in Table 5 of the study conducted in the Bislig City Division reveal a significant positive correlation between instructional leadership practices and teachers' pedagogical competence. Notably, the construct "Assessment for Learning" exhibits the highest correlation coefficient ($r = 0.697$, $p < 0.01$), indicating a strong relationship between administrators' emphasis on assessment strategies and teachers' pedagogical skills. This suggests that when school leaders prioritize assessment for learning, it positively influences teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction. This aligns with the study by Busico (2024) and Saro et al. (2023), which found that instructional competence and supervisory skills of school heads are significantly related to teachers' performance in public elementary schools.

Table 5 Test on the Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Instructional Leadership and the Level of Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

Instructional Leadership Practices	Pedagogical Competence			Interpretation
	R-Coefficient	R^2	P-value	
Assessment for Learning	0.697	0.486	0.000**	Significant
Development of Programs and/or Adopting Existing Programs	0.646	0.417	0.000**	Significant
Implementation of Programs for Instructional Improvement	0.530	0.281	0.001**	Significant
Instructional Supervision	0.405	0.164	0.013*	Significant

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Furthermore, the constructs "Development of Programs and/or Adopting Existing Programs" ($r = 0.646$, $p < 0.01$) and "Implementation of Programs for Instructional Improvement" ($r = 0.530$, $p < 0.01$) also demonstrate significant positive correlations with teachers' pedagogical competence. These findings underscore the importance of school leaders' roles in program development and implementation in enhancing teaching effectiveness. Anub (2020) supports this perspective, highlighting that instructional leadership practices are positively related to teachers' satisfaction and school performance indicators, emphasizing the impact of leadership on educational outcomes.

Aside from that, "Instructional Supervision" shows a moderate yet significant correlation ($r = 0.405$, $p < 0.05$) with teachers' pedagogical competence. This indicates that regular and effective supervision by school administrators contributes to the professional growth of teachers. Battad (2024) found a significant relationship between instructional leadership skills of school heads and the self-efficacy of elementary teachers, suggesting that effective supervision fosters teachers' confidence and instructional proficiency. Collectively, these findings highlight the critical role of instructional leadership in shaping and enhancing the pedagogical competencies of teachers in the Bislig City Division.

Problem 6. What prediction model may be designed based on the results of the study?

Based on the results of the analysis, only one (1) of the four (4) independent variables is found to be statistically significant in predicting the pedagogical competence of teachers in the Bislig City Division, that is, the principals' capacity in Assessment for Learning. Consequently, the prediction model for this study is: $y = 0.452x_1$. Here, x_1 represents Assessment for Learning, which emerges as the sole variable strongly predicting teachers' pedagogical competence. This finding underscores the critical role of school leaders in mastering assessment principles and implementing effective assessment procedures, particularly alternative methods aimed at enhancing student learning. Cereno and Quinito (2025) highlight that learning-centered leadership, especially in assessment practices, significantly influences teachers' professional development, fostering improved instructional strategies.

Table 6 Test on Regression Correlation on the Instructional Leadership Practices that Predicts Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		T-value	P-value	Interpretation
	Beta	Std. Error			
(Constant)	0.831	0.588	1.415	0.167	Not Significant
Assessment for Learning	0.452	0.161	2.800	0.009	Significant
Development of Programs and/or Adoption Existing Programs	0.211	0. 192	1.095	0.282	Not Significant
Implementation of Programs for Instructional Improvement	0.064	0.205	0.311	0.758	Not Significant
Instructional Supervision	0.060	0. 165	0.364	0.718	Not Significant

As instructional leaders, principals are pivotal in shaping the instructional climate and influencing teacher performance. Mangsinco (2024) emphasizes that active engagement in instructional practices, including mentoring and providing professional development opportunities, positively impacts teacher efficacy and job satisfaction. Furthermore, Escobido and De Jesus (2024) identify that effective leadership practices, such as transformational and collaborative leadership, enhance teachers' strategies and motivation, leading to improved student outcomes.

While only one variable showed a statistically significant result, the value of the remaining three instructional leadership components should not be underestimated. Gading (2024) found that instructional supervision, feedback mechanisms, and coaching practices employed by school heads significantly improve teachers' performance. Additionally, Groenewald et al. (2023) assert that principals' instructional leadership, through clear goal setting and active monitoring, fosters a culture of continuous improvement, enhancing teacher efficacy and student achievement.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that instructional leadership practices and pedagogical competencies among teachers are perceived to be "Very Effective" by both teachers and school administrators. Instructional leadership is strongly evident in the areas of assessment for learning, program development, implementation for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision, with assessment for learning receiving the highest rating. However, notable perceptual differences between administrators and teachers suggest a need for improved communication and collaboration, particularly in supervisory practices. Besides, the pedagogical competence among teachers also shows high effectiveness across all parameters, especially in fostering social regard for learning, creating conducive learning environments, and committing to personal growth. Despite this, community linkages emerged as the area with the lowest yet still strong rating, indicating potential for further enhancement. Overall, the alignment in ratings reflects a professional culture of mutual respect and shared goals, but the presence of perception gaps underscores the importance of continuous dialogue, joint professional development, and inclusive decision-making to sustain educational effectiveness. The prediction model for this study is $y = 0.452x_1$, where y represents the effectiveness of instructional leadership, correspond to pedagogical competence, school leadership practices, and teacher professional development, respectively. This model suggests that each factor contributes significantly to enhancing instructional leadership effectiveness. Therefore, it is recommended that schools focus on strengthening these key areas to achieve sustainable improvements in leadership practices, ensuring both teacher and student success in the educational environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of this research study, it is essential to present relevant recommendations to guide future practices and policy decisions. The following are the suggested actions based on the analysis and results of the study:

1. It is recommended that internal and external officials in Bislig City Division regularly monitor and evaluate administrators' instructional leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence.
2. It is suggested that school administrators promote shared leadership with teachers by collaborating on curriculum, instruction, and assessment to enhance teaching and learning.
3. It is recommended that principal's model lifelong learning by staying updated on curriculum and instruction to effectively support teacher development.
4. It is suggested that principals and division supervisors enhance teacher evaluation systems to promote reflective practice and shared responsibility in professional development.

5. It is recommended that instructional supervision be continuous and involve teachers in the process to improve professional competence.
6. It is suggested that principals hold regular discussions with teachers on assessment data to guide instructional decisions and identify areas for professional development.
7. It is recommended that schools and division personnel implement ongoing, structured professional development programs aligned with a shared instructional vision.
8. It is suggested that a training course on Assessment for Learning be developed for both administrators and teachers, as indicated by the prediction model.
9. It is recommended that principals and teachers strengthen school-community linkages by engaging various stakeholders and external organizations to support school goals.
10. It is suggested that future research explore the impact of instructional supervision on teachers' pedagogical competence, preferably using qualitative, longitudinal methods.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declared that she had no known financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

M. C. Francia: Conceptualization of the study, methodology, data analysis and interpretation, original draft preparation, review, grammar checking, and editing.

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Marvilyn Caroro Francia's passion for education has spanned over three decades. Born in Bislig City, province of Surigao del Sur, Philippines, this Filipino powerhouse has dedicated her life to shaping young minds, rising through the ranks of the Department of Education to become a respected Chief Education Program Supervisor.

Dr. Francia has significantly contributed to the realm of education through her administrative roles and academic achievements. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy in Management from St. Joseph Institute of Technology in 2013, a Master of Arts in Education major in Education Management at the Andres Soriano College in 2010, a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English and Bachelor of Elementary Education in the same institution. Her expertise in the fields of English, Curriculum and Instruction, Beginning Reading, and Professional Education has helped shape the educational landscape of the schools in the division where she served as the division's first Chief Education Supervisor in Curriculum and Implementation Division through numerous workshops and seminars and provision of technical assistance to school heads and teachers. For over a decade, Dr. Francia's leadership and innovative approaches have helped transform schools across the division, culminating in the Bislig Division being recognized as the Outstanding Medium-sized Division in Caraga Region for an impressive 5 consecutive years. Through the unwavering dedication and passion for empowering educators, Dr. Francia with her team at the Curriculum Implementation Division continues to shape the educational landscape which she believed cemented a

With 36 years of experience in both private and public sectors, her expertise is unparalleled. Her knowledge has been sought after at the highest levels. She has been chosen as a resource speaker for in-service trainings at the school, district, division, regional, and even national levels, most recently for the implementation of the MATATAG CURRICULUM cementing her reputation as a trailblazer in Philippine education. Dr. Francia's distinguished career is a testament to her unwavering commitment to educational excellence and her ability to lead transformative change.