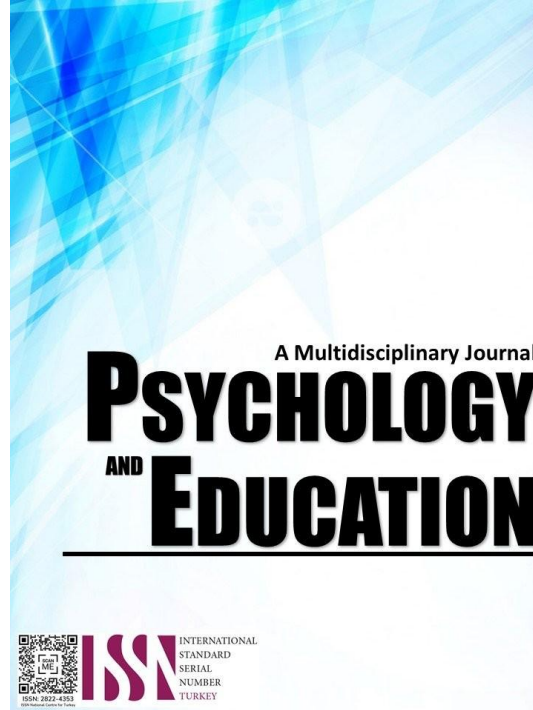


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Influence of School Heads' Innovative and Instructional Leadership on the Classroom Practices of Teachers

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Abstract

Inconsistencies in classroom practices and leadership effectiveness remain pressing challenges in Philippine elementary education, particularly in rural districts. These issues often result in varied instructional delivery, uneven student outcomes, and limited teacher support. Resolving these concerns requires a deeper understanding of how school leadership affects teaching quality. This study examined the influence of innovative and instructional leadership of school heads on the classroom practices of teachers in the Montevista District, Davao de Oro Division. Anchored in Transformational Leadership Theory, the research was driven by challenges in instructional consistency and leadership effectiveness in Philippine elementary schools. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from 130 elementary teachers through adapted survey questionnaires. Results revealed that school heads demonstrated very high levels of innovative leadership, with mean scores of 3.57 for action patterns, 3.58 for innovative thinking, and 3.60 for strategic thinking. Instructional leadership was also rated very high, particularly in coordinating the curriculum with a mean of 3.59 and framing school goals with a mean of 3.58. Teachers exhibited very high levels of classroom practices, with educational skills scoring the highest with a mean of 3.81, followed by classroom management and subject matter mastery with a mean of 3.77. Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between innovative leadership and classroom practices (r -value = 0.400, $p < 0.001$), as well as a stronger positive relationship between instructional leadership and classroom practices (r -value = 0.468, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis identified instructional leadership with a β of 0.459 and a p -value of 0.002 as the most significant predictor of classroom practices. In contrast, innovative leadership showed no significant predictive value, as seen in a β of 0.011 with a p -value of 0.939. These findings emphasized the role of instructional leadership in enhancing teaching quality and suggested that strategic supervision and curriculum coordination are key drivers of effective classroom practices.

Keywords: *innovative leadership, instructional leadership, classroom practices, elementary education, Davao de Oro, correlational research design*

Introduction

Classroom practices are a global phenomenon, often characterized by inconsistent teaching approaches, which undermine efforts to establish common educational standards. As a result, both teachers and students may become confused as they navigate differing expectations and practices within the same educational system. This inconsistency is further exacerbated by leadership issues of school heads, where they fail to provide clear guidance, support, and direction, leaving classroom practices unaligned and hindering the overall quality of education (Siddique et al., 2024).

In Cambodia, classroom practices often involve inconsistent standards across different classes, particularly in areas like classroom management, educational skills, and mastery of subject matter. The study of Kumari and Biswas (2024) highlights these inconsistencies, such as different rules on behavior management, grading criteria, and instructional strategies. This inconsistency causes confusion about performance expectations and hinders students' motivation to develop necessary skills. The inconsistent emphasis on mastery of the subject matter affects learning outcomes for students, and teachers' varying instructional delivery methods create unequal learning opportunities. These variations ultimately disrupt the learning experiences of students and affect classroom practices.

In the Philippines, inconsistent classroom practices pose a significant challenge to the education system, as teaching methods differ across classrooms. This lack of uniformity in classroom management, educational skills development, and subject matter mastery creates confusion among students. Inconsistent classroom management strategies, such as differences in discipline approaches, lead to uncertainty in student behavior expectations. Also, differences in the mastery of subject matter affect the understanding of lesson delivery. Ineffective leadership further added to this issue, as school heads fail to provide the necessary guidance and support to align these practices in the classrooms (Fenuku & Akpaku, 2024).

In one of the schools in the Davao de Oro division where the researcher works, inconsistencies in classroom management, educational skills development, and subject matter mastery are evident. These variations affect discipline, teaching methods, and content delivery, leading to confusion among students and preventing their learning progress. The challenges are heightened by large class sizes and insufficient resources, which hinder the adaptation of instructional methods and the fostering of a productive learning environment. During a pre-interview with one teacher in the Montevista district, the teacher expressed concerns about the unstructured classroom practices adopted by their colleagues. These problems are also the result of the school's inconsistent systems, which have failed to establish clear standards and provide necessary support in consistent classroom practices for all teachers. The identified problems have

led the researcher to conduct this study to determine if school heads' instructional and innovative leadership correlates with the classroom practices of teachers.

This study is grounded in the Transformational Leadership Theory developed by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1985), which highlights how leaders inspire, motivate, and engage their followers to foster significant change within an organization. Through their vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support, transformational leaders promote innovation and collaboration.

School heads who embody transformational leadership through innovative leadership encourage teachers to adopt new teaching methodologies. This fosters a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability to meet diverse student needs. In addition, instructional leadership ensures that teachers' classroom practices align with the educational goals. Transformational school heads guide teachers in curriculum delivery, providing feedback and professional development opportunities to ensure that instructional strategies continually improve.

Research Questions

The general objective of this study is to determine the influence of school heads' innovative leadership and instructional leadership on teachers' classroom practices. Specifically, this research sought answers to the following questions:

1. What was the level of school heads innovative leadership in terms of:
 - 1.1. action patterns
 - 1.2. innovative thinking; and
 - 1.3. strategic thinking?
2. What was the level of school heads instructional leadership, in terms of:
 - 2.1. communicating the school goals;
 - 2.2. coordinating the curriculum; and
 - 2.3. framing the school goals?
3. What was the level of the classroom practices of teachers, in terms of:
 - 3.1. classroom management;
 - 3.2. educational skills; and
 - 3.3. mastery of the subject matter?
4. Was there a significant relationship between school heads innovative leadership and the classroom practices of teachers?
5. Was there a significant relationship between school heads instructional leadership and the classroom practices of teachers?
6. Which domains in Innovative Leadership and Instructional leadership predicts classroom practices of teachers?

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design, which involved the systematic gathering and analysis of quantitative data to explore patterns, relationships, and trends among elementary teachers in the Montevista District of the Davao de Oro Division. By integrating descriptive and correlational approaches, the researcher was able to examine variables as they naturally occur, without any manipulation or experimental intervention. This design was particularly appropriate for assessing the levels of school heads' innovative and instructional leadership and their influence on teachers' classroom practices. As emphasized by Creswell and Creswell (2014), aligning the research design with the objectives of the study and supporting it with scholarly references enhances the credibility and coherence of the study.

Respondents

The study was conducted in the Montevista District, Davao de Oro Division, and involved respondents from Linoan Elementary School, New Visayas Elementary School, Montevista Central Elementary School, Prosperidad Elementary School, Tapia Elementary School, and Banglasan Elementary School. A universal sampling technique was employed to select all 130 elementary teachers from the identified schools. This method ensured comprehensive representation of the population and allowed for a detailed assessment of the domains influencing classroom practices in relation to school heads' innovative and instructional leadership.

Instrument

The primary tool used for data collection in this study was an adapted survey questionnaire designed to measure three core constructs: innovative leadership, instructional leadership, and classroom practices. The instrument was derived from previously validated sources: Hernandez et al. (2023) for creative leadership, Magboo et al. (2023) for instructional leadership, and Garcia (2023) for classroom practices. It was structured into three main sections, each containing 15 items grouped according to specific domains. The first section focused on innovative leadership, covering action patterns, creative thinking, and strategic thinking. The second section assessed instructional leadership, including communicating school goals, coordinating the curriculum, and framing school goals. The third section evaluated classroom practices, specifically classroom management, educational skills, and mastery of subject matter.

Each item in the questionnaire was rated using a four-point Likert scale, where 4 indicated "Strongly Agree," 3 "Agree," 2 "Disagree," and 1 "Strongly Disagree." This format allowed for the precise interpretation of the levels of leadership and classroom practices observed among respondents.

To ensure the instrument's validity, it underwent expert review for content relevance, clarity, and appropriateness. The research adviser and the institution's Ethics Review Committee approved the instrument. A pilot test was conducted with 30 teachers from Canidkid Integrated School and Camantangan Elementary School to assess reliability. The results showed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.896 for innovative leadership, 0.885 for instructional leadership, and 0.758 for classroom practices, indicating that the instrument was reliable and suitable for use in the study.

The survey was administered to 130 elementary teachers from six public schools in the Montevista District, Davao de Oro Division. Data collection was conducted both face-to-face and online, depending on the availability and preference of the respondents. Each participant was given approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Before administration, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was assured. The standardized format and consistent administration procedures ensured the reliability and integrity of the data collected.

Procedure

After creating the survey instrument, the researcher ensured its accuracy and validity by seeking approval from the research adviser. Following this, the instrument was validated by a panel of academic experts to confirm the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of its content. The Ethics Review Committee also reviewed the survey to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

Upon receiving the needed approvals, a pilot test was conducted among 30 teacher participants from Canidkid Integrated School and Camantangan Elementary School. The results of the pilot test showed that the instrument had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.896 for innovative leadership, 0.885 for instructional leadership, and 0.758 for classroom practices, all of which were interpreted as very good.

After the pilot testing, the researcher secured final approval from the Ethics Review Committee and submitted formal requests to the school heads of the participating schools for permission to conduct the study. The validated survey instruments were then administered to qualified elementary teacher respondents who were currently teaching in public schools within the Davao de Oro Division and had direct experience with the leadership practices of their school heads. Strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure the relevance and integrity of the data collected.

Data Analysis

In this study, quantitative data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools such as mean scores to determine the levels of innovative leadership, instructional leadership, and classroom practices among elementary teachers. To examine the relationships between variables, Pearson correlation analysis was employed. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify which domains of innovative leadership and instructional leadership significantly predicted the classroom practices of teachers.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to ethical principles, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and the safety of all respondents. They were fully informed of their rights and assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. To ensure data protection, all personal information was handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researcher maintained transparency and accountability throughout the research process, following institutional protocols and ethical standards. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee prior to data collection, and all procedures were designed to uphold the dignity, privacy, and welfare of the respondents.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Level of Innovative Leadership*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Action Patterns	3.57	Very High
Innovative Thinking	3.58	Very High
Strategic Thinking	3.60	Very High
Overall	3.58	Very High

Presented in Table 1 is the level of innovative leadership of school heads as perceived by the respondents, with an overall mean of 3.58, interpreted as very high. Based on the data, the overall mean is 3.58, which is interpreted as Very High. The indicator Strategic Thinking obtained the highest mean of 3.60, followed by Innovative Thinking with a mean of 3.58, and Action Patterns with a mean of 3.57.

The result of this study supported the ideas of Hassan et al. (2024), who emphasized that strategic thinking is a component of effective educational leadership, as it enables school heads to plan for future challenges, make informed decisions, and implement long-term plans that foster sustainable school development.



Table 2. *Level of Instructional Leadership*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Communicating the school goals	3.53	Very High
Coordinating the curriculum	3.59	Very High
Framing the school goals	3.58	Very High
Overall	3.57	Very High

Presented in Table 2 is the level of instructional leadership, with an overall mean of 3.57, interpreted as Very High. The two highest means were recorded in "Coordinating the curriculum" with a mean of 3.59 and "Framing the school goals" with a mean of 3.58. The lowest mean was noted in "Communicating the school goals" with a mean of 3.53. The study's findings supported those of Mahardhika and Raharja (2023), who emphasized the need for strategic thinking in effective educational leadership, utilizing critical analysis, innovative problem-solving, and long-term planning. These factors are important for school heads to face complex educational challenges and to formulate goals that drive sustainable school improvement.

Table 3. *Level of Classroom Practices*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Classroom management	3.77	Very High
Educational skills	3.81	Very High
Mastery of the subject matter	3.77	Very High
Overall	3.78	Very High

Presented in Table 3 is the level of classroom practices with an overall mean of 3.78, interpreted as Very High. The highest mean is found in educational skills with a mean of 3.81, interpreted as very high, followed by both classroom management and mastery of the subject matter, each with a mean of 3.77, interpreted as very high. This finding supported the results made by Parveen et al. (2023), who emphasized that teachers with competent educational skills effectively utilize various instructional strategies, including differentiated instruction (DI), to cater to diverse learning styles. Their study highlights that such skills are essential for improving student engagement and learning outcomes. They also noted that effective leadership significantly improves the implementation of these strategies.

Table 4. *Relationships of Innovative Leadership and Classroom Practices*

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Innovative Leadership Classroom Practices	0.400	0.000	Moderate Positive Correlation	Reject the Null Hypothesis

Presented in Table 4 is the analysis of the relationship between the innovative leadership of school heads and the classroom practices of teachers. The results reveal a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.400 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a moderate positive correlation between the two variables. Given that the p-value is significantly lower than the standard significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding reveals a statistically significant difference in classroom practices as influenced by the level of innovative leadership exhibited by school heads. In essence, higher levels of innovative leadership significantly correspond to better classroom practices. This strongly emphasizes the crucial role of innovation in leadership, highlighting that when school heads adopt creative, forward-thinking strategies, teachers are more likely to demonstrate improved instructional methods, classroom engagement, and overall teaching performance.

Table 5. *Relationships of Instructional Leadership and Classroom Practices*

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Instructional Leadership Classroom Practices	0.468	0.000	Moderate Positive Correlation	Reject the Null Hypothesis

The study's results showed a moderate positive correlation (Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.468, p-value of 0.000) between instructional leadership and classroom practices. Consequently, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis, indicating that better instructional leadership is linked to more effective classroom practices. This suggests that schools with stronger instructional leadership, characterized by leaders who actively supervise instruction, support teachers, align the curriculum, and communicate clear academic goals, tend to have teachers who demonstrate more effective and consistent classroom practices.

Table 6. *Regression Analysis on the Variables of Innovative Leadership and Instructional Leadership Predicting Classroom Practices of Teachers*

Predictor	B	Standard Error	β	t-value	p-value
Model 1					
(Constant)	2.670	0.187		14.301	0.000
Instructional Leadership	0.311	0.052	0.468	5.994	0.000
Model 2					
(Constant)	2.663	0.208		12.832	0.000
Instructional Leadership	0.305	0.098	0.459	3.100	0.002
Innovative Leadership	0.008	0.108	0.011	0.077	0.939

Presented in Table 6 is a regression analysis assessing the predictive power of Instructional and Innovative Leadership on classroom practices. Model 1 shows that Instructional Leadership significantly predicts classroom practices with a β of 0.468 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong positive influence. In Model 2, Instructional Leadership remains significant with a β of 0.459 and a p-value of 0.002, while Innovative Leadership is not a significant predictor, having a β of 0.011 and a p-value of 0.939. These results suggest that only Instructional Leadership has a meaningful impact on the classroom practices of teachers.

Conclusions

This study affirmed that school heads in the participating schools exhibit a very high level of innovative and instructional leadership, particularly in strategic thinking, curriculum coordination, and goal framing. Teachers also demonstrated a very high level of classroom practices, especially in educational skills, classroom management, and mastery of subject matter. The significant positive relationship between school leadership and classroom practices underscores the vital role of effective leadership in enhancing instructional quality, fostering teacher engagement, and improving student outcomes.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that school heads continue enhancing their leadership competencies through targeted training in strategic planning, instructional supervision, and curriculum alignment. Teachers may be encouraged to participate in professional development programs, collaborative planning sessions, and instructional coaching to sustain high-quality classroom practices. The Department of Education may institutionalize leadership development initiatives that integrate innovative and instructional leadership frameworks to strengthen school-wide instructional capacity. Future researchers may explore additional variables such as school climate, teacher motivation, and alternative leadership models to gain deeper insights into the dynamics of instructional leadership and classroom effectiveness.

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