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Instructional Leadership, Teachers' Work Engagement and Professional Development: Pathways to Enhanced Professional Practices

Jembert U. Pepito
Doctor of Education in Educational Management and Development
Cebu Technological University – Danao City Campus, Danao City, Cebu, Philippines

Email of Corresponding Author: jembertpepito@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examined relationships among instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development in public elementary and secondary schools in the Division of Cebu Province during School Year 2025–2026, providing a basis for a Professional Enhancement Program. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, 300 teachers selected through simple random sampling completed structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis were employed. Instructional leadership was often practiced (M = 4.09, SD = 0.91), particularly in maximizing instructional time and curriculum implementation. Teachers were very often engaged (M = 4.09, SD = 0.85), especially in dedication, while professional development was often evident (M = 3.99, SD = 0.87), particularly through professional reading. Significant positive relationships emerged between instructional leadership and work engagement (r = .578), instructional leadership and professional development (r = .549), and work engagement and professional development (r = .615), all at $p < .001$. All seven instructional leadership dimensions significantly predicted work engagement, whereas only selected dimensions predicted professional development. These findings indicate that stronger perceived instructional leadership accompanies greater teacher engagement and professional learning, without establishing causality. School administrators should implement the proposed Professional Enhancement Program, strengthening instructional resources, monitoring, feedback, and collaborative learning opportunities. The single-division setting, self-reported measures, and correlational design limit generalizability and causal interpretation. The study offers locally grounded evidence for leadership planning and sustained teacher development, supporting Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education, through stronger professional practices and educational sustainability. It also identifies distinct leadership priorities for engagement and targeted professional development interventions.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership, Professional Development, Professional Enhancement, Public School Teachers, Quality Education, Work Engagement

1. Introduction

Ensuring equitable access to quality education remains a global priority (Ghamrawi, 2023). Achieving this objective requires school leaders to establish professional development systems that strengthen instructional competence and encourage teachers to respond to changing educational demands (He et al., 2024). Instructional leadership supports teacher engagement, professional accountability, and continuous improvement (Eugenio, 2025; Kilag & Sasan, 2023). Effective instructional leadership strengthens teachers' competencies and

institutional performance (Ahmad, 2021). Principals contribute to instructional improvement by encouraging teachers, providing feedback, and establishing supportive professional relationships (Long & Xia, 2025; Li et al., 2026). Their effectiveness also depends on relational competence, contextual awareness, and social-emotional skills (Cann et al., 2021). Teachers' work engagement encompasses their energy, commitment, and concentration in professional responsibilities (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Administrative support influences teachers' motivation and engagement (Nogadas & Apostol, 2024), while professional commitment contributes to instructional performance and student outcomes (Shu, 2022). Professional development involves continuously improving teaching knowledge, skills, and practices to address diverse learning needs (Evers et al., 2015; Sancar et al., 2021). Teachers who believe in their capacity for improvement are more inclined to participate in professional learning (Hejazi & Sadoughi, 2025). Continuous development is particularly important amid technological advances and changing classroom demands (Pratyush, 2023; Worku et al., 2025; Ajani, 2023).

Instructional leadership involves interconnected practices that guide curriculum implementation, instructional supervision, resource allocation, and teacher development (Taimin & Kim, 2025). It emphasizes school leaders' responsibility for establishing instructional direction and improving teaching and learning (Bellibaş, Gümüş, et al., 2021; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The study examines seven instructional leadership dimensions identified by Akram et al. (2017): instructional resource provision, maintaining visible presence, supporting professional development, maximizing instructional time, monitoring students' progress, providing feedback on teaching and learning, and curriculum implementation. Resource provision and a supportive learning environment enable teachers to deliver instruction effectively (Salim et al., 2024; Walker & Qian, 2022). Principals' visibility and active participation in school activities reinforce instructional expectations (Alsmadi, 2022). Classroom observation and supervision provide opportunities to identify instructional needs and support teachers' improvement (Cassanova et al., 2024). Professional learning opportunities further strengthen teaching competence and institutional effectiveness (Adams et al., 2025; Ajani, 2023; Bellibaş, Kılınç, et al., 2021; He et al., 2024). Effective instructional leadership also requires protecting instructional time, monitoring student progress, and providing constructive feedback (Gümüş et al., 2021; Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum, 2021). These practices support instructional consistency, teacher effectiveness, and learning outcomes (Tan et al., 2024; Negoso, 2021; Alanoglu, 2022). Curriculum coordination ensures that teaching practices remain aligned with educational objectives and national requirements (Susanti et al., 2026). Work engagement is equally important to teachers' professional effectiveness. It reflects meaningful participation, enthusiasm, and sustained involvement in instructional responsibilities (Rodriguez, 2022; Chen et al., 2025). Its dimensions—vigor, dedication, and absorption—represent teachers' energy, professional commitment, and concentration (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigor involves resilience and persistence in demanding work situations (Ariyanto et al., 2025; Y. Wang, 2021), while dedication reflects teachers' enthusiasm and professional identity (Nuri et al., 2024; Cacciamani et al., 2022). Professional development complements work engagement through reading, training, experimentation, reflection, feedback, and professional collaboration (Evers et al., 2015). Collaborative learning and peer support enable teachers to exchange instructional strategies and contribute to school improvement (Syam et al., 2023; García-Martínez et al., 2021). Together, these studies establish that instructional leadership, teacher engagement, and professional learning are closely connected dimensions of effective educational practice.

International studies demonstrate the importance of instructional leadership in strengthening teacher engagement and professional learning. Research in the United States identified positive associations between leadership and teachers' professional involvement (Urick et al., 2022). Related investigations emphasize interpersonal leadership processes, structured supervision, and supportive school governance (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2020; Demirdag, 2021; Zainullah et al., 2025). Instructional leadership also contributes to professional development by encouraging collaborative learning and instructional improvement (Chabalala & Naidoo, 2021; Shengnan & Hallinger, 2021). Studies in Malaysia and Iran highlight the relationships among leadership, teacher learning, professional commitment, and institutional conditions (Thien & Liu, 2024; Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2023). In the Philippines, teachers experience administrative responsibilities, substantial workloads, and limited professional development opportunities that may affect their engagement and instructional effectiveness (Lagawid, 2024). School administrators may also struggle to balance managerial responsibilities with direct instructional supervision (Daing & Mustapha, 2023). Nevertheless, Philippine studies demonstrate the importance of leadership support in strengthening teacher engagement and professional growth (Nogadas & Apostol, 2024; Kilag & Sasan, 2023; Quines & Monteza, 2023; Dalumpines, 2023). Research further indicates that teachers' engagement is associated with participation in professional learning (Dayagbil & Alda, 2024; Padillo et al., 2021). Institutional support, professional motivation, and opportunities for continuing development contribute to teachers' instructional effectiveness (Martin, 2024; Gonzaga, 2024). Within the Division of Cebu Province, public elementary and secondary schools operate across geographically diverse communities with varying institutional resources, school conditions, and teacher experiences. This setting provides an appropriate context for examining the relationships among instructional leadership, work engagement, and professional development.

The study is grounded in the Instructional Leadership Model, Work Engagement Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory, supported by Republic Act No. 9155 and DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017. The Instructional Leadership

Model of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) explains how school leaders guide curriculum implementation, supervise instruction, monitor learning, and support teacher development. It emphasizes leadership practices that strengthen instructional quality and professional growth (He et al., 2024). Work Engagement Theory, associated with Schaufeli et al. (2002), conceptualizes engagement through vigor, dedication, and absorption. These dimensions describe teachers' energy, commitment, and concentration in their professional responsibilities (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). Engagement is influenced by individual motivation, organizational conditions, and leadership support (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022). Teachers' motivation and participation in professional learning also contribute to instructional effectiveness (Ji, 2021; Fütterer et al., 2024). Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Bandura (1977), explains how individuals learn through interactions among personal characteristics, behavior, and environmental influences. Teachers may strengthen their professional practices by observing effective leadership, collaborating with colleagues, receiving feedback, and applying newly acquired knowledge (Gallario et al., 2025). Republic Act No. 9155 (2001), or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, establishes the responsibilities of school heads as instructional leaders and administrative managers. Its implementing provisions emphasize collaboration between school leaders and teachers in delivering quality educational services (Republic Act No. 9155, 2001). Department of Education (DepEd, 2017), through DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, establishes the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which guide professional competence, instructional practice, collaboration, and continuing development. These standards provide a policy foundation for examining teachers' professional learning activities and their contributions to school improvement. Collectively, these theoretical and legal foundations explain how instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development interact within the educational environment.

Existing studies have examined instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development individually or through pairwise relationships. Research demonstrates that instructional leadership supports engagement and instructional effectiveness (Estudillo & Mhunpiew, 2021; Mataboge & Mahlangu, 2024; Elliott & Hollingsworth, 2020), while leadership support and professional learning opportunities contribute to teacher development (Hallinger et al., 2025; Musandu et al., 2023). However, contextual factors such as workload, organizational conditions, leadership priorities, and access to professional development may influence these relationships (Naz & Rashid, 2021; Aureada, 2021; Dhandapani & Kaur, 2024; Potane et al., 2023). Although studies have established meaningful relationships between work engagement and professional learning (Ji, 2021; Tanjung & Kurniawan, 2024; Hejazi & Sadoughi, 2025), limited research has examined all three constructs within one analytical framework, particularly among public elementary and secondary school teachers in Cebu Province. To address this gap, the present study investigates teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership, their work engagement, and professional development. It examines the relationships among these variables and identifies instructional leadership dimensions that significantly predict engagement and professional development. The findings serve as the basis for a Professional Enhancement Program responsive to teachers' and school leaders' identified needs.

The study primarily supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): Quality Education, particularly the promotion of effective teaching, qualified educators, and continuous professional learning. Instructional leadership contributes to this goal by strengthening curriculum implementation, instructional supervision, teacher support, and learning environments. Teachers' work engagement supports consistent participation in instructional responsibilities, while professional development strengthens pedagogical competence and responsiveness to learners' needs. The study's proposed Professional Enhancement Program provides a mechanism for identifying professional learning priorities and improving instructional leadership practices. By examining the relationships among leadership, engagement, and development, the research contributes to evidence-informed strategies for strengthening the quality of public education. The study also has relevance to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, specifically its decent-work dimension, because it considers teachers' professional engagement, workplace support, and opportunities for career development. This alignment is secondary to the study's principal educational focus.

The study contributes primarily to educational, institutional, social, and policy sustainability by examining factors that support teachers' continued professional effectiveness. From an educational sustainability perspective, effective instructional leadership and continuous professional development help maintain teaching quality amid evolving curriculum requirements, instructional expectations, and learner needs. Teachers who engage in reading, training, experimentation, reflection, and professional collaboration are better positioned to sustain improvements in classroom practices. Institutional sustainability is supported through leadership practices that encourage professional accountability, constructive feedback, collaboration, and continuous school improvement. Understanding the relationships among instructional leadership, work engagement, and professional development may help administrators establish more responsive professional support systems. The study also contributes to social sustainability by emphasizing the importance of engaged and professionally competent teachers in providing quality public education. Strengthening teachers' instructional practices can support educational opportunities for learners across diverse school communities. From a policy and governance perspective, the findings may inform school-based professional development planning, instructional supervision, and

implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers. The proposed Professional Enhancement Program offers a practical basis for aligning leadership support and teacher development with institutional improvement priorities. Overall, the study contributes to sustainable educational improvement by integrating instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development into a unified approach to strengthening professional practices in the Division of Cebu Province.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to assess teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership, work engagement, and professional development and determine the relationships among these variables. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), quantitative research involves collecting and analyzing numerical data to examine relationships among variables. The descriptive component established the levels of instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development, while the correlational component determined the strength and direction of their associations. Regression analysis was also employed to identify instructional leadership dimensions that significantly predicted teachers' work engagement and professional development.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in public elementary and secondary schools under the Division of Cebu Province, Central Visayas, Philippines. The division operates through six strategic sub-offices located in Medellin, Liloan, Balamban, San Fernando, Badian, and Dalaguete, serving geographically diverse school communities. The research environment encompasses schools with varying institutional resources, student populations, and teacher experiences. These characteristics provided an appropriate setting for examining instructional leadership practices, teachers' work engagement, and professional development across different educational contexts within the province.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents comprised 300 public elementary and secondary school teachers employed under the Division of Cebu Province during School Year 2025–2026. They represented different teaching levels, years of professional experience, educational qualifications, and academic positions. Respondents provided information regarding their age, sex, teaching level, years of teaching experience, highest educational attainment, teaching position, and number of relevant professional development sessions attended within the preceding five years. Their responses were used to assess perceived instructional leadership practices, work engagement, and professional development.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed simple random sampling to select 300 teacher-respondents from public elementary and secondary schools within the Division of Cebu Province. This technique provided eligible teachers an equal probability of selection and helped minimize selection bias. Simple random sampling is commonly applied in quantitative research to support impartial participant selection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The selected respondents represented teachers with varying professional backgrounds and experiences, providing quantitative data for examining the study variables and their relationships.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire comprising four parts: respondents' demographic and professional profiles, perceived instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development at work. The instruments employed a uniform five-point Likert scale to facilitate consistent measurement and comparison across the study variables. The instructional leadership component was adopted from Akram et al. (2017) and measured seven dimensions: instructional resource provider, maintaining visible presence, support for professional development, maximizing instructional time, monitoring students' progress, providing feedback on teaching and learning, and curriculum implementer. These dimensions contained three, three, four, three, two, three, and three items, respectively. The questionnaire was reviewed by experts, who recommended removing redundant, overlapping, or contextually irrelevant items while retaining the essential indicators of instructional leadership. Teachers' work engagement was assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, adopted from Schaufeli et al. (2002). The instrument measured vigor, dedication, and absorption, reflecting teachers' energy, commitment, and concentration in performing professional responsibilities. Following expert recommendations, one item each from the vigor and absorption dimensions was removed to reduce questionnaire length and respondent fatigue. The revised instrument retained its three dimensions and employed a five-point response scale. Professional development was measured using the instrument adapted from Evers et al. (2015), covering six dimensions: keeping up-to-date: reading, keeping up-to-date: work-related training, experimenting, reflecting and asking for feedback, collaborating with colleagues to improve lessons, and collaborating with colleagues to improve school development. These dimensions comprised three, two, three, three, three, and three items, respectively. The questionnaire underwent expert

evaluation and reliability and validity testing, with overlapping items removed to improve clarity and manageability while retaining the intended dimensions.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed three phases involving preparation, survey administration, and data processing. Initially, the researchers secured permission from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent and Public Schools District Supervisors within the Division of Cebu Province through formal transmittal letters. Following approval, selected teachers were invited to participate voluntarily and were informed about the purpose and conditions of the study. The survey was administered electronically through Google Forms, allowing respondents to complete the questionnaire online. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential, their personal information would be protected, and the collected data would be used exclusively for academic purposes. After obtaining the required 300 responses, the researchers organized, tabulated, and processed the data for statistical analysis. The resulting information was analyzed to determine respondents' profiles, perceived instructional leadership practices, levels of work engagement, and professional development. Findings were interpreted according to the research objectives and used to formulate recommendations and develop a Professional Enhancement Program addressing identified leadership and professional learning needs.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson product–moment correlation, and regression analysis. Frequency and percentage distributions described respondents' demographic and professional characteristics, while means and standard deviations determined the perceived levels of instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development across their respective dimensions. Mean scores were interpreted using five-point descriptive scales. Instructional leadership scores ranging from 4.20–5.00 indicated Always Practiced; 3.40–4.19, Often Practiced; 2.60–3.39, Sometimes Practiced; 1.80–2.59, Rarely Practiced; and 1.00–1.79, Never Practiced (Akram et al., 2017). Teachers' work engagement was interpreted as Always Engaged, Very Often Engaged, Often Engaged, Sometimes Engaged, and Rarely Engaged using the study's adapted five-point descriptive intervals. Professional development was classified as Always Developed, Often Developed, Fairly Often Developed, Sometimes Developed, and Hardly Ever Developed across the corresponding intervals (Evers et al., 2015). Pearson r was employed to determine the strength and direction of relationships between instructional leadership and teachers' work engagement, instructional leadership and professional development, and teachers' work engagement and professional development. Regression analysis identified instructional leadership dimensions that significantly predicted variations in teachers' work engagement and professional development. Statistical hypotheses were evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings provided the empirical basis for the proposed Professional Enhancement Program.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical procedures by securing authorization from the appropriate educational authorities before conducting data collection. Respondents were informed of the research purpose and invited to participate voluntarily, without obligation or coercion. Informed consent was obtained before questionnaire administration. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, and participants were assured that their identities and personal information would be protected. The collected responses were used exclusively for academic purposes, with data processing and interpretation conducted in accordance with the stated research objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

3.1.1 Age and Sex

The respondents were predominantly aged 30–34 years (24.33%), followed by those aged 35–39 years (23.00%) and 40–44 years (14.00%). Teachers aged 55 years and above represented the smallest group (4.00%). In terms of sex, 237 respondents (79.00%) were female, while 63 (21.00%) were male. These findings indicate that the sample consisted largely of younger and middle-aged teachers, with females representing the majority. Age and sex provide relevant demographic contexts for understanding teachers' professional experiences. Singh et al. (2025) and Guglielmi et al. (2016) reported variations in work engagement across age groups, particularly concerning professional recognition and commitment. Similarly, Topchyan and Woehler (2021) and Lafiguera and Torreces (2026) identified differences in engagement associated with teachers' sex. These studies support the inclusion of demographic characteristics when examining work engagement and professional development.

3.1.2 Teaching Level and Years of Experience

Most respondents taught at the secondary level (176 or 58.67%), while 124 (41.33%) taught at the elementary level. Regarding teaching experience, the largest group had 6–10 years of service (37.00%), followed by those with 1–5 years (29.00%) and 11–15 years (17.67%). Overall, 83.67% had 1–15 years of teaching experience, indicating that the sample primarily represented teachers in the earlier and middle stages of their careers. Teaching

level and experience provide important contexts for understanding professional engagement. Perera et al. (2018) examined the structure of teacher work engagement. Scheirlinckx et al. (2025) and Çakır et al. (2026) likewise emphasized that professional learning needs and instructional characteristics vary according to teaching experience. These findings suggest the relevance of considering career stages when examining leadership practices and teachers' professional growth.

3.1.3 Educational Attainment and Teaching Position

Half of the respondents (50.33%) had earned master's degree units, while 29.33% held bachelor's degrees, 12.67% had completed master's degrees, 4.33% had earned doctoral units, and 3.33% held doctoral degrees. Regarding teaching positions, Teacher 1 accounted for 47.67%, followed by Teacher 3 (36.00%), Teacher 2 (11.33%), Master Teacher 1 (3.67%), and Master Teacher 2 (1.33%). The findings indicate considerable participation in graduate education, although most respondents occupied classroom teaching positions. Educational qualifications and teaching positions are relevant to teachers' professional opportunities and responsibilities. Aliste and Basañes (2024) and Calansingin et al. (2022) associated educational attainment with differences in work engagement. Similarly, Kagotani et al. (2021) and Yuyou and Wenjing (2018) identified teaching positions as relevant to professional responsibilities, training opportunities, and engagement. These studies provide context for interpreting the respondents' educational and professional characteristics.

3.1.4 Professional Development Training Participation

Professional development participation varied among respondents during the preceding five years. The largest group, comprising 124 teachers (41.33%), attended 5–10 training activities, while 105 (35.00%) attended fewer than five. Another 32 respondents (10.67%) participated in 11–15 training activities. These results demonstrate differing levels of participation in formal professional learning opportunities. Sancar et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of examining professional development activities in relation to teachers' instructional improvement. The variation in training participation highlights differences in respondents' exposure to organized professional learning and provides relevant background for examining their reported professional development practices.

3.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Instructional Leadership

3.2.1 Instructional Resource Provider

Teachers perceived instructional resource provision as often practiced. Recommending resources based on teachers' instructional needs received the highest mean of 3.88. Gathering feedback regarding instructional resource availability and facilitating access to teaching materials were likewise perceived as regularly practiced. These findings indicate that school principals generally supported teachers' instructional resource needs. Sönmez et al. (2025) emphasized the relationship between instructional leadership and teachers' professional learning. Long and Xia (2025) similarly linked supportive leadership practices to professional growth, while Dorukbaşı and Cansoy (2024) highlighted leadership conditions that support teachers' learning. These findings reinforce the relevance of instructional resource provision in maintaining supportive teaching environments.

3.2.2 Maintaining Visible Presence

School principals were generally perceived as maintaining an active and visible presence. The highest-rated indicator obtained a mean of 4.27, interpreted as always practiced, while two other indicators received 4.12 and 3.80, both interpreted as often practiced. The results suggest that principals regularly demonstrated involvement in school activities and maintained opportunities for interaction with teachers. These findings are consistent with Sönmez et al.'s (2025) observation that instructional leadership is associated with professional growth. Liu and Hallinger (2018) also emphasized the importance of instructional leadership in strengthening teachers' professional learning. A visible leadership presence provides opportunities for professional interaction, instructional guidance, and school-level support.

3.2.3 Support for Professional Development

Teachers generally rated principals' support for professional development as often practiced. The highest-rated indicator obtained a mean of 4.22, interpreted as always practiced, while three other indicators received means of 4.14, 4.10 and 4.02, all interpreted as often practiced. These findings indicate that school principals regularly encouraged professional learning, although the extent of support varied across specific practices. Thien and Liu (2024) identified significant associations between school leadership and teachers' professional learning engagement. He et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of opportunities for developing professional competencies, while Dorukbaşı and Cansoy (2024) linked supportive leadership with professional learning. These studies support the relevance of sustained leadership assistance in teachers' professional development.

3.2.4 Maximizing Instructional Time

Maximizing instructional time emerged as one of the strongest instructional leadership practices. The three indicators obtained means of 4.43, 4.30, and 4.24, all interpreted as always practiced. The overall mean was 4.32, indicating that principals consistently emphasized the effective use of classroom instructional time. Grissom et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of principals' allocation of time to instructional responsibilities, particularly

activities related to classroom instruction and teacher support. Robinson et al. (2008) similarly highlighted leadership practices focused on teaching and learning. The findings indicate that protecting instructional time was a consistently demonstrated leadership responsibility among the schools represented.

3.2.5 Monitoring Students' Progress

Principals were perceived as often monitoring students' academic progress, with indicator means of 3.81 and 3.74 and an overall mean of 3.78. These results indicate regular monitoring of student performance and instructional progress, although this dimension received comparatively lower ratings than maximizing instructional time and curriculum implementation. Kazi (2021) emphasized the relevance of instructional evaluation and monitoring to classroom teaching practices. Mora-Ruano et al. (2021) likewise highlighted principals' support in strengthening instructional processes. These findings suggest that monitoring student progress remains an important aspect of instructional leadership requiring consistent attention.

3.2.6 Providing Feedback on Teaching and Learning

Teachers perceived their school principals as often providing instructional feedback and recognition. The highest-rated indicator received a mean of 4.21, interpreted as always practiced, while the other two obtained 4.16 and 4.14, both interpreted as often practiced. The findings indicate that feedback was generally provided, although the consistency of individual feedback practices varied. Lochmiller (2016) emphasized the contribution of administrators' instructional feedback to teachers' improvement. Tuytens and Devos (2011) likewise examined the relevance of school leadership to teacher evaluation and feedback. Akinlar et al. (2025) and Sönmez et al. (2025) further highlighted the relationship between instructional leadership and teachers' professional learning. These findings reinforce the importance of constructive feedback as part of instructional supervision.

3.2.7 Curriculum Implementer

Curriculum implementation received consistently high assessments, with indicator means of 4.34, 4.31, and 4.26, all interpreted as always practiced. Its overall mean was 4.30, making it one of the highest-rated instructional leadership dimensions. These findings indicate that school principals consistently demonstrated practices supporting curriculum implementation. Lee and Hallinger (2012) emphasized the importance of instructional leadership in maintaining curriculum coherence and coordination. Rigby et al. (2017) similarly examined how school leadership practices support instructional improvement. These findings reinforce the importance of leadership involvement in ensuring that curriculum requirements are translated into classroom instruction.

3.2.8 Overall Instructional Leadership Practices

Instructional leadership was generally rated as often practiced, with an overall mean of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 0.91. Maximizing instructional time (M = 4.32) and curriculum implementer (M = 4.30) received the highest assessments and were interpreted as always practiced. The remaining five dimensions were rated as often practiced, indicating differences in the frequency with which instructional leadership responsibilities were demonstrated. The findings reflect the multidimensional nature of instructional leadership discussed by Taimin and Kim (2025) and Akram et al. (2017). Gümüş et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of protecting instructional time, while Walker and Qian (2022) highlighted leadership responsibilities associated with school improvement. Other studies similarly linked instructional leadership with professional learning and teaching practices (He et al., 2024; Arendse, 2023; Li et al., 2026). Walker and Qian (2022), Tan et al. (2024), and Kumonya (2025) further support the importance of examining instructional leadership across multiple responsibilities rather than as a single practice.

3.3 Teachers' Work Engagement

3.3.1 Vigor

Teachers reported being very often engaged in terms of vigor, demonstrating energy, persistence, and mental resilience in performing instructional responsibilities. The highest-rated indicators obtained means of 4.16 and 4.15, reflecting consistently positive assessments of teachers' energy and determination. The overall mean for vigor was 4.04, indicating that respondents generally maintained enthusiasm and perseverance in their work. Uslukaya and Zincirli (2025) emphasized that teachers' work engagement is associated with job resources and institutional support. van Beurden et al. (2025) likewise examined conditions associated with teachers' engagement. These findings provide context for understanding how supportive professional environments relate to teachers' energy and persistence in fulfilling instructional responsibilities.

3.3.2 Dedication

Dedication emerged as the highest-rated dimension of teachers' work engagement, with an overall mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.87, interpreted as always engaged. The highest indicators obtained means of 4.41 and 4.35, followed by another indicator with a mean of 4.23. These results indicate strong professional commitment, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose among respondents. Uslukaya and Zincirli (2025) associated work engagement with teachers' professional commitment and institutional support. Alonzo et al. (2025) likewise

emphasized the relevance of teachers' dedication to their professional responsibilities. These findings support the interpretation that dedication represents a prominent aspect of work engagement among the participating teachers.

3.3.3 Absorption

Teachers were very often engaged in terms of absorption, indicating substantial concentration and involvement in instructional activities. The highest-rated indicator obtained a mean of 4.26, interpreted as always engaged, followed by indicators with means of 4.03 and 3.96. These findings indicate that respondents frequently experienced focused involvement in their teaching responsibilities, although absorption was less pronounced than dedication. Sheridan et al. (2025) described absorption as a central dimension of work engagement involving concentration and involvement in professional tasks. Uslukaya and Zincirli (2025) and Vivante and Vedder-Weiss (2023) similarly emphasized the relevance of individual and workplace resources to teachers' engagement. These findings support the importance of examining sustained concentration alongside teachers' energy and professional commitment.

3.3.4 Overall Level of Teachers' Work Engagement

Teachers' overall work engagement obtained a mean of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 0.85, interpreted as very often engaged. Dedication ranked highest (M = 4.26, SD = 0.87), followed by vigor (M = 4.04). Absorption (M=3.96) was likewise rated as very often engaged. These results indicate consistently positive work engagement, with professional dedication emerging as the strongest dimension. The findings align with the conceptualization of engagement through vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Bakker et al., 2014). Ariyanto et al. (2025), Cacciamani et al. (2022), and Sacriz and Tagadiad (2024) emphasized the importance of professional commitment and motivation. Sacriz and Tagadiad (2024) associated vigor with persistence in teaching, while Pöysä et al. (2022) highlighted concentration as an important characteristic of absorption. These studies support the interpretation that respondents demonstrated strong commitment, energy, and involvement in their professional responsibilities.

3.4 Teachers' Professional Development

3.4.1 Keeping Up-to-Date: Reading

Keeping up-to-date through reading emerged as the strongest professional development dimension. Its three indicators obtained means of 4.54, 4.48, and 4.38, all interpreted as always developed. These results indicate that respondents consistently engaged in professional reading to update their knowledge, strengthen instructional understanding, and remain informed about educational developments. Sancar et al. (2021) emphasized continuous knowledge acquisition and application as essential components of professional development. van Driel and Berry (2012) likewise highlighted the importance of professional learning in strengthening teaching knowledge, while Filderman et al. (2025) supported the relevance of evidence-informed professional learning. These studies reinforce the value of professional reading as a regular component of teachers' development.

3.4.2 Keeping Up-to-Date: Work-Related Training

Teachers' participation in work-related training was rated as often developed, with an overall mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 0.90. The two indicators obtained means of 3.92 and 3.79, indicating regular involvement in training activities intended to improve instructional knowledge and professional competencies. Camilli Trujillo et al. (2024) emphasized that professional training supports teachers' content knowledge, instructional competencies, and professional learning. Huang et al. (2024) likewise highlighted the relevance of structured development opportunities. These findings support the importance of work-related training as a means of maintaining and improving professional competencies.

3.4.3 Experimenting with Instructional Practices

Teachers generally reported frequent experimentation with instructional strategies, methods, and assessment practices. The highest-rated indicator obtained a mean of 4.25, interpreted as always developed, followed by the other indicators with a mean of 4.19 and 4.11, both interpreted as often developed. These findings indicate that respondents regularly explored alternative approaches to improve classroom instruction. Bragg et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of practical professional learning experiences in developing instructional knowledge and teaching confidence. Bragg et al. (2021) and Sancar et al. (2021) likewise highlighted experimentation and the application of professional learning to classroom practices. These findings support the relevance of trying and refining instructional approaches as part of continuous teacher development.

3.4.4 Reflecting and Asking for Feedback

Teachers reported that reflection and feedback-seeking were often developed professional practices. The highest-rated indicator obtained a mean of 4.17, followed by other indicators with a mean of 4.10 and 3.21. These findings indicate that respondents regularly reflected on their teaching experiences and sought feedback to identify areas for instructional improvement. Miquel et al. (2024) emphasized that classroom observation, professional reflection, and feedback exchange help teachers identify areas for improvement. Flores et al. (2024) similarly

highlighted the contribution of reflective practices to professional learning. These findings support the relevance of systematic reflection and constructive feedback in teachers' continuing development.

3.4.5 Collaborating with Colleagues to Improve Lessons

Teachers' collaboration with colleagues to improve lessons was generally rated as often developed. The highest-rated indicator obtained a mean of 3.87, followed by the other indicators with a mean of 3.79 and 3.65. These findings indicate regular professional interaction and sharing of instructional practices, although collaborative activities were less prominent than professional reading. Hsieh et al. (2023) emphasized the relationship between instructional leadership and teachers' collaborative professional learning. Hsieh et al. (2023) likewise highlighted the importance of collaboration in strengthening instructional practices. These findings suggest that collegial interaction remains a relevant component of professional development, particularly in improving lesson preparation and instructional delivery.

3.4.6 Collaborating with Colleagues to Improve School Development

Teachers reported that collaboration for school development was often practiced as part of their professional growth. The highest-rated indicator obtained a mean of 3.97, followed by the other two indicators with a mean of 3.81 and 3.76. These findings indicate that respondents participated in collaborative activities supporting school improvement, although the frequency varied across specific practices. Pan et al. (2024) emphasized the relationship between teacher collaboration, school innovation, and instructional improvement. Hsieh et al. (2023) similarly highlighted leadership conditions associated with collaborative professional learning, while Ghamrawi et al. (2024) emphasized the contribution of professional collaboration to school improvement. These findings support the importance of collegial participation in school development initiatives.

3.4.7 Overall Level of Teachers' Professional Development

Teachers' professional development obtained an overall mean of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 0.87, interpreted as often developed. Keeping up-to-date through reading emerged as the strongest dimension and was interpreted as always developed. The remaining dimensions, including training, experimentation, reflection, feedback-seeking, and collaboration, were rated as often developed. These findings indicate that respondents regularly participated in professional learning, with individual reading practices receiving stronger assessments than several collaborative activities. Nazari et al. (2022) emphasized professional reading as a means of strengthening instructional knowledge. Professional training likewise supports competency development and adaptation to educational changes (Liu & Mutlu, 2025), while Chen (2024) highlighted its relevance to instructional improvement. Li and Akram (2023), Meng (2023), and Zhang (2022) emphasized reflection and feedback as important components of professional learning. Collaboration further supports professional knowledge exchange (Syam et al., 2023), while Velasquez et al. (2023) and Briede and Drelinga (2023) highlighted collegial support in addressing instructional challenges. García-Martínez et al. (2021) and Khamdit and Worapun (2024) likewise emphasized collaboration in strengthening school development.

3.5 Significant Relationships Between Instructional Leadership, Work Engagement, and Professional Development

3.5.1 Relationship Between Instructional Leadership and Teachers' Work Engagement

The analysis revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between instructional leadership and teachers' work engagement ($r = 0.578$, $\beta = 0.523$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher perceived instructional leadership was associated with greater work engagement among respondents. Since the relationship was statistically significant, the null hypothesis stating that instructional leadership and teachers' work engagement were not significantly related was rejected. These findings are consistent with Urick et al. (2022), Li et al. (2026), and Hallinger et al. (2025), who associated school leadership with teachers' commitment and professional involvement. Zahed-Babelan et al. (2019) emphasized the relevance of empowerment and workplace culture to teacher engagement. Similarly, Nogadas and Apostol (2024) and Aliste and Basañes (2024) identified significant relationships between leadership practices and teachers' work engagement. These studies support the observed positive association between instructional leadership and teachers' professional involvement.

3.5.2 Relationship Between Instructional Leadership and Teachers' Professional Development

Instructional leadership was significantly and positively associated with teachers' professional development ($r = 0.549$, $\beta = 0.534$, $p < .001$). The moderate positive relationship indicates that respondents who perceived stronger instructional leadership also reported greater involvement in professional development activities. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that instructional leadership and professional development were not significantly related was rejected. He et al. (2024) and Karakose et al. (2026) identified significant relationships between instructional leadership and teachers' professional growth. Shengnan and Hallinger (2021), Thien and Liu (2024), and Hosseingholizadeh et al. (2023) likewise emphasized leadership support for professional learning. Philippine studies by Quines and Monteza (2023), Kilag and Sasan (2023), and Dalumpines (2023) further highlighted the importance of instructional supervision, supportive relationships, and professional learning opportunities. These

findings support the observed relationship between leadership practices and teachers' continuing professional development.

3.6 Relationship Between Teachers' Work Engagement and Professional Development

3.6.1 Significant Association Between Teachers' Work Engagement and Professional Development

Teachers' work engagement demonstrated a significant positive relationship with professional development ($r = 0.615$, $p < .001$). The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.595$) further indicated a positive predictive relationship between work engagement and professional development. These results show that respondents reporting greater work engagement also tended to report higher levels of professional development. Accordingly, the null hypothesis stating that no significant relationship existed between these variables was rejected. The findings are consistent with Ji (2021), Demirdag (2021), and He et al. (2025), who associated professional learning with teachers' motivation and engagement. Yan and Dai (2026) identified a positive predictive relationship between professional development and work engagement, while Zhang et al. (2023) reported that engagement predicted teachers' professional development. Huang et al. (2023) and Sok and Heng (2023) further emphasized the close association between professional learning and engagement. Philippine studies by Dayagbil and Alda (2024), Padillo et al. (2021), and Tulo and Lee (2022) similarly supported this relationship. Martin (2024), Anog et al. (2024), and Marcial et al. (2024) highlighted the relevance of professional growth, administrative support, and motivation. Collectively, these findings reinforce the significant association between engagement and professional development without establishing causality.

3.7 Instructional Leadership Dimensions Predicting Teachers' Work Engagement and Professional Development

3.7.1 Instructional Leadership Dimensions Predicting Teachers' Work Engagement

Regression analysis revealed that all seven instructional leadership dimensions significantly predicted teachers' work engagement ($p < .001$). Instructional Resource Provider demonstrated the highest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.719$), followed by Curriculum Implementer ($\beta = 0.435$), Support for Professional Development ($\beta = 0.382$), Monitoring Students' Progress ($\beta = 0.320$), Providing Feedback on Teaching and Learning ($\beta = 0.203$), Maximizing Instructional Time ($\beta = 0.174$), and Maintaining Visible Presence ($\beta = 0.156$). These results indicate that each measured instructional leadership dimension demonstrated a statistically significant predictive relationship with work engagement. He et al. (2024) emphasized the relevance of instructional leadership to teachers' professional learning, while Karakose et al. (2026) identified significant associations between leadership practices and professional growth. Zahed-Babelan et al. (2019) likewise highlighted the complex relationship between instructional leadership and work engagement. The findings suggest that instructional resource provision demonstrated the strongest predictive relationship with engagement among the seven dimensions examined, while other leadership practices also contributed statistically significant predictive information.

3.7.2 Instructional Leadership Dimensions Predicting Teachers' Professional Development

Only three instructional leadership dimensions significantly predicted teachers' professional development at the .05 significance level. Maintaining Visible Presence ($\beta = 0.2112$, $p = .047$) and Monitoring Students' Progress ($\beta = 0.2245$, $p = .020$) demonstrated significant positive predictive relationships. In contrast, Support for Professional Development demonstrated a significant negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.2756$, $p = .023$). Instructional Resource Provider ($\beta = 0.1276$, $p = .191$), Maximizing Instructional Time ($\beta = 0.0357$, $p = .702$), Providing Feedback on Teaching and Learning ($\beta = 0.0865$, $p = .387$), and Curriculum Implementer ($\beta = 0.1958$, $p = .052$) were not statistically significant predictors. These findings indicate that the predictive relationships between instructional leadership dimensions and professional development differed from those observed for work engagement. Although all seven dimensions significantly predicted engagement, only maintaining visible presence, monitoring students' progress, and support for professional development significantly predicted professional development. The negative coefficient for support for professional development should be interpreted within the regression model rather than as evidence that leadership support directly reduces professional growth. The findings emphasize the importance of distinguishing the predictive contributions of individual leadership practices when examining teachers' professional outcomes.

3.8 Basis for the Proposed Professional Enhancement Program

3.8.1 Integration of the Major Findings

The study established that instructional leadership was generally often practiced ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.91$), teachers were very often engaged in their work ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.85$), and professional development was often evident ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.87$). Significant positive relationships were observed among all three major variables. Instructional leadership dimensions also demonstrated differing predictive relationships with teachers' work engagement and professional development. These findings served as the basis for developing the proposed Professional Enhancement Program. The integrated results indicate that instructional leadership, work engagement, and professional development are interconnected aspects of teachers' professional practices. The proposed Professional Enhancement Program therefore draws on the study's evidence to address differences in leadership practices, sustain teachers' engagement, and strengthen continuing professional learning. Its

development represents the practical application of the study's findings within the participating public school context.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study established significant positive relationships among instructional leadership, teachers' work engagement, and professional development among 300 public elementary and secondary school teachers in the Division of Cebu Province during School Year 2025–2026. Instructional leadership was generally often practiced, with maximizing instructional time and curriculum implementation receiving the highest assessments. Teachers demonstrated consistently high work engagement, particularly in dedication, while professional development was frequently evident, especially through professional reading. Significant moderate positive correlations were found between instructional leadership and work engagement ($r = .578$), instructional leadership and professional development ($r = .549$), and work engagement and professional development ($r = .615$), all at $p < .001$. All seven instructional leadership dimensions significantly predicted work engagement, whereas only selected dimensions predicted professional development. These findings highlight the interconnected nature of leadership practices, teacher engagement, and professional learning, providing an empirical foundation for developing a responsive Professional Enhancement Program.

School principals should sustain effective practices in maximizing instructional time and curriculum implementation while strengthening instructional resource provision, leadership visibility, professional development support, student progress monitoring, and instructional feedback. Professional learning opportunities should be differentiated according to teachers' experience, educational qualifications, teaching positions, and previous training participation to address varying professional needs. School administrators and district supervisors should prioritize structured mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, classroom observation, and constructive feedback to support continuous instructional improvement. Teachers should actively participate in professional reading, work-related training, experimentation with instructional strategies, reflective practices, and collaborative school development initiatives. The proposed Professional Enhancement Program should be incorporated into school improvement planning to strengthen instructional leadership, sustain work engagement, and promote professional growth. Future researchers may examine additional factors associated with professional development and conduct comparative investigations involving public and private school teachers to determine whether similar relationships emerge across educational settings.

The study was limited to 300 public elementary and secondary school teachers in the Division of Cebu Province during School Year 2025–2026, restricting the direct applicability of findings to other educational settings. Its quantitative descriptive-correlational design identified statistical associations and predictors but could not establish causal relationships. Data were obtained through self-reported online questionnaires measuring teachers' perceptions, which may not fully represent actual leadership practices, engagement, and professional development. The investigation also focused on predetermined variables and dimensions. Future studies may include private schools, broader geographical coverage, additional relevant variables, and longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study adhered to ethical research principles by securing permission from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, concerned Public Schools District Supervisors, and School Principals in the Division of Cebu Province before data collection. Respondents were informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and voluntary nature of participation, and informed consent was obtained before administering the questionnaires. Participants were assured that their identities and personal information would remain confidential and that collected data would be used exclusively for academic purposes. The researchers-maintained confidentiality, respected respondents' rights, and ensured responsible data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting throughout the research process.

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