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Instructional Leadership and Subjective Well-Being among Teachers in Public Elementary Schools of Mlang North District, Schools Division Office of Cotabato: An Explanatory Sequential Mixed-Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examined school heads' instructional leadership practices and teachers' subjective well-being in 11 public elementary schools in Mlang North District, Schools Division Office of Cotabato, and explored workplace conditions shaping teachers' experiences. A quantitatively prioritized explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combined separate cross-sectional surveys of 152 teachers using the Instructional Leadership Practices Questionnaire and 150 teachers using the Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire with semi-structured interviews involving 18 teachers. Descriptive statistics, a paired-samples t test, and thematic analysis informed group-level integration. Instructional leadership was rated very high overall (M = 4.640), while subjective well-being was moderate (M = 2.969). Teaching efficacy (M = 3.107) significantly exceeded school connectedness (M = 2.832), $t(149) = 5.130$, $p < .001$. Interviews highlighted participatory direction, constructive supervision, equitable recognition, workload protection, and collegial relationships as important to teachers' experiences; persistent documentation and competing responsibilities presented difficulties. The findings indicated that frequently reported leadership practices coexisted with less favorable experiences of belonging, underscoring the importance of how support is provided. School leaders should strengthen inclusive consultation, fair recognition, supportive feedback, and protection of instructional time. Self-reported, cross-sectional data from one district and unlinked survey responses limited generalizability and prevented testing individual-level leadership–well-being associations. The study offers context-specific priorities for improving teachers' workplace support and informing school-level well-being initiatives.

Keywords: *Instructional Leadership, Mixed Methods, Public Elementary Schools, School Connectedness, Teacher Well-Being, Teaching Efficacy, Workload*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context of the Study

Teacher well-being is integral to educational quality because teachers' working conditions influence their professional engagement, commitment, and capacity to sustain effective instruction. A meta-analysis of 173 studies identified personal resources, professional competence, and supportive relationships as important correlates of teacher well-being (Zhou et al., 2024). Similarly, a synthesis of 58 studies found that job and personal resources were positively associated with well-being, whereas job demands were negatively associated with it (Li et al., 2025). These findings position teacher well-being as an organizational concern rather than solely an individual responsibility. In Philippine public schools, concerns about workload have prompted policies intended to protect instructional time and teacher welfare. Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 002, s. 2024 directed the removal of administrative tasks from public school teachers, while DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024 rationalized teachers' workloads and teaching-overload arrangements (DepEd, 2024a, 2024b). However, teachers' experiences of these reforms depend on local implementation and the support available to them, as demonstrated in a Philippine qualitative study on the removal of administrative tasks (Testa & Delavin, 2025). At the school level, instructional leadership provides a relevant organizational context. It encompasses defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. A meta-analysis found a moderate positive association between principals' instructional leadership and teacher attitudes, although the strength of the associations varied across outcomes (Hallinger et al., 2025). Teacher subjective well-being, meanwhile, includes school connectedness and teaching efficacy, the two components assessed by the Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (Renshaw, 2020). Examining these constructs in the public elementary schools of Mlang North District, Schools Division Office of Cotabato, provides a context-specific account of leadership practices and teachers' experiences of well-being.

1.2. Research Problem

Instructional leadership should be considered alongside workload, interpersonal relationships, and other school conditions within the Job Demands–Resources framework (Bakker et al., 2023). An international analysis of data from 46,563 teachers in 15 countries indicated a positive association between instructional leadership and teacher well-being, partly explained by workload stress and influenced by perceived autonomy support (Chen & Yin, 2025). In the Philippines, public school teachers in Bohol described excessive workload as a source of stress and disruption to their personal lives, while identifying professional fulfillment and consistent institutional support as important to their well-being (Llemit et al., 2026). Evidence from Region XI further suggests that workplace conditions and collegial support may be more influential than leadership style alone. An explanatory sequential study reported that principal leadership styles did not significantly mediate the relationship between the work environment and teacher well-being (Patrimonio & Laya, 2026). Accordingly, favorable leadership ratings may not fully explain teachers' experiences of belonging, professional confidence, or competing demands. In Mlang North District, the central concern is how teachers perceive instructional leadership, school connectedness, and teaching efficacy, and how they interpret school-head practices and work-context conditions in relation to their well-being. These district-specific experiences warrant closer examination.

1.3. Research Gap

Existing literature documents associations between instructional leadership and teacher attitudes, although these vary by outcome and context (Hallinger et al., 2025). International research indicates that workload stress and autonomy support help explain the leadership–well-

being relationship (Chen & Yin, 2025). Philippine studies highlight administrative-task reforms, collaboration, and workplace conditions, but do not describe the distinct components of teacher subjective well-being in Mlang North District (Testa & Delavin, 2025; Patrimonio & Laya, 2026). The study addressed this contextual and interpretive gap by combining separate group-level survey descriptions of school heads' instructional leadership and teachers' subjective well-being with interviews about leadership practices, demands, and resources. It also compared school connectedness and teaching efficacy within the well-being survey responses. Because the leadership and well-being questionnaires lacked a shared respondent identifier, an individual-level statistical relationship between the constructs could not be estimated. The study therefore contributes integrated descriptive and qualitative evidence without claiming a statistical association or causal relationship.

1.4. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to describe school heads' instructional leadership and teachers' subjective well-being in the public elementary schools of Mlang North District, Schools Division Office of Cotabato. The ILPQ was used to assess instructional leadership in terms of defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate, while the TSWQ measured school connectedness, teaching efficacy, and overall subjective well-being. The study also tested whether the two well-being components differed significantly at the .05 level. Through interviews, it explored school-head practices that teachers perceived as sources of support, strain, or little influence on well-being, alongside contextual demands and resources. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to identify locally relevant leadership implications.

1.5. Significance and Practical Contribution of the Study

The study contributes a district-specific understanding of how teachers perceive instructional leadership and experience school connectedness and teaching efficacy. Its findings may help school heads review instructional priorities, communication, professional support, and learning-climate practices in relation to teachers' workload concerns. For district administrators, the integrated evidence may inform discussions about equitable support, appropriate task allocation, and the implementation of existing teacher-welfare policies. Teachers may benefit from a clearer account of school conditions they perceive as supportive or demanding. For researchers, the study illustrates the value of integrating descriptive survey evidence with contextual interviews while recognizing the limitations of unpaired questionnaires. Its contribution is interpretive and practical; it does not establish statistical association or causation.

1.6. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Alignment

The study aligns directly with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, Good Health and Well-being, and SDG 4, Quality Education (United Nations, 2015). SDG 3 is relevant because the research examines teachers' positive psychological functioning and the workplace demands and resources they described in relation to school connectedness and teaching efficacy. Its findings may inform school-level practices that support teacher welfare without implying clinical health outcomes. SDG 4 is relevant because instructional leadership addresses teaching priorities, professional learning, and the conditions that support classroom instruction. By examining leadership practices and teachers' experiences in Mlang North District, the study provides context-specific evidence that may help schools strengthen supportive teaching environments and promote sustainable educational improvement.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a pragmatic, quantitatively prioritized explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (QUAN → qual), with partial overlap in implementation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2025). The nonexperimental, cross-sectional Instructional Leadership Practices Questionnaire (ILPQ) survey preceded interviews and informed their probes. The Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (TSWQ), administered separately, remained open during interviews. Quantitative summaries and qualitative themes were integrated at group level after data collection. Neither individual-level cross-survey matching nor causal inference was supported (Firestone et al., 2024).

2.2. Research Locale, Population, and Participants or Respondents

The study involved 11 public elementary schools in Mlang North District, Schools Division Office of Cotabato, Department of Education–Region XII: Dalipe, Katipunan, Liboo, Lika Central, Magallon, Malayan, New Antique, New Consolacion, New Lawaan, Tibao, and Ugpay. The accessible population comprised 167 full-time classroom teachers with at least one completed school year under their current school head. Master Teachers with regular teaching assignments qualified; school heads, acting school heads, nonteaching personnel, and learners did not. Complete responses totaled 152 for ILPQ and 150 for TSWQ; 18 teachers participated in interviews.

2.3. Sampling Technique and Sample Determination

Total enumeration was attempted by inviting all 167 eligible teachers, targeting at least 150 usable responses per questionnaire. Participation reached 91.0% for ILPQ and 89.8% for TSWQ; separate forms prevented identifying teachers who completed both. Forty-four eligible teachers joined the ILPQ pilot and remained eligible for the main survey; pilot responses were analyzed separately. Eighteen interviewees were randomly selected from volunteers. Four interpretive profiles were assigned from interview accounts rather than questionnaire scores.

2.4. Research Instrument and Validation

The researcher-developed, 30-item ILPQ assessed Defining the School's Mission (6 items), Managing the Instructional Program (9), and Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate (15) using a five-point frequency scale. The eight-item TSWQ measured School Connectedness and Teaching Efficacy (four items each) using a four-point scale (Renshaw, 2020). The research director validated the ILPQ using form F-024-19 (mean rating 3.57); items were revised before pilot testing. Pilot Cronbach's α values were .897, .932, and .963; main-survey values were .898, .947, and .952 (overall .974). TSWQ α values were .864, .796, and .852 (overall). A three-question semi-structured interview guide was reviewed using form F-024-18.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure

Following institutional ethical clearance and division authorization, invitations and consent information were distributed. ILPQ responses were collected through Google Forms on September 21–25, 2026; TSWQ responses were collected separately on September 23–October 4. ILPQ results were reviewed September 26–27 to guide interview probes. Eighteen face-to-face interviews lasting 45–60 minutes occurred September 28–October 2; participants answered in English or a mixture of Filipino and Bisaya. With consent, interviews were recorded, transcribed, translated when necessary, and de-identified. Final integration followed completion of TSWQ collection.

2.6. Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Responses were screened for missing, out-of-range, and uniform patterns. ILPQ scores were described using means, standard deviations, and 95% confidence intervals; TSWQ scores using descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha. A paired-samples t test compared TSWQ Teaching Efficacy and School Connectedness, with Cohen's dz and Wilcoxon signed-rank sensitivity analysis (two-sided α = .05). Cross-instrument correlations and regression were not conducted because respondent records were unlinked. Interview transcripts were manually coded using an adapted Colaizzi (1978) process; cross-profile comparisons and a joint display supported group-level integration (Ahmed, 2024).

2.7. Ethical Considerations

The Central Mindanao Colleges Research Ethics Committee granted clearance on September 17, 2026, following expedited review (Protocol GS-EC-2026-001; valid through September 17, 2027). Participants gave informed consent, participated voluntarily, and could decline questions or discontinue participation. Survey records contained no names or school identifiers; interview contact information was stored separately, and school heads had no access to individual records. Personal data were handled under Republic Act No. 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (National Privacy Commission, 2012).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Very High Teacher-Rated Instructional Leadership Practices

Research Question 1 examined instructional leadership as perceived by 152 respondents to the Instructional Leadership Practices Questionnaire (ILPQ). The results reflected teachers' assessments of practices attributed to their school heads rather than independent appraisals of individual administrators. On the five-point scale, means from 4.21 to 5.00 were interpreted as Very High (Almost Always).

All three dimensions were classified as Very High. Defining the School's Mission, comprising six items, obtained the highest mean (M = 4.701, SD = 0.421, 95% CI [4.633, 4.768], α = .898), followed by Managing the Instructional Program, comprising nine items (M = 4.620, SD = 0.497, 95% CI [4.540, 4.700], α = .947), and Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate, comprising 15 items (M = 4.598, SD = 0.500, 95% CI [4.518, 4.678], α = .952). The 30-item overall score, calculated as the equally weighted mean of the three dimension scores, was 4.640 (SD = 0.443, 95% CI [4.569, 4.711], α = .974), while the alternative item-weighted mean was 4.625. These scores indicated that respondents reported encountering mission-setting, instructional management, and climate-promoting practices almost always, although they did not establish how consistently those practices were experienced by every teacher.

Relatively lower item ratings provided more specific direction for interpretation. Nominating teachers for recognition received a mean of 4.36, while acknowledging extra effort and making time for informal instructional conversations each received 4.46. Minimizing interruptions to instructional time received 4.52. Although these values remained within the Very High range, their positions relative to other items suggested areas that teachers perceived as less frequent. Interview accounts discussed in Section 3.4 independently returned to recognition, instructional dialogue, and protection of classroom time as concerns with practical importance.

The scale also showed substantial concentration at its upper end. Item means ranged only from 4.36 to 4.72; 94.5% of individual item responses were 4 or 5, and 41 of 152 teachers (27.0%) selected 5 for all 30 items. The pilot test showed a similar concentration, with 92.5% of

responses at 4 or 5. Such restricted dispersion limits the instrument's ability to differentiate higher from lower perceived practice levels (Meier, 2022). Moreover, correlations among the three dimensions were strong (r = .80–.84), indicating that respondents tended to evaluate the dimensions together rather than as sharply separated leadership characteristics. Consistent with these observations, Canipas (2026) also reported very high instructional-leadership ratings among basic education teachers in Apayao.

Taken together, the results portrayed frequently reported instructional leadership within the surveyed group. For Mlang North District, the actionable issue is not necessarily increasing the frequency of already highly rated practices but examining their quality, fairness, and day-to-day usefulness. The pronounced ceiling effect and the absence of independent validation of the novel ILPQ factor structure also warrant caution in assigning strong comparative meaning to small differences between dimensions.

3.2. Moderate Teacher Subjective Well-Being with Stronger Teaching Efficacy

Research Question 2 assessed subjective well-being among 150 respondents to the Teacher Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire (TSWQ). Because the TSWQ and ILPQ respondent datasets were separate and unlinked, the well-being findings could not be paired at the teacher level with the leadership ratings in Section 3.1. The TSWQ used a four-point response scale, on which the range from 2.51 to 3.25 was interpreted as Moderate (Often) in relation to the response anchors and local context (Renshaw, 2020).

Overall teacher subjective well-being across eight items was Moderate (Often), with a mean of 2.969 (SD = 0.540, 95% CI [2.882, 3.056]). The four-item Teaching Efficacy component averaged 3.107 (SD = 0.566, 95% CI [3.015, 3.198]), whereas the four-item School Connectedness component averaged 2.832 (SD = 0.692, 95% CI [2.720, 2.943]). Both components fell within the same verbal category, but the higher efficacy mean pointed to comparatively stronger confidence in teaching-related functioning than in feelings of membership and acceptance at school.

The item responses supported this distinction. The lowest means were recorded for "I feel like people at this school care about me" (2.65) and "I can really be myself at this school" (2.68), both reflecting connectedness. All four efficacy items averaged at least 2.98, and "I am good at helping students learn new things" had the highest item mean (3.23). Seven respondents supplied identical answers across all eight items; those complete and permissible response patterns were retained in the analysis. Internal-consistency coefficients were α = .864 for School Connectedness, .796 for Teaching Efficacy, and .852 for the overall score, providing support for consistency of the reported composite scores within this sample.

The descriptive pattern suggests positive but uneven workplace functioning rather than uniformly strong well-being. Renshaw (2020) conceptualized connectedness and efficacy as distinct dimensions of teacher well-being. Recent research has likewise associated teachers' well-being with the balance among job demands, organizational resources, and personal resources (Li et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2024). In a Philippine public-school context, Llemit et al. (2026) highlighted professional fulfillment alongside heavy work demands. These perspectives are compatible with the present finding that respondents expressed confidence in their instructional roles while reporting more qualified experiences of care and belonging at school.

For practice, the lower connectedness ratings directed attention to interpersonal support, equitable treatment, and opportunities for teachers to feel heard. Such measures would complement efforts to sustain instructional confidence; however, the descriptive survey alone could not identify which workplace conditions explained the difference between the two components.

3.3. Teaching Efficacy Significantly Exceeding School Connectedness

Research Question 3 addressed whether the two TSWQ components differed within the same 150 respondents. Because connectedness and efficacy were measured for each teacher in this dataset, a paired comparison was appropriate. The analysis reported the mean difference, 95% confidence interval, paired t-test, standardized effect size, and Wilcoxon signed-rank sensitivity test.

Teaching Efficacy exceeded School Connectedness by a mean of 0.275 points, 95% CI [0.169, 0.381], $t(149) = 5.130$, $p < .001$, $dz = 0.419$. The null hypothesis of no mean difference was rejected. Among the respondents, 92 reported higher efficacy scores, 39 reported higher connectedness scores, and 19 had equal scores. The Shapiro–Wilk result for the paired differences ($W = .980$, $p = .025$) indicated some departure from normality; consequently, the Wilcoxon signed-rank sensitivity test was also reported and supported the same directional conclusion ($W = 2{,}286$, $p < .001$). The convergence of the parametric and nonparametric results strengthened confidence in the observed within-sample difference without altering its substantive interpretation.

The result suggested that respondents found their personal teaching capability more consistently positive than their experience of attachment to the school community. It did not imply that connectedness was uniformly poor, as both mean scores remained within the Moderate (Often) response category, and individual patterns varied. This differentiation accords with the TSWQ framework, which treats teaching efficacy and school connectedness as related but separate domains (Renshaw, 2020), and with subsequent cross-national examination of the instrument's structure (Michael et al., 2025). It is also compatible with the role of personal competencies and resources in teacher well-being discussed by Zhou et al. (2024).

The practical interpretation is that efforts directed solely toward strengthening teaching competence may not address teachers' sense of belonging. Relationships, perceived fairness, and school-level support merit attention alongside professional development. These are interpretive priorities rather than tested explanations of the score difference. The interview findings in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 provide complementary accounts of the experiences that teachers associated with each domain.

3.4. Instructional Leadership Experienced as Support, Pressure, or Limited Influence

Research Question 4 explored how 18 interviewees described school-head practices that supported, strained, or had limited influence on school connectedness and teaching efficacy. The four comparative groupings used in the analysis arose from interview narratives rather than from matching individual interviewees to the separate questionnaire records. Five themes were identified: clear and participatory instructional direction, developmental versus compliance-focused supervision, relevant and equitable instructional support, protected teaching time and

manageable workload, and collegial support and professional agency. Participant identifiers were retained, and quoted statements represented the research team's de-identified English translations where applicable.

The first theme, clear and participatory instructional direction, distinguished the presence of school goals from the manner in which they were developed and communicated. Supportive direction was described by P1–P5, while goal-related pressure appeared in the accounts of P1, P2, P5, P7, and P15. Shifting priorities were mentioned by P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P16, and P17. P1 reported, "My school head explains instructional priorities clearly and asks teachers how the plan will work in our classes. That makes me feel included in the direction of the school." In contrast, P14 described how changing priorities generated uncertainty: "Instructional priorities often change and I am not always sure which task should come first. That makes me feel less secure and less connected." Accounts of overlapping deadlines (P1) and simultaneous performance indicators (P2) showed that the same general practice of goal-setting could be experienced as purposeful direction and additional pressure. Thus, the very high mission-setting rating in Section 3.1 described reported frequency but did not resolve differences in feasibility, participation, and emotional consequences.

The second theme, developmental versus compliance-focused supervision, emphasized the usefulness and tone of feedback rather than simply the occurrence of monitoring. Developmental supervision appeared in accounts from P1–P9, limited influence was reported by P10–P13, and strain was described by P14–P18. P1 stated, "After a classroom observation, the feedback focused on one strength and one area I could improve. I left the conversation feeling capable rather than judged." Other participants perceived monitoring differently. P14 stated that "Frequent monitoring feels compliance-driven and increases my anxiety about making mistakes," while P11 explained that "Classroom monitoring feels procedural, so I rely on self-reflection more than formal feedback." These contrasts are consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) interpretation that a supervisory practice may operate as a job resource when it develops capability, yet as a demand when it is experienced as burdensome or punitive (Bakker et al., 2023). The interview evidence supported attention to the specificity, respectfulness, and instructional usefulness of feedback rather than a purely frequency-based indicator of supervision.

The third theme, relevant and equitable instructional support, described the importance of professional learning and recognition that addressed actual instructional needs and were distributed fairly. Helpful support was voiced by P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, and P8, whereas poor fit or inequity was identified by P6, P15, and P17. P2 explained, "When I struggled with a new strategy, the school head arranged peer observation instead of simply telling me to improve." By comparison, P15 observed that "Professional learning is sometimes not connected to the difficulties I actually encounter in class," and P17 stated that "Recognition and opportunities sometimes seem uneven, which affects my sense of belonging." These accounts connected the content and distribution of support to both professional confidence and affiliation with colleagues. They also provided contextual meaning to the relatively lower ILPQ recognition items. Studies concerning leadership, school culture, and collaboration similarly underscore the relevance of organizational relationships and professional support (Liu et al., 2021; Gu et al., 2025).

The fourth theme, protected teaching time and manageable workload, appeared in accounts from P1, P2, P4, P6, P7, P8, P14, P16, and P18. Several interviewees described a gap between receiving useful leadership support and having sufficient time to act on it. P6 stated, “Feedback from observations is helpful, but I sometimes have little time to apply it because I move immediately to other duties.” P8 added, “Recognition helps emotionally, but protection of instructional time would make the biggest difference to my daily well-being.” Documentation, ancillary assignments, interruptions, and overlapping deadlines were described as limiting the benefits of otherwise positive interactions with school heads. Accordingly, workload-sensitive planning and protection of class time emerged as concrete conditions under which supportive leadership might become more usable rather than as outcomes established by the questionnaire data.

The fifth theme, collegial support and professional agency, identified other sources of confidence and belonging when formal instructional leadership was described as less influential. Alternative resources were emphasized by P10, P11, P12, and P13. P10 explained, “The school head gives limited instructional feedback, so most of my support comes from experienced colleagues.” P13 added, “I feel effective when I see learners improve, even if formal feedback is rare.” The contrasting case of P9 involved supportive leadership alongside lower reported well-being and strained peer relationships. This case cautioned against treating positive leadership experiences as sufficient for well-being in every setting. Literature on school culture, trust, and collaboration provides a relevant point of comparison (Gu et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2021), although the interviews did not establish causal or population-wide patterns.

Across the five themes, instructional leadership was interpreted through the accessibility, developmental character, fairness, and workload implications of school-head practices. The qualitative results broadened the meaning of the highly favorable ILPQ ratings by distinguishing practices that teachers experienced as beneficial from those perceived as demanding, uneven, or peripheral to their day-to-day functioning.

3.5. Work-Context Conditions Associated with Teachers’ Well-Being Experiences

Research Question 5 examined circumstances that interviewees identified as shaping their well-being alongside school-head practices. Six themes concerned workload, predictability and resources, collegial relationships, external requirements, family and travel responsibilities, and personal professional resources. These findings described perceived conditions rather than statistically estimated effects or measured predictors of well-being.

The first theme concerned workload and time pressure, which appeared across all 18 interview accounts. Participants described reporting duties, multiple deadlines, noninstructional activities, and additional responsibilities that could reduce the time available for lesson preparation and rest. P14 stated, “I carry several ancillary assignments and often complete paperwork after school.” P6 observed that “supportive leadership cannot remove all work and family demands,” while P10 discussed relying on familiar routines to manage obligations. These accounts align with the broader relationship between job demands and well-being discussed by Li et al. (2025). They also provide local context for discussions of administrative-duty implementation in Philippine schools (DepEd, 2024a; Testa & Delavin, 2025). The relevant implication is that the usability of instructional support depends partly on the demands competing for teachers’ time.

The second theme addressed predictability and resources. All interviewees referred to the value of predictable routines, availability of materials, or transparent use of scarce resources. P4 remarked, “Resources are limited but decisions about their use are transparent, which reduces frustration.” P15 described unequal access to materials as requiring additional preparation time, while P14 and P16 referred to changes in routines and expectations. The accounts suggested that predictability and transparent decision-making could make resource constraints more manageable, whereas frequent changes and uneven provision added practical burdens. This theme helped explain why general impressions of school-head support might not capture differences in everyday working conditions.

The third theme emphasized collegial climate and fairness. All 18 participants discussed collegial conditions, with contrasting accounts of peer assistance, tension, and shared overload. P10 called colleagues “the strongest reason I remain connected to the school,” while P17 noted that “perceived unfairness can create distance within the staff.” Conflict or unfairness was specifically identified in P9 and P17, while shared overload was reflected in P7, P14, P15, P16, and P18. These findings resonate with reports emphasizing collaboration and professional support in teachers’ well-being (Patrimonio & Laya, 2026; Llemit et al., 2026). They also provided a contextual interpretation of why the connectedness component of the TSWQ might be more sensitive to workplace relationships than teachers’ assessments of their own competence, without demonstrating that collegial climate produced the measured difference.

The fourth theme involved external and structural demands. Nine participants (P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, P15, P16, P17, and P18) identified pressures beyond the direct control of the school head, including division-level reporting, community activities, large classes, and learner needs. P8 stated, “Some reporting requirements come from outside the school and cannot simply be removed by the principal.” The accounts indicated the limitations of attributing teachers’ daily demands exclusively to school leadership. They supported considering district- and division-level implementation conditions when interpreting what individual school heads could reasonably change.

The fifth theme concerned family and commute demands. Twelve participants (P1, P2, P4, P6, P7, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, and P18) described caregiving, household responsibilities, transportation, travel time, or weather as influences on energy and concentration. P6 explained, “Caregiving responsibilities at home strongly affect my energy and are outside the principal’s control,” while P9 reported that “a long commute also adds fatigue.” These accounts are consistent with discussions of work–life demands in Philippine teachers’ well-being (Llemit et al., 2026). They qualified any interpretation that workplace leadership alone accounted for participants’ experiences.

The sixth theme highlighted experience and professional purpose. Participants P10, P11, P12, and P13 described experience, planning, autonomy, reflection, and meaningful learner progress as resources sustaining their professional functioning despite less supportive formal leadership. P10 stated, “Personal experience and confidence help me manage stress even when leadership support is limited,” while P13 emphasized “relationships and purpose rather than strong leadership experiences.” These narratives resembled the role of personal resources discussed by Zhou et al. (2024). They also offered context for the relatively higher teaching-efficacy scores

in the separate TSWQ sample while remaining interview-derived possibilities rather than matched explanations of those scores.

Viewed as a whole, the six themes portrayed teacher well-being as embedded in overlapping professional, interpersonal, structural, and personal conditions. The findings suggested that school-level initiatives could be more meaningful when coordinated with fair resource decisions, manageable schedules, peer support, and attention to demands that extended beyond the principal's control.

3.6. Integrated Interpretation of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Research Question 6 integrated the three survey-based questions with interview findings from Research Questions 4 and 5. The interpretation drew on aggregate leadership results (ILPQ, n = 152), aggregate well-being results (TSWQ, n = 150), and accounts from 18 interviewees. Because the two survey datasets were unlinked, and interviewees were not assigned to questionnaire-based score categories, the integration assessed convergence, expansion, and qualification at the level of patterns rather than individual-level statistical association.

First, the quantitative and qualitative evidence converged on the presence of instructional leadership activities. All three ILPQ dimensions were rated Very High (overall M = 4.640), and interviewees described goal-setting, supervision, and instructional support as recognizable features of school life. Nevertheless, the interviews qualified what frequency ratings could communicate. Clear and participatory direction contrasted with shifting expectations, developmental feedback contrasted with procedural monitoring, and supportive opportunities contrasted with perceived inequity. The strong concentration of ILPQ responses near the scale maximum, with 94.5% rated 4 or 5 and 27.0% selecting 5 across all 30 items, further reduced its ability to reflect such qualitative distinctions (Meier, 2022).

Second, the survey and interview strands converged on the practical relevance of recognition, dialogue, and protected teaching time. Although these practices remained in the Very High category, they appeared among the relatively lower ILPQ item means. Interviewees independently described fair recognition, actionable feedback, and manageable schedules as necessary for leadership practices to feel meaningful. In JD-R terms, a leadership action may be experienced as a resource when it helps teachers complete instructional work but as a demand when implementation introduces further reporting or time pressure (Bakker et al., 2023). This interpretation reflected the reported narratives rather than a measured causal pathway.

Third, the separate TSWQ sample showed Moderate well-being (M = 2.969) and significantly higher Teaching Efficacy (M = 3.107) than School Connectedness (M = 2.832), $t(149) = 5.130$, $p < .001$. Interviews expanded the descriptive picture by locating confidence in teaching experience, learner progress, and useful feedback while linking belonging to colleagues, fairness, and recognition. These accounts are compatible with literature on collaborative school culture and teacher outcomes (Liu et al., 2021; Gu et al., 2025; Hallinger et al., 2025). However, the sources of the observed subscale difference were not tested, and the TSWQ respondents could not be identified within the leadership-survey results.

A fourth integrative observation concerned the limits of school-level influence. Interviewees described documentation, resource constraints, division requirements, class and learner

demands, family responsibilities, and commuting as conditions surrounding their workplace functioning. These conditions offered contextual interpretations of moderate well-being in a setting where leadership practices were rated highly by a different respondent set. Related research has considered workload stress in leadership–teacher relationships (Chen & Yin, 2025), while Philippine administrative-duty policies and implementation discussions provide relevant institutional context (DepEd, 2024a, 2024b; Testa & Delavin, 2025). Neither the qualitative accounts nor the separate descriptive survey means could establish an individual-level leadership–well-being relationship, including the absence of such a relationship.

The integrated findings therefore supported a restrained conclusion: teachers reported frequent instructional leadership practices, while interview accounts emphasized how their usefulness depended on clarity, developmental feedback, equitable support, workload, and collegial conditions. These distinctions suggested priorities for Mlang North District, particularly the protection of instructional time, realistic scheduling, supportive supervision, and fair recognition. Future research using matched measures of leadership and well-being, along with further assessment of the ILPQ structure, would be needed to test the proposed relationships and determine whether the qualitative explanations generalized beyond the interviewed participants.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that school heads in Mlang North District demonstrated very high instructional leadership across the three assessed dimensions, particularly in defining the school mission, although teacher recognition, informal instructional dialogue, and protection of teaching time remained areas for improvement. In contrast, teachers reported moderate subjective well-being, with Teaching Efficacy significantly higher than School Connectedness, indicating stronger perceptions of professional competence than school belonging. Qualitative findings further emphasized the importance of clear communication, inclusive consultation, respectful feedback, manageable workloads, and supportive professional relationships. Teachers also identified organizational demands, available resources, personal responsibilities, and professional experiences as relevant conditions influencing their well-being. Collectively, the findings highlighted distinct patterns in instructional leadership and teacher well-being without establishing a direct statistical relationship between them. The study contributed contextual insights into school leadership practices and workplace conditions that merit attention in strengthening teachers' professional experiences and school connectedness.

School heads and the Schools Division Office should sustain effective instructional leadership practices while strengthening teacher recognition, professional dialogue, and protection of instructional time. Greater attention should be directed toward improving School Connectedness through inclusive decision-making, equitable distribution of responsibilities, structured peer support, and respectful professional relationships. Schools should regularly assess teacher well-being through confidential feedback mechanisms and review administrative workloads, reporting requirements, meeting schedules, and ancillary assignments in accordance with applicable Department of Education policies. Developmental supervision should emphasize constructive feedback, instructional coaching, relevant Learning Action Cell activities, and consultation before implementing major instructional changes. School administrators should also improve access to teaching resources, establish predictable schedules, and consider teachers' personal circumstances when assigning responsibilities. Future research should employ linked leadership and well-being assessments, strengthen instrument validation, and incorporate appropriate contextual variables to examine possible

relationships more comprehensively. Instructional leadership ratings should support professional development rather than individual performance ranking.

The study was limited by its cross-sectional, self-reported surveys, which restricted causal interpretation and introduced potential response bias. The instructional leadership and teacher well-being surveys involved separate, unlinked respondent groups, preventing individual-level correlation and regression analyses. Data collection phases partially overlapped, limiting the explanatory integration of quantitative and qualitative findings. The investigation covered 11 schools within one district, restricting broader generalizability. Additionally, the researcher-developed instructional leadership instrument had limited construct validation, concentrated ratings, and possible pilot participation overlap. Volunteer interviews and researcher-interpreted profiles also constrained qualitative comparisons. Future studies may address these limitations through linked assessments, stronger instrument validation, broader sampling, and more clearly sequenced research procedures.

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