

# Self-Efficacy as Mediating Mechanism to Instructional Leadership and Teaching Competence among Public Elementary School Teachers

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## Abstract

This study analyzed and determined the relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy to teaching competence. This study utilized a descriptive-correlational type of research. The study's respondents were 250 elementary teachers currently employed in 23 schools in the Sariaya West District, Division of Quezon. The study utilized an adapted questionnaire distributed through Google Forms for convenient distribution and data gathering. The findings revealed a very strong and statistically significant relationship between overall instructional leadership and overall teaching competence. Similarly, there was a very strong and statistically significant relationship between instructional leadership and overall teacher self-efficacy. Furthermore, the analysis showed a very strong and statistically significant relationship between overall self-efficacy and overall teaching competence. These results suggest that instructional leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing both teacher self-efficacy and teaching competence, while self-efficacy also significantly contributes to improving teaching competence.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that school leaders strengthen their instructional leadership practices by providing continuous professional development, mentoring, and support to teachers. Schools should also implement programs that enhance teacher self-efficacy, such as coaching, collaborative learning communities, and skills training. By doing so, teachers' confidence and competence in teaching can be further improved, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for learners.

**Keywords:** *Instructional Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Teaching Competence*

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## 1. Introduction

The importance of instructional leadership has gained prominence in worldwide educational reform and teacher effectiveness discussions. Through fostering an environment that encourages ongoing instructional development, school principals have the power to greatly impact student learning results and teacher quality, which is a feature of the education systems of the top-performing countries. Besides providing a conducive learning atmosphere, instructional leadership also involves the oversight and upgrading of curricular and teaching methods, as well as clear communication of school goals aimed at producing

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educational outcomes for all students (Hallinger et al., 2020; Qadach et al., 2020).

Studies show that the principal's role in effectively carrying out instructional leadership can have a positive effect on teacher motivation, performance, and instructional methods (Mayasari, 2021). Nevertheless, the principal's instructional leadership influence is mainly indirect, and the effect is through hidden variables that determine instructional quality. Teacher competence and self-efficacy are two factors that directly correlate with student achievement (Lauermann & ten Hagen, 2021).

Teaching competency is not simply defined as mastery of subject-matter; knowledge but as the dynamic integration of teaching skills, reflective practice, and classroom management skills. It is generally considered the cornerstone of effective teaching and a strong indicator of student achievement. Teachers who have high levels of and are more apt to be skilled at designing interesting learning environments. differentiate instruction for diverse learners, and use assessment strategies that foster deep and meaningful learning. At the same time, self-efficacy, defined as teachers' belief in their ability to perform professional tasks effectively, has become a critical psychological construct in educational research. Teachers who have high self-efficacy attitudes are more flexible, more open to new teaching methods, and have a greater dedication to students' success (Yuen et al., 2020; Rachmawati, 2022). Therefore, self-efficacy is increasingly being thought of as a mediating variable often shaped by influencing teachers' instructional behaviors and performance outcomes, external factors like leadership practices.

Instructional leadership, teaching, and self-efficacy competency are in a dynamic and mutually reinforcing relationship crucial to effective learning and teaching. Instructional leadership lays the groundwork for this link by creating a school environment that supports professional development, cooperation, and ingenuity. School leaders who intentionally communicate the school's mission, supervise the implementation of curriculum, and create a positive educational environment have a tendency to make teachers feel more confident and empowered in their teaching role (Hallinger & Wang, 2022). This positive climate of leadership increases teachers' sense of self-efficacy, which is their belief that they are confident that they can plan for, organize, and implement whatever it takes to achieve desired instructional results (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers with strong self-efficacy are more resilient, more open to new ideas, and more persistent in solving classroom problems, leading to higher teaching proficiency. Therefore, self-efficacy is an important psychological transition between the external impact of instructional leadership and the internal development of teaching ability (Gkolia et al., 2018). Collectively, these variables constitute an integrated platform in which successful leadership nurtures self-efficacy that is manifested later on by competent and influential teaching (Bandura, 1997; Hallinger et al., 2020; Qadach et al., 2020; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

In the Philippine setting, the significance of instructional leadership has become quite a great concern, primarily at public elementary schools, which are always running into problems such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and heavy administrative tasks. Instructional leadership focused on quality can be a great help in addressing these problems at a systemic level through giving power to teachers and building a culture of persistence in learning and growth. Very recent studies at the local level validate the positive connection between instructional leadership, teacher self-efficacy, and professional engagement. To give an example, San Roque and Valle (2025) disclosed that instructional supervision in Cagayan de Oro contributed to a positive change in the efficacy belief of teachers, especially in areas like classroom management and instructional strategies. Likewise, Baguio and Tagadiad (2023) discovered that instructional leadership and organizational socialization raised the self-efficacy of teachers in Davao del Norte. Further research results by Pelington et al. (2024) reveal that self-efficacy is very closely related to

professional development, teaching performance, and overall teaching competency, thereby highlighting the inspiring function of self-belief in effective teaching.

Despite the given information, very few studies in the Philippines have really tried to figure out how instructional leadership, teacher competence, and self-efficacy all work together in one framework. For instance, hardly any of them have examined self-efficacy as a mediator between instructional leadership and teaching competency. This is a very big issue in public elementary schools, where teacher effectiveness is the main factor in student learning outcomes.

That is why this research will measure the levels of instructional leadership, self-efficacy, and teaching competency of public elementary school teachers. Most of all, this study tries to solve the problem by finding out whether self-efficacy is a mediator between instructional leadership and teaching competency. The results are likely to be a wake-up call to policy reforms, teacher training, and leadership development in Philippine basic education through the enhancement of instructional quality. The present study, therefore, aims at contributing to the national and international discussions on effective school leadership and teacher professional growth by linking the local empirical evidence to the established theoretical bases.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Instructional Leadership**

Scholars and policymakers in education have regularly focused on instructional strategies and frameworks as a major concern to alleviate achievement gaps that continue to exist. Research results have also shown that a principal's leadership style and model of decision-making highly influence the overall performance of an institution. In addition, principals are best capable of leading the upskilling of teachers through the execution of evidence-based practices that are specifically crafted to narrow the gaps in academic achievement. This point of contact highlights the importance of studying how much the leadership of the administration has on student learning outcomes, especially in schools that are characterized by a disproportionately high number of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Sanchez and Watson (2021) revealed that the instructional leadership of principals in high-performing elementary schools was expressed through five interconnected domains: distributed leadership, data-informed communication, visible engagement with teaching and learning, raising academic expectations, and providing professional development support. These leaders strengthened teacher collaboration and enhanced instructional quality via formalized mechanisms such as collaborative goal setting, continuous performance monitoring, focused professional learning initiatives, and systematic classroom observation protocols. Their impact on student achievement was mostly secondary, coming through changes in teacher practices, the creation of cultures of high expectations, and the maintenance of a sustained focus on instruction. Apart from methodological weaknesses, such as the authors still supporting the idea that effective instructional leadership is built on a four-pronged framework covering goal setting, monitoring, communication, and professional development, they called for capacity-building programs aimed at principal competencies in these areas.

Similarly, Liu and Liao (2024) determined that China's national-level teacher leaders conceptualize instructional leadership as a tripartite construct: (a) personal commitment to pedagogical excellence, (b) cultivation of professional learning communities to facilitate collective instructional enhancement, and (c) active participation in regional and national education reform initiatives. Leadership enhancement was achieved through the application of research-informed pedagogical approaches, substantive engagement with peers, administrators, and policymakers, and strategic utilization of institutional resources to promote

continuous professional growth. This study contributed a context-sensitive instructional leadership paradigm and advanced practical strategies for fostering teacher leadership both domestically and internationally.

Pietsch et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analytical big-data synthesis to assess the relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement across diverse cultural and temporal contexts. Their findings revealed a positive yet context-dependent relationship, with stronger effects observed in centralized education systems characterized by rigorous accountability measures. The study underscored the significance of socio-cultural variables and temporal factors in shaping the efficacy of instructional leadership, calling for policy interventions and leadership training programs tailored to specific systemic conditions. By integrating extensive longitudinal and cross-national datasets, the authors established robust empirical evidence confirming the enduring but variable nature of instructional leadership's impact on academic achievement.

Further, Ahmad et al. (2024) examined the role of secondary school principals as instructional leaders and found that effective leaders engaged in strategic curriculum planning, rigorous classroom observation, structured teacher mentoring, and sustained professional development, all of which directly influenced instructional quality. These principals fostered collaborative school cultures, established explicit academic benchmarks, and employed data-driven decision-making frameworks to monitor learning outcomes and remediate performance gaps. The findings underscored the necessity of developing principals' instructional leadership competencies to improve academic results, particularly in resource-constrained and demographically diverse school environments.

Bellibaş et al. (2024) explored the relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement in UAE schools, emphasizing the mediating roles of teacher professional development and cognitively activating pedagogical practices. Their analysis demonstrated that principals who prioritized teacher capacity building, encouraged innovative instructional approaches, and cultivated professional collaboration created learning environments that enhanced instructional quality and improved student outcomes. The study concluded that leadership development initiatives focused on professional learning and cognitively engaging pedagogy represent critical mechanisms by which instructional leadership positively affects student achievement across varied educational contexts.

Don et al. (2018) reference in their paper Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model as the basis of their theory. According to this model, there are three major dimensions: one is **defining the school mission, another is managing the instructional program, and the third is promoting a positive school learning climate**. Furthermore, each dimension is made up of certain leadership behaviors. A case in point, setting clear goals for the institution is a collaborative endeavor involving teachers, parents, and the staff to arrive at the main priorities that conform to the school vision. The goals are subsequently communicated both formally and informally to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding.

## 2.2. Self-Efficacy

The way educators perceive their professional abilities, their level of instructional competence, and their teaching methods significantly influence student learning and the effectiveness of the classroom environment as a whole. We can see that teachers' self-efficacy is not only a crucial factor in how teachers approach their work but also in how they handle stress and derive job satisfaction. Moreover, teachers' belief in their competence is an extremely potent force in shaping the way they manage classrooms, deliver instruction effectively, and respond to various educational challenges.

Guider et al. (2025) investigated the link between self-efficacy and perceived stress among Moroccan teachers. They found that teachers who believed they could handle their teaching tasks well had

fewer stress symptoms from work, which means that confidence in one's teaching ability can serve as protection from burnout at the professional level. The major sources of stress were administration demands, handling difficult students, and heavy workload; however, teachers with high levels of self-efficacy were still able to cope with these stressors. Based on their findings, the researchers proposed that increasing teacher self-efficacy through focused training and institutional support is an effective strategy for reducing teachers' stress and improving teacher work performance and well-being in Moroccan schools.

Arabmofrad and Shakki (2024) explored the relationship among self-efficacy, emotion regulation, and perceived professional success of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers. They found a very strong positive correlation between these variables, demonstrating that those teachers who are believed to have a greater level of self-efficacy are also the ones who are capable of exerting better control over their emotions even in professional contexts and, consequently, exhibit a higher level of professional success. In fact, emotion regulation was a mediating variable, which indicates that self-efficacy affects professional performance not only directly but also indirectly through enhancing teachers' capacity to cope with stress during class and maintain good relations with others. Instructions on how to regulate teachers' reactions/feelings and boost their self-efficacy are effective methods/improvements that lead to increasing professional performance and job satisfaction of EFL teachers, the authors concluded.

Keka (2024) made a comparative study on the attitudes, perceptions, and self-efficacy of primary teachers in Slovenia and Kosovo about students with special educational needs (SEN). While teachers from the two countries, on the whole, exhibited positive attitudes toward inclusion, educators from Slovenia reported higher self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices as a result of their better training and institutional support. Conversely, teachers from Kosovo faced significant challenges as a result of limited resources and a lack of support. The authors thought that teacher training, professional development, and systemic support should be enhanced for the implementation of inclusion at a higher level in both countries.

The research focused on personality traits, perceived organizational support, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction as factors influencing teacher job performance. Conscientiousness and emotional stability were identified as strong predictors of performance among personality variables. Besides, perceived organizational support and self-efficacy exhibited a strong association with job satisfaction, which, in turn, experimentally proved to be a mediator of their positive effect on job performance. These results demonstrate that the key to improving both job satisfaction and performance lies in creating supportive teacher environments and enhancing teacher self-efficacy (Li et al., 2024).

Bandura (1997) noted that self-efficacy became a focal point in behavioral and organizational sciences only after it was first found in the physiological literature. He characterized perceived self-efficacy as a person's conviction in their capability to plan and effectively execute the actions necessary to deal with future situations. Self-efficacy is the perception individuals hold of their competence to carry out the actions needed to handle future scenarios. It results from four main sources: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Besides, Bandura insisted that self-efficacy, or the belief in one's actions required to achieve desired goals, entails the power to change; and therefore, achievement is intertwined with the behavioral and environmental factors explored in social cognitive theory. In the context of education, although knowledge and skills are the main ingredients to success, self-efficacy, or the belief that one can effectively apply those skills, usually determines the outcome of one's performance.

Self-efficacy is considered a major motivational contributor to acquiring skills, persisting, and maintaining psychological well-being. Those who possess a high level of self-efficacy are not only more willing to foresee success, but they also quite often envision positive results and devise strategies to battle

obstacles. Teachers with a high level of self-efficacy show more innovation, less disruptive behavior in the classroom, greater student motivation, and more effective parent/school communication, etc.

### **2.3. Teaching Competence**

Teachers' teaching competence, when examined through the lens of the PPST domains, plays a crucial role in assessing teacher effectiveness and raising the standard of education. For a start, being a good teacher means more than just knowing the subject matter thoroughly; it also entails having the competency to design, implement, and adjust teaching methodologies that foster student engagement, independent thinking, and problem-solving. Teaching competence is a multifaceted idea that is influenced by various factors such as professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, reflective practice, and external factors. To properly equip teachers for the ever-evolving needs of students and educational systems, this competence not only needs to be carefully evaluated but also requires continuous professional development.

Duong et al.'s (2023) long-term study followed the professional practices and sensemaking processes of teachers, with a focus on how teaching competencies were developed and used over time in the context of Vietnamese schools. One of the main results was that teachers very often alter the methods they use to fulfill the requirements arising from new curriculum reform, changes in policy, and socio-cultural pressures. Such change was guided by teachers' professional identity, the constraints of the context, and reflective practice. As a result, competence in teaching was considered a notion that is not only continuously evolving but also heavily dependent on factors within the education system as well as the personal features of teachers.

They found in Indonesia that the adversity quotient, rather than emotional intelligence, significantly predicted teachers' professional competence, which suggests that resilience plays an important role in effective teaching (Stoltz, 2000).

Teachers' personal competences, such as socio-emotional skills, communication, and self-regulation, are the main determinants of classroom climate and student learning, according to a review done by Molina-Moreno et al. (2024). They contend that continuous training of teachers is necessary to improve these competencies at all stages of a teacher's career.

Tran and O'Connor (2023) came to the conclusion that "teacher curriculum competence" means the capacity of teachers to engage in curriculum production by seeing, understanding, and responding to the needs of learning. Their results indicate that teachers' curriculum work is determined not only by their knowledge of the subject but also by their personal attitudes toward learning.

The development of 21st-century skills is strongly linked to teacher competence, as evidenced by experiments carried out by Sulaiman and Ismail (2020) in the Transformation Schools 2025 program in Malaysia. The pedagogy, ICT skills, and classroom management were identified as key elements of teacher competence for present-day education.

To create inclusive learning environments, teachers' emotional competence, including empathy, emotion regulation, and awareness, is a must, according to the review of Molina-Moreno et al. (2024). Emotional competencies contribute to classroom relationships and teacher well-being.

Teaching competence is most accurately defined as the holistic blending of different domains of practice rather than one single skill. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) delineates seven interconnected domains, content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages and professional engagement, and



personal growth and professional development, that together describe being an effective teacher and serve as sub-variables of effective teaching (Department of Education [DepEd], 2017).

The study by Malunes and Dioso (2020) was about the level of teaching competence of public elementary school teachers in Bacolod City during the 2019, 2020 school year and was guided by the PPST domains. Factors like educational attainment, teaching experience, and assessor designation were considered by the study, which revealed significant differences in PPST domains influenced by these variables.

This research not only developed and administered an assessment tool aligned with all seven PPST domains, but also analyzed results according to these seven PPST domains (Gepila, 2020). This framework-oriented assessment enabled the comprehension of teacher competencies in areas such as Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum Planning, Assessment and Reporting, Community Linkages, and Professional Growth.

The 2023 research conducted a competency check on pre-service teachers in Camarines Norte State College by employing survey instrument items derived from the seven PPST domains. The descriptive research design allowed the researchers to capture the extent of future teachers' compliance with the expectations set forth for areas such as Content Knowledge, Diversity of Learners, and Assessment and Reporting.

Besides that, Blömeke (2024) elaborated on the continuum model of teacher competence by defining professional expertise as a seamless and integrated continuum of intelligence, knowledge, skills, and behavior. This perspective emphasizes that teacher competence involves more than just the accumulation of knowledge; it also entails the cognitive and behavioral integration of professional skills throughout one's career. The model stresses the demand for comprehensive evaluation and training schemes that consider competence as multi-faceted and developmental, in contrast to static, while teacher performance is, by its nature, the adjustment to changing educational contexts.

In their research work, Wantoro et al. (2025) have developed a scientific approach module guided by a discovery-based approach to enhance students' problem-solving skills. The module, by promoting structured inquiry, reflective practice, and analytical reasoning, led students to conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking skills. Significant improvements in scientific reasoning, analytical abilities, problem-solving, and learning via guided discovery are indicated by the results.

Another thing, Isaeni et al. (2025) study identified the level of teachers' readiness in implementing the deep learning curriculum in Indonesian madrasahs, with the main focus on pedagogical preparedness, infrastructure, and systemic support. The survey outcomes indicated that the majority of the teachers were in favor of deep learning pedagogies, and they even expressed their keenness for integrating critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving into their teaching. However, some issues were highlighted, such as limited access to digital resources, untrained teachers in deep learning methods, and the inconsistency between the assessment systems and the goals of deep learning. When asked if they found it challenging to move from traditional content-driven teaching to student-centered learning, as the practices are still deeply rooted and there is a lack of support both at the school and institutional levels, teachers said that they indeed had difficulty. From their study, the researchers inferred that for a curriculum overhaul to be impactful, it would require thorough teacher training, alongside investment in the infrastructure and policies that are congruent with the innovative pedagogical practices.

#### **2.4 Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy in the Relationship Between Instructional Leadership and Teaching Competence**

Self-efficacy is a crucial psychological mediator through which instructional leadership influences teaching competence. Instructional leadership, defined by making clear instructional objectives, encouraging teachers' professional development, providing them with constructive feedback and establishing a positive school climate, raises teachers' beliefs in their own ability to teach effectively. Teachers who have high levels of self-efficacy are capable of running the classroom more efficiently, reaching out to different types of learners and launching the newest teaching techniques. Hence, besides having a direct impact on the quality of teaching, leadership styles also determine teachers' professional convictions that eventually lead to higher their level of instructional performance, pedagogical competence and student learning outcomes. Considering that self-efficacy plays a role of moderator in these relationships, therefore, indicates that psychological variables are crucial in amplifying leadership effects.

Sabouripour et al. (2021) investigated whether self-efficacy acts as a mediating factor in the relationship of optimism, psychological wellbeing, and resilience among Iranian university students. Results showed that optimism and psychological well-being were the main contributors to resilience, whereas self-efficacy only partially explained this relationship. High self-efficacy students were found to have more resilience and well-being, suggesting that one can enhance both one's adaptive capacity and psychological outcomes by elevating self-efficacy.

Besides, Gumus et al. (2022) researched the connection between the level of teacher self-efficacy and leadership capacity, with the focus on the mediating role of professional learning. The results showed that professional development had a great mediation effect on the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and leadership potential. Those teachers who participated actively in collaborative professional learning as well as being part of school decision-making showed greater instructional confidence thus emphasizing that professional development is an effective tool to continue the link between self-efficacy and leadership capacity.

Siriparp et. al (2022) further carried out research to study the impacts of principal instructional leadership, collective teacher efficacy, and teacher roles on teacher self-efficacy. The research discovered a positive link between instructional leadership and teacher self-efficacy, collective teacher efficacy was found as a mediator between the two, however, teacher roles moderated this mediating effect. Such results indicate that leadership strategies both enhancing group efficacy and supportive role structures are vital in boosting teacher confidence and effectiveness in teaching.

Nguyen et. al (2020) studied the effects of instructional and distributed leadership on teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. They looked at supportive school culture and teacher collaboration as mediators. They found that both leadership styles indirectly helped teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction by enabling organizational climates that were supportive and the practice of collaboration. Their research pointed out that shared leadership and a positive school atmosphere are the main elements in strengthening teacher confidence and professional satisfaction.



Meyer et. al (2020) analyzed the links between principal leadership and teacher collaboration. They paid special attention to teacher collective efficacy as a mediator of the relationship. The study results showed that leadership actions that were focused on trust establishment, consistent teaching support, and sharing the vision increased teacher collaboration which happened mostly due to teacher beliefs in their collective efficacy. The paper ends by saying that culture of collaborative teaching is under strong leadership control and that shared teacher's efficacy plays a role.

Coban et al. (2020) examined the relationships between trust in a principal, a leader's instructional focus, and teacher collaboration and self-efficacy through multilevel mediation analysis in a teacher sample. Results showed significant relationships between trust in principal and teacher collaboration, and teacher self-efficacy, with instructional focus being an important mediator. The article suggested that developing trust and instructional leadership are some of the main strategies for creating collaborative school environments and boosting teacher confidence.

## 2.5 Synthesis

Instructional leadership is key to not only raising instructional quality but also driving the overall academic success of a school. Principals who are committed to curriculum oversight, goal setting, facilitating teacher development, and data-driven decision making, are among the few who still succeed in creating more effective learning environments across a wide spectrum of school contexts. Apart from increasing teacher effectiveness, these leadership strategies also produce an atmosphere that fosters collaboration and high performance, thereby resulting in students' academic achievement. (Sanchez & Watson, 2021; Liu & Liao, 2024; Pietsch et al., 2024). Additional studies conducted in different countries like China, the United Arab Emirates, and secondary schools of Pakistan show that principals who devote most of their time to teacher mentoring and staff participation in the learning process are more likely to create supportive professional environments, which in turn lead to better academic results (Ahmad et al., 2024; Bellibaş et al., 2024). On the whole, the combined findings indicate that instructional leadership yields the best results when it is supported by systems, professional learning communities, and cognitively challenging pedagogies, which not only address contextual matters but also foster equitable student success.

Partly together with school management, teacher self-efficacy stands out as one of the critical psychological components determining the quality of teaching, classroom management, and teachers' mental well-being. For example, teachers who are highly self-confident in their abilities, among other things, are better capable of controlling their emotions; they are usually more resilient, open to experimenting with new ways of instruction, and finally, they consider their work more fulfilling (Guider et al., 2025; Arabmofrad & Shakki, 2024). Similarly, teacher self-efficacy is significantly fostered by professional development programs and a supportive organizational culture which, in turn, lead to less teacher stress and more motivation (Greenquist-Marlett et al., 2024; Keka, 2024). Moreover, the association of teacher self-efficacy with personality traits like conscientiousness, coupled with the availability of support systems in the school, imply that the trust of teachers in their teaching skills serves as a mediator of the relationship between working conditions and teacher performance (Li et al., 2025). Therefore, these different pieces of research together present self-efficacy as not only a psychological advantage but also as a potent instrument

for bringing about instructional change and increasing teaching effectiveness.

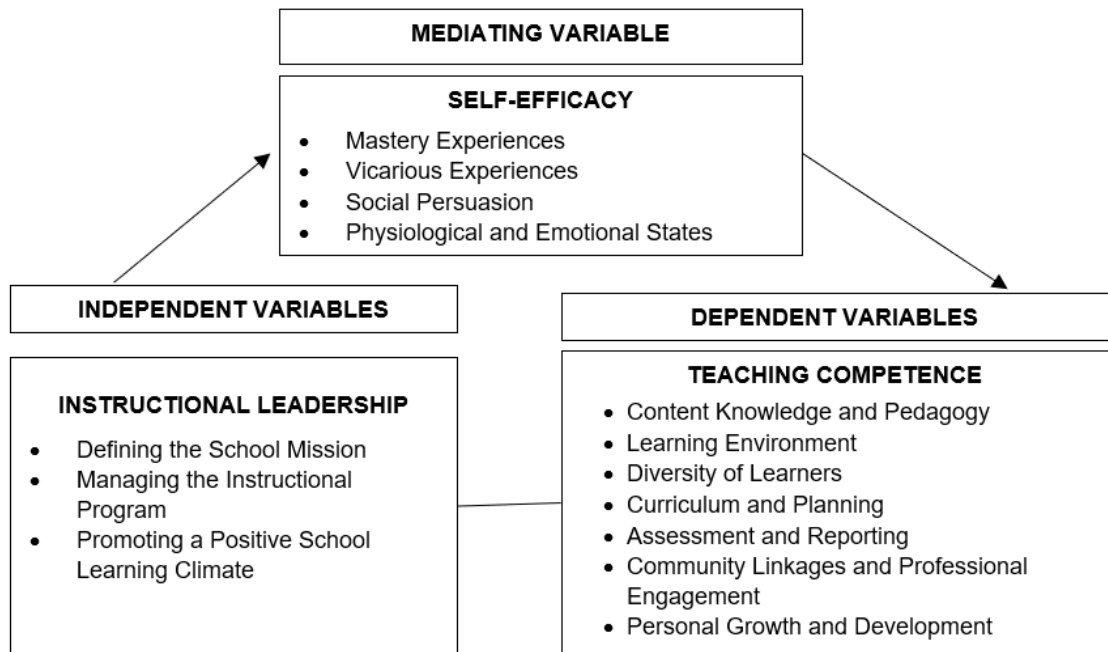
Among the various facets of teaching expertise, teaching skill, pedagogical knowledge, and reflective practice, all of which require a deep understanding of the subject matter and the ability to adapt teaching methods to suit the diverse needs of students, mainly revolve around the dependence on the immediate environment, thus, be situation-bound, and a never-ending process as well. A number of studies that have relied on cross-sectional as well as longitudinal data and have been published so far, have shown that the level of teacher competency, which is largely affected by curriculum reforms, policy changes, and professional development, is one of the factors that also determines the final results of the assessments (Duong et al., 2023; Blömeke, 2024). Studies on competence assessment also reveal that teachers who have are familiar with guided discovery learning, self-regulated learning methods, and have regular support for deep learning curricula, tend to show professional growth and be more effective (Wantoro et al., 2025; Isnaeni et al., 2025). On the other hand, teacher performance is influenced by professional competence, among other things, such as effective communication, satisfaction from the job, and the conditions of the work environment (Hariyasasti & Purwanto, 2025). For this reason, the above findings indicate that competence is a multi-dimensional concept that is externally affected by the acquisition of knowledge, development of skills, and factors of the environment, but at the same time internally driven by evaluation and professional support that are continuously carried out.

Self-efficacy has been demonstrated to be a mediating variable between instructional leadership and teaching competency. Leadership techniques that focus on the clarification of focal points, professional collaboration, capacity building, and trust growth can not only increase teachers' self-efficacy in teaching but also improve their pedagogical knowledge and teaching performance (Sabouripour et al., 2021; Gumus et al., 2022; Siriparp et al., 2022). Mediation analysis of data indicates leadership influences are increased when they are embedded within collaborative school cultures, the collective efficacy beliefs, and the availability of excellent professional development programs (Nguyen et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2020; Coban et al., 2020). The main point of these findings is that leadership strategies that simultaneously create corporate culture, enhance teacher cooperation, and develop both individual and collective efficacy, ultimately leading to the continual improvement of instructional competence, are very important and desired.

As such, the study identifies the mutually dependent relationship of instructional leadership, teacher self-efficacy, and teaching competency in public primary schools. Earth-wide explorations have exhaustively treated these three variables, however the knowledge of their interlinkages in local educational systems characterized by resource constraints and policy changes remains only scanty. This study is motivated by filling in the gap through the survey of the effect of instructional leadership on teaching competency as mediated by teacher self-efficacy. The intention of the study is to shed light on the way the dynamics of leadership may serve to empower teachers to enhance their instructional methods and, thus, lead to better student learning."

### 3. Research Paradigm

The figure below explains the relationship between the independent, dependent and mediating variables. The independent variable consisted of the dimensions of instructional leadership: defining the school mission, managing instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. The study's dependent variables involve teaching competence consisting of content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages and professional engagement and personal growth and development. The mediating variable consisted of self-efficacy involving mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, physiological and emotional states.



### 4. Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study at a 0.05 level of significance:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competence.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and teaching competence.

H<sub>04</sub>: Self-efficacy does not significantly mediate the relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competence.

### 5. Methodology

The research design of this work was descriptive-correlational, which is the best way to figure out how instructional leadership and teacher competency are related and at the same time observe the role of teacher self-efficacy in this relationship among public elementary school teachers in Sariaya West District.

The study involved a group of 250 public elementary school teachers from the Sariaya West District, Quezon Province, Philippines. They were mostly the teachers who physically conducted classes during the academic year, and they represented various grade levels and types of schools within the district. The choice of public elementary school teachers was a deliberate one because these teachers are the main agents of basic education and their performance at work is tightly connected to the type of instructional leadership in their schools. As the main educational providers, their views on how various leadership styles affect their self-efficacy and teaching competence are invaluable.

The researchers used stratified random sampling as the method of selecting a sample of whom to study. They wanted to make sure the sample would be representative of the diversity of the Sariaya West District schools. In each type of school, some teachers were randomly chosen to do the study. This is a good method to reduce sampling bias and to get each type of educational context proportionally represented.

The main tool used for gathering data was a modified survey questionnaire.

The researcher used an adapted survey questionnaire instrument based on the variables included in her study. The questionnaire is divided into four parts.

To ensure the instrument's quality, it underwent multiple layers of validation and reliability testing. It was reviewed by the research adviser, panel members, and expert educators—including master teachers and a language specialist from the district. A pilot test was conducted with 15 public school teachers outside the target district. The internal consistency of each subscale was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with all values exceeding .90, indicating excellent reliability across all dimensions.

Before implementation, the researcher secured the necessary permissions from the Schools Division Superintendent and school principals. The survey was distributed digitally through Google Forms, allowing for efficient and timely data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no personally identifying information was collected.

After data collection, responses were carefully organized and forwarded to the university's statistics center, where a licensed statistician conducted the analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to summarize teachers' responses, while Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to assess the relationships between variables.

Throughout the study, the researcher upheld strict ethical considerations, ensuring that the dignity, rights, and privacy of the respondents were respected. All data were used exclusively for academic purposes and were handled with utmost care to avoid any misuse or misrepresentation. This rigorous methodology was designed not only to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings but also to reflect a deep respect for the voices and experiences of the teachers involved.

## **6. Results**

### **Test of the significant relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competence**

**Table 1**
*Test of Significant Relationship between Instructional Leadership and Teaching Competence*

| Instructional Leadership                    | Teaching Competence          |                      |                       |                       |                        |                    |                                            |                      |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                             | Content Knowledge & Pedagogy | Learning Environment | Diversity of Learners | Curriculum & Planning | Assessment & Reporting | Community Linkages | Personal Growth & Professional Development | Teaching Performance |
| <b>Defining the School Mission</b>          | .744**                       | .712**               | .739**                | .742**                | .773**                 | .767**             | .733**                                     | .783**               |
| <b>Managing the Instructional Program</b>   | .699**                       | .699**               | .711**                | .736**                | .713**                 | .687**             | .692**                                     | .750**               |
| <b>Promoting a Positive School Learning</b> | .748**                       | .732**               | .781**                | .746**                | .763**                 | .742**             | .731**                                     | .794**               |
| <b>Overall</b>                              | .775**                       | .759**               | .790**                | .787**                | .796**                 | .777**             | .763**                                     | .824**               |

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Verbal Interpretation of r-value: +1.0 Perfect positive +/- association +0.8 to +1.0 Very strong +/- association +0.6 to +0.8 Strong +/- association +0.4 to +0.6 Moderate +/- association +0.2 to +0.4 Weak +/- association 0.0 to +0.2 Very weak +/- or no association

Pearson r analysis results showed a very strong and highly significant relationship between overall instructional leadership and overall teaching competence, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient  $r = .824$ ,  $p = .000$ . This means teachers working under school heads who show high levels of instructional leadership are likely to be more competent in the pedagogical, curricular, assessment, and professional fields.

A very strong positive correlation ( $r > .80$ ) shows that changes in instructional leadership, to be specific, defining the school mission, managing instructional programs, and promoting a positive learning climate, are very much related to changes in teacher performance. The level of significance ( $p < .01$ ) additionally shows that this relationship is not just due to chance, which underlines the very significant impact leadership behaviors can have on professional teaching practices.

These results are in line with leadership theories that argue that effective instructional leaders create a suitable environment where teachers are always given advice, support, and resources necessary for them to be able to improve their teaching and professional skills. This adds to the point that a principal's role is not just administrative but is directly responsible for the quality of teaching and school effectiveness.

Among the different aspects of instructional leadership, fostering a positive learning environment was the one that had the highest correlation with the teaching competence domains. The correlation coefficients for each one are: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy:  $r = .748$ , Learning Environment:  $r = .732$ , Diversity of Learners:  $r = .781$ , Curriculum and Planning:  $r = .746$ , Assessment and Reporting:  $r = .763$ , Community Linkages:  $r = .742$ , and Personal Growth and Professional Development:  $r = .731$ .

All correlations are within the range of a strong positive relationship (.70.79) and are significant at the level  $p < .01$ . This means that when school leaders can establish strong, supportive, and motivating collaborative environments, teachers can demonstrate their competencies in all the areas of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

High levels of trust, encouragement, common norms, and emotional safety, which characterize a positive learning climate, most likely help teachers to better interact with the content, handle classrooms more

efficiently, respond to learner diversity, and participate in reflective professional development. This is in line with many research works that have documented the instrumental role of organizational climate in enhancing both instructional quality and teacher motivation.

According to this study, when school leaders are able to create environments that are supportive, motivating, and collaborative, teachers will be competent in the domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). A positive learning environment made up of trust, encouragement, shared norms, and emotional safety gives teachers the confidence to improve their ability to deliver content, manage classrooms, respond to learner diversity, and pursue professional growth.

Previous research also supports this notion. Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model suggests that focusing on mission clarity, instructional guidance, and school atmosphere can significantly improve teaching quality. Similarly, Villa and Tulod (2021) and Wahab et al. (2020) have reported very strong positive correlations between instructional leadership and teacher competence or achievement. Besides, the studies of Abdullah and Amponsah (2021) and Jannah et al. (2023) have demonstrated that a supportive school climate motivating teachers leads to greater instructional efficacy.

In sum, current results back up previous research that instructional leadership determines teacher competence. These strong relationships show that an effective school leader goes beyond administrative functions and is the central figure in teacher development, instructional quality, and overall school success.

**Table 2**

*Test of Significant Relationship between Instructional Leadership and Self-Efficacy*

| Instructional Leadership              | Self-Efficacy      |                      |                   |                                    | Overall Self-Efficacy |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                       | Mastery Experience | Vicarious Experience | Social Persuasion | Physiological and Emotional States |                       |
| Defining the School Mission           | .755**             | .735**               | .716**            | .658**                             | .771**                |
| Managing the Instructional Program    | .707**             | .687**               | .663**            | .660**                             | .732**                |
| Promoting a Positive Learning Climate | .755**             | .745**               | .713**            | .654**                             | .772**                |
| Overall Instructional Leadership      | .785**             | .767**               | .740**            | .698**                             | .805**                |

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Verbal Interpretation of r-value: +1.0 Perfect positive +/- association +0.8 to +1.0 Very strong +/- association +0.6 to +0.8 Strong +/- association +0.4 to +0.6 Moderate +/- association +0.2 to +0.4 Weak +/- association 0.0 to +0.2 Very weak +/- or no association

This number would imply that if instructional leadership practices are enhanced, teachers' trust in their own professional abilities will be increased to the same extent. The exceptionally strong positive correlation ( $r > .80$ ) means that changes in self-efficacy are quite dependent on the quality of leadership



provided by the school heads. Besides that, the level of significance ( $p < .01$ ) indicates that the chance of this relationship happening randomly is very small, which means that the results are dependable.

Actually, these stats also fit the pattern we have seen in the other aspects (self-efficacy, mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states) that all had strong, positive, and significant correlations with the main areas of instructional leadership. Overall, these findings suggest that when leaders articulate clear visions, provide well-managed instructional programs, and foster a positive and supportive learning environment, teachers' belief in their ability to lead instructional activities, address student problems, and perform their professional responsibilities effectively is greatly enhanced.

The empirical data thus support the existing literature on leadership and the psychology of motivation. The idea of self-efficacy by Bandura highlights the fact that human beings develop very strong efficacy beliefs when they are in a supportive environment, receiving encouraging feedback, and having the chance to improve their skills; these things are primarily under the control of school leaders. Therefore, instructional leadership, in addition to directing school organizations, also psychologically empowers teachers who are the key to endless instructional improvement.

Self-efficacy, in general, mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states all have strong, direct, and highly significant correlations with various components of instructional leadership. The findings highlight the fact that teachers' trust in themselves to perform instructional tasks, satisfy learners' needs, and fulfill professional responsibilities is boosted when leaders clearly communicate the school mission, manage instructional programs in a systematic way, and promote a conducive learning atmosphere.

The results have strong backing in the literature.

A key part of Bandura's (1977, 1997) social cognitive theory is the idea that self-efficacy is enhanced by the four major sources, namely: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states, which are all influenced by leadership through changes in the environment. The findings were in line with Özdemir, Sahin, and Öztürk's (2020) assertion that principals' instructional leadership modalities significantly shape teachers' self-efficacy perceptions. Similarly, Herawati and Tjahjono (2020) verified that instructional leadership could effectively enhance teachers' professional skills via self-efficacy, which acts as a mediating variable. Thien and Liu (2024) emphasized the importance of instructional leadership by saying that it fortifies teacher learning through the nurturing of psychological factors, including efficacy beliefs.

Besides this, the results are in line with Wang et al. (2025), who noted that setting clear academic priorities leads to changing instructional quality through teacher-related psychological factors. Taken together, these studies back up the current conclusion that instructional leadership is not only about administrative coordination but also has a direct effect on teachers' psychological empowerment.

From the discussion above, it is possible to draw a conclusion that self-efficacy is a factor that connects leadership to performance. Because self-efficacy is a predictor of classroom effectiveness, persistence, motivation, and instructional decision-making, our very strong correlation ( $r = .805$ ) means that leadership brings about improvements in teachers' performance indirectly by making teachers more confident and giving them a sense of professional agency.

In general, the findings provide more evidence to support the arguments made by both researchers

and theorists that not only does effective instructional leadership determine the direction of the school but also creates psychological conditions that are conducive to high-quality teaching. Thus, focusing on improving leadership skills should be continuously seen as one of the main steps in raising teacher efficacy, instructional effectiveness, and overall school performance.

**Table 3***Test of Significant Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Teaching Competence*

| Self-Efficacy                      | Teaching Competence                      |                       |                       |                        |                    |                         |                        |        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------|
|                                    | Content Knowledge & Learning Environment | Diversity of Learners | Curriculum & Planning | Assessment & Reporting | Community Linkages | Personal Growth & Devt. | Overall Teaching Perf. |        |
| Mastery Experience                 | .733**                                   | .750**                | .770**                | .746**                 | .737**             | .717**                  | .668**                 | .777** |
| Vicarious Experience               | .737**                                   | .755**                | .771**                | .787**                 | .758**             | .725**                  | .719**                 | .799** |
| Social Persuasion                  | .754**                                   | .752**                | .778**                | .745**                 | .763**             | .730**                  | .705**                 | .793** |
| Physiological and Emotional States | .693**                                   | .691**                | .692**                | .679**                 | .655**             | .632**                  | .641**                 | .715** |
| Overall Self-Efficacy              | .786**                                   | .794**                | .811**                | .797**                 | .785**             | .755**                  | .737**                 | .831** |

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Verbal Interpretation of r-value: +1.0 Perfect positive +/- association +0.8 to +1.0 Very strong +/- association +0.6 to +0.8 Strong +/- association +0.4 to +0.6 Moderate +/- association +0.2 to +0.4 Weak +/- association 0.0 to +0.2 Very weak +/- or no association

This very strong positive association ( $r > .80$ ) suggests that teachers who possess higher confidence in their professional capabilities also tend to demonstrate higher levels of competence across all domains of teaching. The significance level ( $p < .01$ ) confirms that this relationship is not due to chance, establishing the robustness of the findings.

Across all dimensions, mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states showed strong to very strong positive correlations with the domains of teaching competence. Out of these variables, overall self-efficacy had very high correlations with learning environment ( $r = .811$ ), curriculum and planning ( $r = .797$ ), and assessment and reporting ( $r = .785$ ), implying that teachers' confidence plays a major role in their instructional decision-making, management of the classroom, assessment, and professional engagement.

The evidence provided here is well supported by the literature. Bandura (1977, 1997), in his social cognitive theory, points out that self-efficacy influences performance through changes in effort, persistence, motivation, and resilience. The results correspond to the study of Guider et al. (2025), that assert that teachers with strong self-confidence experience less stress and have better teaching effectiveness. Similarly, Li et al. (2025) revealed that self-efficacy is a key element of work performance and professional behavior. Besides, Arabmofrad and Shakki (2024) have highlighted that teachers who have a high level of trust in their capabilities are more successful in their careers and deliver better quality teaching.

Besides that, Widodo et al. (2022) and Molina-Moreno et al. (2024) stated that psychological tools such as confidence and emotional regulation are essential indicators of teaching competency and effectiveness

in the classroom. These works jointly corroborate the current result that self-efficacy plays an important role in professional teaching performance.

Altogether, the very high correlation ( $r = .831$ ,  $p = .000$ ) goes even further in re-emphasizing that self-efficacy is not just a personal belief but an impactful indicator of real teaching competence. The findings are supportive of both theoretical and empirical assertions that enhancing teachers' confidence, emotional stability, and belief systems can lead to significant improvements in instructional quality and overall educational results.

**Table 4**

*Test of the Significant Mediating Effect of Self-Efficacy on Instructional Leadership and Teaching Competence*

| Effect                                 | Beta  | Std Error | 95% ci |       | Z     | P     | Mediation | Conclusion  |
|----------------------------------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------------|
|                                        |       |           | Lower  | Upper |       |       |           |             |
| <b>Indirect</b><br><i>IL → SE → TC</i> | 0.387 | 0.046     | 0.297  | 0.477 | 8.410 | <.001 | 46.6      | Significant |
| <b>Direct</b><br><i>IL → TC</i>        | 0.443 | 0.053     | 0.340  | 0.547 | 8.420 | <.001 | 53.4      | Significant |
| <b>Total</b><br><i>IL → TC</i>         | 0.831 | 0.036     | 0.760  | 0.901 | 23.06 | <.001 | 100.0     | Significant |

*Note: Significant if  $p < 0.05$ ; SE=Self-Efficacy, IL=Instructional Leadership, TC=Teaching Competence*

The mediation results suggest that self-efficacy mediates about 50% of the influence of instructional leadership on teaching competence (partial mediation). However, the authors also revealed that leadership still has a large direct effect on competence even when the influence of self-efficacy is taken into account, which means that the effects are not fully explained by the mediator. Since both  $a \times b$  and  $c'$  are positive and significant, this mediation pattern is complementary (partial) mediation: leadership effects on competence are mediated by teachers' self-beliefs but also occur via other routes (e.g., creation of a clear mission, instructional support, resource alignment).

The Mediation role of self-efficacy in the relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competency has been corroborated by a lot of studies both locally and internationally. One of the major factors identified for the improvement of teacher performance is teacher self-efficacy. In fact, instruction delivery and classroom management are the two areas most influenced by teacher self-efficacy. Leadership practices in schools have been pinpointed as one of the top influencing factors of teachers' work performance in the Philippines (Baluyos et al., 2019; Corpuz, 2018). Likewise, international studies have revealed that instructional leadership enhances teachers' self-efficacy by exposing them to professional development, supervision, and support (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Duyar et al., 2013). Apart from that, teachers who possess a higher level of self-efficacy not only adopt more powerful instructional strategies, but they also display a greater level of persistence and better classroom practices. Therefore, self-efficacy has been one of the key determinants of teaching effectiveness (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Furthermore, it was revealed that instructional leadership is a significant mediating variable because, through self-efficacy, it indirectly impacts teacher outcomes (Hallinger et al., 2018). All these findings underscore self-efficacy as a chief psychological mechanism by which instructional leadership results in enhanced teaching competency.

## 7. Conclusion

From the summary of findings, the following conclusions are hereby presented by the researcher.

1. The hypothesis indicating that there is no significant relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competence is not supported. It implies that there was a significant relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competence.

2. The hypothesis showing that there is no significant relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy is not supported. It suggests that there was a significant relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy.

3. The hypothesis proposing that there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and teaching competence is not supported. It signifies that there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and teaching competence.

4. The hypothesis that self-efficacy does not significantly mediate the relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competence is disproved. In other words, self-efficacy does indeed mediate the relationship between instructional leadership and teaching competence significantly.

## **8. Recommendations**

Drawing upon the results and the closing remarks of this research, here are the suggestions:

1. According to the study, Elementary teachers view efficacy as the main factor that leads to teaching competence. Teachers are expected to raise their level of efficacy by attending training, reflecting on their work, and working in teams. Teachers should undertake more mastery experiences, try peer observation, and respond positively to feedback. In addition, it is crucial to develop emotional regulation and resilience that will help in maintaining one's professional effectiveness even in difficult situations.

2. It is suggested that school heads and administrators enhance their instructional leadership by establishing a positive learning atmosphere within the school, having a firm grasp of the instructional programs, and clearly communicating the school's mission. They should be equipped to offer teachers a combination of supervision, feedback, mentoring, and professional development sessions so as to raise the teachers' self-efficacy. Among such measures, the creation of a supportive and collaborative environment stands out as the most effective way of empowering teachers. Leadership development should target those skills that, at the same time, build up teachers' confidence and improve the quality of instruction.

3. Those responsible for educational policies should think of generating policies that not only improve instructional leadership but also lead to teacher empowerment. Leadership courses must prioritize the development of leaders' administrative capabilities such that they can raise teachers' beliefs in their own effectiveness. That's why regular counseling, teacher skill upgrading, and teacher participation in professional learning communities are very important. Teachers' assessment systems can be designed mainly for support rather than to ensure rigid compliance. Mixing leadership with teaching is likely to result in raising the standards of teaching and, consequently, enhancing students' performance.

4. Future studies may explore other hidden variables that have a greater impact on instructional leadership and teaching competence. For example, organizational culture, teacher motivation, job satisfaction, etc., are potential areas to investigate. Longitudinal studies show the potential to capture changes over time, and carrying out this research at various educational levels is bound to increase the representativeness of the findings. Qualitative methods are most ideal to explore teachers' attitudes towards leadership and how it shapes their professional identities and teaching practices.

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