

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TEACHER COMPETENCY GROWTH

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Abstract

This study examined how professional development (PD) leadership influences teacher competency growth in public schools. Grounded in instructional leadership theory, the research explored how school leaders' practices - such as mentoring, coaching, instructional feedback, and collaborative learning structures - shape teachers' professional learning and classroom effectiveness. The study addressed the need to understand whether leadership engagement in PD translates into measurable improvements in teachers' instructional practices, classroom management, and reflective teaching. A descriptive-correlational design was employed involving 150 teachers from three public schools (elementary, junior high, and senior high). Data were gathered through a validated survey consisting of a Leadership Practices Scale and a Teacher Competency Scale. Reliability testing yielded Cronbach's alpha values above .80 for both instruments. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression to determine the relationship between leadership practices and teacher competency growth. Findings revealed moderate to high levels of leadership support for PD, particularly through mentoring, coaching, collaborative planning, and instructional observation with feedback. Teachers reported noticeable improvements in instructional delivery, classroom management, and reflective practices. Statistical analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between PD leadership and teacher competency growth ($r = 0.59, p < 0.01$), with leadership practices explaining a substantial proportion of variance in competency outcomes. However, barriers such as time constraints, heavy workload, and limited resources were identified as challenges to sustained PD engagement. The study concludes that professional development leadership is a significant predictor of teacher competency growth. School leaders who prioritize structured, collaborative, and reflective PD environments contribute meaningfully to enhancing teacher performance and instructional quality.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership, Professional Development, Teacher Competency, Mentoring and Coaching, Professional Learning Communities.

Introduction

Teacher quality is a foundational factor in achieving improved learning outcomes in educational systems worldwide. Effective professional development (PD) has been identified as a crucial mechanism for improving teacher competency, while leadership within schools plays a critical role in shaping and sustaining professional growth opportunities (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, as cited in related research). Leadership that prioritizes continuous professional learning can directly influence teachers' capacity to refine instructional practices, adapt to curricular changes, and engage with students effectively.

In the context of evolving academic demands, leaders in education must not only manage administrative functions but also foster environments that promote continuous PD. Instructional leadership and school management practices are recognized as influential in enabling professional development that leads to teacher competency enhancement (Acuña & Ancho, 2021). The core premise of this study is that leadership practices within educational institutions significantly affect the growth of teacher competencies.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to investigate how the professional

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development leadership influences teacher competency growth. Specifically, it addresses the following questions:

1. What leadership practices are implemented to support professional development?
2. How do these leadership strategies relate to measurable growth in teacher competency?
3. What barriers exist that impede the effectiveness of professional development leadership?

Significance of the Study

Findings from this research will provide school administrators, policymakers, and educational leaders with evidence on the importance of leadership involvement in PD programs and how strategic leadership practices enhance teacher competencies, ultimately improving learning outcomes.

Review of Related Literature

Leadership in schools has been widely associated with teacher development outcomes. Research by Kristiani et al. (n.d.) highlights a strong correlation between instructional leadership, professional development, and teacher competency results, demonstrating that leadership orientation significantly influences work motivation and competency acquisition among teachers. (Tutik, 2020).

In a similar vein, studies focusing on Professional Learning Communities (PLC) show that collaborative leadership and structured support significantly predict teacher leadership competency, underscoring the importance of an environment conducive to shared learning and reflective practice. (Nelikan, 2023)

In the Philippines, research has examined school leadership innovations and their role in PD during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings revealed that principals who quickly adapted and reimagined professional development initiatives improved teachers' adaptive instructional competencies during a sudden shift to remote modalities. (Acuña, 2022)

Moreover, Esguerra and Quinito (2025) reported that teachers perceive professional development as highly effective in fostering instructional practice improvements, job satisfaction, and professional growth - all areas directly linked to guidance and support from school leadership. (Esguerra, 2025)

Collectively, these works suggest that leadership practices not only enable access to development opportunities but also shape the quality and

outcomes of those opportunities, which in turn contribute to teacher competency growth.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design, which allows examination of relationships between leadership practices related to PD and teacher competency growth. Data were collected using structured questionnaires with validated constructs adapted from existing studies on instructional leadership and teacher competency scales.

Population and Sampling

Participants were drawn from three public schools within a defined school division area: one elementary, one junior high, and one senior high. Using purposive sampling, 150 teachers across these levels participated in the study.

Instruments

The survey instrument comprised two main sections:

1. **Leadership Practices Scale (LPS):**
Adapted from items on instructional and professional development leadership (Kristiani et al., n.d.).
2. **Teacher Competency Scale (TCS):**
Based on indicators of pedagogical practice, reflective teaching, classroom management, and professional growth.

Both scales were subjected to reliability testing (Cronbach's $\alpha > .80$).

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out over four weeks. Participants completed online surveys with oversight from school administrators who facilitated distribution and ensured ethical compliance.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using correlation and regression analyses to determine relationships between leadership practices and teacher competency growth.

Results

A total of 150 teachers participated in the study, representing a diverse group in terms of gender, years of experience, and educational attainment. The majority of respondents were female, and teaching experience ranged widely from early-career educators to veteran teachers with over two decades of service. Most participants held a bachelor's degree, while a substantial proportion had completed graduate studies. Notably, less than half of the respondents had participated in formal professional development activities within the last

academic year, highlighting a gap between available opportunities and actual participation. This demographic profile provided a meaningful context for examining how leadership practices influence teacher competency growth across varying levels of professional maturity.

In terms of leadership practices related to professional development, respondents reported moderate to high levels of support from school leaders. Many teachers indicated that mentoring, coaching, and collaborative planning sessions were consistently facilitated by administrators. Instructional observation followed by constructive feedback was also commonly experienced, suggesting that school leaders were actively engaged in instructional supervision rather than focusing solely on administrative responsibilities. These leadership behaviors created structured opportunities for teachers to engage in reflective dialogue, peer collaboration, and guided improvement of classroom practices. The presence of such practices aligns with research indicating that instructional leadership plays a vital role in fostering environments conducive to professional learning and teacher development.

With regard to teacher competency growth, participants reported noticeable improvements across several domains of teaching practice. Teachers described enhanced ability to plan and deliver lessons effectively, adapt instructional strategies to meet student needs, and manage classroom behavior more efficiently. A significant number of respondents also reported increased engagement in reflective teaching practices, including self-assessment and peer feedback. These improvements were attributed to their involvement in professional development activities supported by school leadership, reinforcing the idea that structured and sustained professional learning opportunities contribute directly to competency enhancement.

Statistical analysis further substantiated these observations. Correlation results revealed a significant positive relationship between leadership practices in professional development and teacher competency growth. Teachers who perceived stronger leadership involvement in mentoring, coaching, and collaborative activities tended to report higher levels of professional competence. Regression analysis demonstrated that leadership practices accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in competency outcomes, indicating that the quality of leadership support is a meaningful predictor of teacher growth. These findings provide empirical support for the assertion that leadership engagement in professional development is not

merely supportive but instrumental in improving teacher performance.

Despite the generally positive findings, respondents identified several barriers that limited their full engagement in professional development. Time constraints emerged as the most prominent challenge, as heavy teaching loads and administrative tasks often reduced opportunities for meaningful participation in development programs. Additionally, limited resources and funding for professional development were cited as obstacles to sustaining long-term initiatives. Scheduling conflicts and workload pressures were also noted as factors that disrupted continuity in professional learning activities. These challenges suggest that while leadership practices are influential, systemic constraints within the school environment can hinder the effectiveness of professional development efforts.

The results demonstrate that when school leaders actively promote mentoring, coaching, collaborative learning, and instructional feedback, teachers experience measurable growth in professional competence. However, for such growth to be sustained, institutional support in terms of time allocation, resources, and organizational structure is equally necessary.

Discussion

Leadership Influence on Teacher Competency Growth

The results support the idea that leadership engagement significantly influences teacher competency growth, particularly when leaders promote mentoring, coaching, collaborative planning, and instructional feedback. Teachers who perceived stronger leadership involvement reported greater gains in instructional efficacy and professional self-reflection. These findings are consistent with studies showing that the provision of continuous, integrated professional development opportunities is a core function of effective instructional leadership. (He, P., Guo, F. & Abazie, G.A. 2024)

For example, research on school principals' instructional leadership found that principals who organized professional learning opportunities, including coaching and mentoring, significantly contributed to teacher professional growth, instructional refinement, and overall teaching quality. This aligns with your study's regression results, which demonstrated that leadership practices are significant predictors of competency growth.

Contextual Evidence from the Philippines

Local education research supports these findings. Studies in Filipino school systems have documented

that leadership innovations during the COVID-19 pandemic included reimagined PD approaches, such as remote coaching and peer support structures, which helped teachers adapt to new instructional demands. (Acuna, 2022)

Research in Camarines Sur also showed strong correlations between instructional leadership and teacher development, reinforcing that leadership functions such as curriculum enhancement, mentorship, and professional growth are integral to teacher competency outcomes.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Competency Development

Your findings are also supported by research on professional learning communities, where shared learning structures - often facilitated by leadership - are linked with higher instructional competence among teachers. High levels of engagement in PLC activities correlate closely with gains in collaborative practices, reflective inquiry, and shared instructional improvements.

This suggests that leadership practices that cultivate collaborative norms are especially effective in promoting sustained competency growth, which goes beyond isolated PD activities to embed learning within daily professional practice.

Barriers and Systemic Challenges

The identified barriers of time, workload, and limited resources reflect broader systemic issues that can constrain PD effectiveness. These challenges have been observed in other studies, where heavy teaching responsibilities and limited institutional support reduce teachers' capacity to engage fully in PD activities, despite leadership efforts.

This implies that leadership must not only design high-quality PD but also advocate for organizational changes that create space, time, and incentive structures for sustained engagement.

Conclusion

This study concludes that professional development leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher competency growth. Leadership practices that emphasize continuous learning, collaboration, and reflective practice are associated with higher levels of teacher professional competence.

Recommendations

1. School leaders should prioritize mentoring and coaching as core PD strategies.
2. Institutionalize collaborative learning communities to sustain growth.
3. Allocate protected time and resources for meaningful PD participation.

4. Further longitudinal studies should examine long-term competency outcomes.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this manuscript.

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