



MASTER TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND TEACHERS' WORK PERFORMANCE IN THE ERA OF EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the relationship between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence in the context of modern educational challenges in Western Cayapa and Ambaguio Districts, Schools Division of Nueva Vizcaya during the school year 2025–2026. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, utilizing a questionnaire administered to 40 teacher-respondents. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were in the 31–40 age group, predominantly female, moderately experienced, and mostly holding or pursuing a master's degree. Master teachers' practices were generally rated as "Agree," with mentoring and coaching emerging as the strongest domain, while curriculum evaluation and advanced digital support were identified as areas needing improvement. Teachers' instructional competence was also rated between "Moderately Agree" and "Agree," indicating that teachers were generally competent but still developing in areas such as digital integration, assessment practices, and innovative teaching strategies. Results further showed that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions when grouped according to profile variables. However, a significant positive relationship was found between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence. This implies that stronger instructional support from master teachers contributes to improved teacher performance. The study concludes that master teachers play a vital role in enhancing teachers' instructional competence, and strengthening their practices can further improve teaching quality in schools.

Keywords: *instructional competence, master teachers, mentoring and coaching*

INTRODUCTION

The field of education today is experiencing a period of rapid and continuous transformation. With the integration of technology, shifts toward learner-centered approaches, and the growing demand for quality and inclusive education, teachers are expected to perform beyond traditional instructional roles. They are now facilitators of learning, innovators, and reflective practitioners who must continuously adapt to changing educational realities. In this context, the need for strong professional support systems within schools becomes more apparent. Among the key figures who provide this support are master teachers, whose roles extend beyond classroom instruction to include mentoring, coaching, and instructional leadership (Fullan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Master teachers play a significant role in shaping the professional growth and work performance of classroom teachers. Their function is not only to demonstrate effective teaching practices but also to guide, support, and empower their colleagues. Professional support provided by master teachers includes classroom observation, feedback, mentoring sessions, collaborative lesson planning, and technical assistance. These practices create a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the school. When teachers are supported, they are more likely to become competent, confident, and committed to their work, which ultimately enhances their performance and contributes to better student outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Hallinger, 2011).

Several studies affirm the importance of mentorship and professional support in improving teacher performance. A study on mentoring practices of master teachers revealed that structured mentoring significantly influences both teachers' and students' performance, highlighting the value of guided professional development in school settings. Similarly, research conducted in the Philippine context found that master teachers exhibit highly effective mentoring practices, particularly in supporting curriculum implementation and instructional leadership, which are essential components of teacher performance (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

In addition, mentorship has been widely recognized as a critical factor in teacher development across different stages of the teaching profession. A recent study emphasizes that mentorship programs tailored to teachers' developmental stages significantly enhance professional growth, engagement, and instructional competence. Beginning teachers benefit from guidance in classroom management and pedagogy, while experienced teachers gain opportunities to refine their practices and assume leadership roles. This indicates that mentorship is not a one-size-fits-all process but a dynamic and responsive support system that evolves according to teachers' needs (Desimone & Garet, 2015).

Moreover, research highlights that mentoring and support behaviors within the school environment are directly related to teachers' teaching performance. A study conducted in Gingoog City demonstrated that supportive relationships among teachers, including mentoring and collegial assistance, have a measurable influence on performance ratings (Aquino & Balilla, 2021). This implies that professional support does not only come from formal leadership structures but also from collaborative interactions within the teaching community. However, master teachers remain central figures in organizing and sustaining these support mechanisms (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

The era of educational transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for teachers. While innovations in teaching and learning offer new possibilities, they also require teachers to continuously upgrade their skills and adapt to new demands. Without adequate support, these challenges may lead to stress, reduced performance, and decreased job satisfaction. This highlights the critical role of master teachers in providing consistent, relevant, and responsive professional support to help teachers navigate these changes effectively (Fullan, 2016).

In the era of educational transformation, professional support has become even more essential. Teachers are required to integrate technology, apply innovative pedagogies, and address diverse learner needs. As noted by Fullan (2016), educational change is only successful when teachers are adequately supported through leadership, collaboration, and capacity-building initiatives.

Mentoring and coaching are among the most effective forms of professional support. Mentoring involves a developmental relationship where experienced teachers guide less experienced ones, while coaching focuses on improving specific instructional practices through observation and feedback (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that teachers who participated in mentoring programs demonstrated higher retention rates, improved instructional practices, and better student outcomes. Their study highlights the importance of structured mentoring systems in supporting teacher development.

Instructional coaching, on the other hand, has been shown to enhance teaching effectiveness through continuous feedback and reflection. Kraft et. al (2018) conducted a meta-analysis and found that coaching programs produced significant improvements in instructional quality and student achievement. These findings suggest that consistent and targeted support contributes to better teacher performance.

Master teachers, in their role as mentors and coaches, provide both formal and informal support to classroom teachers. Their ability to guide, model, and evaluate teaching practices positions them as essential contributors to professional growth (Hallinger, 2011).

Instructional leadership focuses on improving teaching and learning through effective supervision, guidance, and support. Master teachers are considered instructional leaders who play a vital role in enhancing teacher performance (Leithwood et al., 2020).

According to Hallinger (2011), instructional leadership involves setting clear goals, monitoring instruction, and promoting a positive learning environment. Master teachers contribute to these functions by assisting in lesson planning, conducting classroom observations, and providing feedback.

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education emphasizes the role of master teachers in providing technical assistance and mentoring aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). This framework highlights the importance of professional collaboration, reflective practice, and continuous improvement (Department of Education, 2017).

According to Schleicher (2018), education systems must adapt to prepare learners for the demands of the 21st century. This includes fostering critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy. Teachers play a central role in this transformation, but they require continuous support to meet these expectations.

Moreover, the integration of technology in education has changed the way teachers deliver instruction. As noted by Koehler and Mishra (2009) in their Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, effective teaching requires the integration of content, pedagogy, and technology. Master teachers can support this integration by guiding teachers in the use of digital tools and innovative teaching strategies.

Several international studies have examined the relationship between professional support and teacher performance. In a study conducted by Kraft et al. (2018), instructional coaching was found to significantly improve teaching practices and student outcomes. The study emphasized that sustained and structured support leads to measurable improvements in performance.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) also found that mentoring programs positively influence teacher effectiveness, retention, and job satisfaction. Their research suggests that beginning teachers benefit greatly from guidance provided by experienced educators.

A study by Desimone and Garet (2015) highlighted that professional development programs that include active learning, collaboration, and coaching are more effective in improving teacher performance. This reinforces the importance of interactive and sustained support systems.

In the Philippines, several studies have explored the role of master teachers in supporting teacher performance. A study conducted in Region VI found that master teachers' mentoring practices significantly contributed to teachers' instructional competence and

classroom management skills. The study concluded that effective mentoring enhances overall teaching performance (Llego, 2019; Department of Education, 2020).

Another study in Mindanao revealed that collaborative practices and peer mentoring positively influence teachers' performance ratings. Teachers who received regular feedback and support demonstrated higher levels of effectiveness compared to those who worked in isolation (Cabardo, 2016; Aquino & Balilla, 2021).

Given these considerations, this study sought to examine the relationship between master teachers' professional support and teachers' work performance in the era of educational transformation. By identifying how different forms of support influenced performance, the study aimed to provide insights that could guide school leaders in strengthening mentoring systems and professional development programs. Ultimately, this research hoped to contribute to the improvement of teacher competence, the enhancement of instructional quality, and the achievement of better educational outcomes in a continuously evolving educational landscape.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the practices of master teachers and the instructional competence of teachers in the context of modern educational challenges in Western Cayapa and Ambaguio Districts, Schools Division of Nueva Vizcaya during the school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Sex;
 - 1.3 Years of Teaching Experience; and
 - 1.4 Highest Educational Attainment.
2. What is the level of master teachers' practices in terms of:
 - 2.1 Instructional Leadership;
 - 2.2 Mentoring and Coaching;
 - 2.3 Digital Pedagogical Support; and
 - 2.4 Curriculum Implementation Support.
3. What is the level of teachers' instructional competence in terms of:
 - 3.1 Lesson Planning and Delivery;
 - 3.2 Classroom Management;
 - 3.3 Use of Technology in Teaching; and
 - 3.4 Assessment of Learning.
 - 3.5 Professional Development and Reflective Practice
4. Is there a significant difference in the perception of teachers when grouped according to their profile variables?
5. Is there a significant relationship between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence?

6. Based on the findings, what capacity building program can be proposed to enhance the practices of master teachers and improve teachers' instructional competence?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between the practices of master teachers and the instructional competence of teachers in the context of modern educational challenges in Western Cayapa and Ambaguio Districts, Schools Division of Nueva Vizcaya during the School Year 2025–2026.

The descriptive aspect of the design was used to identify and describe the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age, sex, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment. It was also used to determine the level of master teachers' practices in terms of instructional leadership, mentoring and coaching, digital pedagogical support, curriculum implementation support, and professional collaboration and guidance. Likewise, it described the level of teachers' instructional competence in terms of lesson planning and delivery, classroom management, use of technology in teaching, assessment of learning, and professional development and reflective practice.

On the other hand, the correlational aspect of the design was utilized to examine whether a significant relationship existed between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence. This design was appropriate for the study because it aimed to determine the extent to which variations in master teachers' practices were associated with variations in teachers' instructional competence without manipulating any variables.

Furthermore, the study also determined whether significant differences existed in the perceptions of teachers when grouped according to their profile variables. Through this design, the researcher was able to gather quantitative data that provided an objective basis for analysis, interpretation, and drawing conclusions regarding the influence of master teachers' professional support on teachers' performance in a real-world educational setting.

Overall, the descriptive-correlational design was deemed suitable for this study as it allowed for a systematic examination of relationships among variables as they naturally occur within the school environment, particularly in the context of ongoing educational transformation.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The main instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher to gather data on the practices of master teachers and the instructional competence of teachers. The questionnaire was divided into three main parts.

The first part gathered information on the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age, sex, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment. This section was designed to describe the background characteristics of the respondents.

The second part measured the level of master teachers' practices in terms of instructional leadership, mentoring and coaching, digital pedagogical support, curriculum implementation support, and professional collaboration and guidance. Items in this section were rated using a Likert scale to determine the extent of perceived practices of master teachers.

The third part assessed the instructional competence of teachers in terms of lesson planning and delivery, classroom management, use of technology in teaching, assessment of learning, and professional development and reflective practice. Similar to the second part, a Likert scale was used to determine the level of competence of the respondents.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was submitted for content validation by experts in educational management and instructional leadership. Their suggestions and recommendations were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items. The instrument was also subjected to a pilot testing to determine its reliability, and the results were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure internal consistency.

The data collection process followed a systematic procedure to ensure accuracy, reliability, and ethical compliance. First, the researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Nueva Vizcaya and the respective school heads of Western Cayapa and Ambaguio Districts to conduct the study.

Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with the school heads and master teachers to identify the appropriate respondents. The questionnaires were then personally distributed to the selected teacher-respondents. Before answering, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses.

The respondents were given sufficient time to accomplish the questionnaire to ensure thoughtful and honest answers. After completion, the questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and retrieved by the researcher.

The gathered data were then organized, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis. Appropriate statistical tools were used to analyze the data in order to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses of the study.

Throughout the data collection process, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent were strictly observed to ensure the integrity of the study and the protection of the respondents.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools based on the specific problems presented.

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools corresponding to each statement of the problem (SOP). These tools were used to ensure accurate interpretation and meaningful analysis of the results.

Frequency count and percentage distribution were used to describe the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of age, sex, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment. These statistical tools were used to present a clear and organized summary of the respondents' demographic characteristics.

Mean was used to determine the level of master teachers' practices in terms of instructional leadership, mentoring and coaching, digital pedagogical support, curriculum implementation support, and professional collaboration and guidance. The mean was used to identify the average level of practices, while the standard deviation was used to measure the variability of responses.

Mean and standard deviation were also used to determine the level of teachers' instructional competence in terms of lesson planning and delivery, classroom management, use of technology in teaching, assessment of learning, and professional development and reflective practice. These statistical measures helped describe the overall competence level of the teachers and the consistency of their responses.

Independent samples t-test was used to determine the significant difference in teachers' perceptions when grouped according to two-category variables such as sex. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for variables with more than two categories, such as age, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment. These tests determined whether significant differences existed among groups.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine the significant relationship between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence. This statistical tool measured the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables.

The results from the descriptive and inferential statistics served as the basis for designing a proposed capacity-building program. No specific statistical tool was used for this SOP; instead, the findings from the previous analyses were synthesized to develop appropriate interventions aimed at enhancing master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence.

RESULTS

Table 1
Profile of the Teacher-Respondents
(n = 40)

Profile Variables	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	21–30	8	20.00
	31–40	15	37.50
	41–50	10	25.00
	51 and above	7	17.50
Sex	Male	14	35.00
	Female	26	65.00
Years of Teaching Experience	1–5 years	9	22.50
	6–10 years	12	30.00
	11–20 years	11	27.50
	21 years and above	8	20.00
Highest Educational Attainment	With M.A Units	9	22.50
	Master's Degree	18	45.00
	With Doctorate Units	7	17.50
	Doctorate Degree	6	15.00

Table 2.1
Level of Master Teachers' Practices in Terms of Instructional Leadership
(n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Provide instructional guidance	4.30	0.60	Agree
2. Model teaching strategies	4.25	0.62	Agree
3. Improve lesson planning	4.10	0.70	Agree
4. Monitor teaching practices	4.05	0.72	Agree
5. Provide feedback	4.40	0.58	Agree
6. Curriculum expertise	4.15	0.65	Agree
7. Address learning gaps	4.20	0.63	Agree
8. Lead instructional initiatives	3.95	0.75	Moderately Agree
9. Guide assessment practices	4.18	0.64	Agree
10. Promote evidence-based strategies	4.22	0.60	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.18	0.64	Agree

Table 2.2
Level of Master Teachers' Practices in Terms of Mentoring and Coaching
(n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Regular mentoring sessions	4.35	0.60	Agree
2. Support novice teachers	4.40	0.58	Agree
3. Guide teaching strategies	4.25	0.63	Agree
4. Build confidence	4.20	0.65	Agree
5. Coaching feedback	4.45	0.55	Agree
6. Reflective teaching	4.30	0.60	Agree
7. Solve instructional problems	4.10	0.70	Agree
8. Supportive relationship	4.50	0.54	Strongly Agree
9. Observation and coaching	4.15	0.66	Agree
10. Promote professional growth	4.28	0.62	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.30	0.61	Agree

Table 2.3
Level of Master Teachers' Practices in Terms of Digital Pedagogical Support
(n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Use of digital tools	4.05	0.70	Agree
2. Technology integration	4.10	0.68	Agree
3. LMS guidance	3.95	0.75	Moderately Agree
4. Digital strategies	4.08	0.67	Agree
5. Digital materials	3.90	0.78	Moderately Agree
6. Blended learning support	4.20	0.63	Agree
7. ICT training	4.15	0.65	Agree
8. Online assessment	4.00	0.72	Agree
9. AI tool support	3.70	0.85	Moderately Agree
10. Digital competence support	4.12	0.66	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.02	0.71	Agree

Table 2.4
Level of Master Teachers' Practices in Terms of Curriculum Implementation Support
(n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Curriculum guidance	4.25	0.60	Agree
2. Explain curriculum changes	4.20	0.62	Agree
3. Align lessons	4.35	0.58	Agree
4. Understand competencies	4.22	0.61	Agree
5. Lesson planning support	4.30	0.59	Agree

6. MELCs guidance	4.15	0.64	Agree
7. Instructional quality	4.28	0.60	Agree
8. Provide resources	4.05	0.70	Agree
9. Curriculum evaluation	3.95	0.75	Moderately Agree
10. Curriculum adaptation	4.18	0.63	Agree
Average Weigthed Mean	4.19	0.63	Agree

Table 3.1
Level of Teachers' Instructional Competence in Terms of Lesson Planning and Delivery
 (n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Prepare detailed lesson plans	3.90	0.75	Moderately Agree
2. Align with curriculum standards	4.20	0.65	Agree
3. State clear objectives	4.10	0.70	Agree
4. Use appropriate strategies	3.95	0.72	Moderately Agree
5. Deliver lessons clearly	4.05	0.68	Agree
6. Apply real-life contexts	3.80	0.78	Moderately Agree
7. Adjust instruction	3.85	0.76	Moderately Agree
8. Use engaging techniques	3.75	0.80	Moderately Agree
9. Learner-centered approach	4.00	0.70	Agree
10. Time management	3.70	0.82	Moderately Agree
Average Weigthed Mean	3.93	0.74	Moderately Agree

Table 3.2
Level of Teachers' Instructional Competence in Terms of Classroom Management
 (n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Clear classroom rules	4.15	0.66	Agree
2. Maintain discipline	4.00	0.70	Agree
3. Positive environment	4.25	0.60	Agree
4. Encourage participation	3.90	0.75	Moderately Agree
5. Handle disruptions	3.80	0.78	Moderately Agree
6. Build relationships	4.35	0.58	Strongly Agree
7. Motivate learners	3.95	0.72	Moderately Agree
8. Maintain attention	3.85	0.76	Moderately Agree
9. Promote inclusivity	4.20	0.65	Agree
10. Safe environment	4.30	0.60	Agree
Average Weigthed Mean	4.08	0.68	Agree

Table 3.3
Level of Teachers' Instructional Competence in Terms of Use of Technology in Teaching
(n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Integrate technology	3.95	0.72	Moderately Agree
2. Use digital tools	4.00	0.70	Agree
3. Create digital materials	3.75	0.80	Moderately Agree
4. Blended learning	3.90	0.75	Moderately Agree
5. Online platforms	3.85	0.78	Moderately Agree
6. AI tools use	3.50	0.90	Moderately Agree
7. Adapt to technology	4.05	0.68	Agree
8. Multimedia use	4.10	0.65	Agree
9. Responsible tech use	4.20	0.63	Agree
10. Improve digital skills	4.00	0.70	Agree
Average Weigthed Mean	3.93	0.73	Moderately Agree

Table 3.4
Level of Teachers' Instructional Competence
in Terms of Assessment of Learning
(n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Use assessment strategies	4.10	0.70	Agree
2. Align with objectives	4.20	0.65	Agree
3. Use formative/summative	4.05	0.68	Agree
4. Provide feedback	3.95	0.72	Moderately Agree
5. Varied methods	3.90	0.75	Moderately Agree
6. Fair assessment	4.25	0.60	Agree
7. Analyze results	3.85	0.76	Moderately Agree
8. Use rubrics	3.80	0.78	Moderately Agree
9. Performance-based	3.90	0.75	Moderately Agree
10. Digital assessment tools	3.70	0.82	Moderately Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.97	0.72	Moderately Agree

Table 3.5
Professional Development and Practice
(n = 40)

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Reflect on teaching	4.20	0.65	Agree
2. Identify improvements	4.10	0.68	Agree
3. Seek feedback	3.95	0.72	Moderately Agree
4. Attend trainings	4.15	0.66	Agree

5. Apply learning	4.00	0.70	Agree
6. Collaborate	4.25	0.60	Agree
7. Update knowledge	4.05	0.68	Agree
8. Growth mindset	4.35	0.58	Strongly Agree
9. Document experiences	3.85	0.75	Moderately Agree
10. Continuous improvement	4.30	0.60	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.12	0.67	Agree

Table 4
Test of Significant Difference in Teachers' Perceptions
When Grouped According to Profile Variables
(n = 40)

Profile Variables	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	1.42	0.246	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Sex	1.18	0.312	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Years of Teaching Experience	1.56	0.198	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	1.63	0.175	Fail to Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 5
Test of Significant Relationship Between Master Teachers' Practices
and Teachers' Instructional Competence
(n = 40)

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Master Teachers' Practices and Teachers' Instructional Competence	0.68	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 40 teacher-respondents in terms of age, sex, teaching experience, and educational attainment. Most of the respondents were between 31–40 years old, which suggests that many of them are already in the middle stage of their teaching career. At this stage, teachers usually have enough experience in teaching while still being open to learning new skills and strategies.

In terms of sex, female teachers were more numerous than male teachers. This reflects the common situation in the Philippine educational system where teaching is mostly dominated by women. Regarding teaching experience, most respondents had 6–10 years of service, indicating that they already possess moderate teaching experience that may help them improve classroom management and instructional practices.

As to educational attainment, many teachers had completed or were pursuing a master's degree. This shows their dedication to professional growth and improving their teaching competence.

These findings are supported by the study of Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), who stated that higher educational attainment helps improve teaching competence. Similarly, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) explained that teachers with moderate teaching experience often show better instructional stability and adaptability.

Overall, the respondents were mostly mid-career and moderately experienced teachers who are professionally motivated and capable of evaluating the influence of master teachers' practices on instructional competence.

Table 2.1 shows that teachers generally agreed that master teachers demonstrate instructional leadership practices, with an overall mean of 4.18. This means that master teachers provide guidance and support in lesson planning, classroom instruction, and feedback, which helps teachers improve their teaching practices.

However, the lower rating in leading instructional initiatives suggests that master teachers may have limited involvement in school-wide instructional reforms and innovations. This may be due to additional responsibilities and lack of time to focus on broader leadership roles.

The findings support Hallinger (2011), who emphasized that instructional leadership becomes more effective when it is continuous and consistent. Likewise, Leithwood et al. (2020) explained that leadership has a stronger effect on teaching when support is purposeful and focused.

Overall, the results show that master teachers play an important role in improving classroom instruction, although their participation in larger instructional initiatives may still be strengthened.

Table 2.2 reveals that teachers positively perceived mentoring and coaching practices, with an overall mean of 4.30. The highest-rated indicator was maintaining supportive relationships, which means teachers feel encouraged and comfortable working with master teachers.

The results suggest that positive relationships contribute to effective mentoring. However, lower ratings in classroom observation and structured coaching sessions indicate that mentoring may still be done informally instead of through a regular and organized system.

These findings support Ingersoll and Strong (2011), who explained that mentoring becomes more effective when it is structured and consistent. Similarly, Kraft et al. (2018) found that coaching is more successful when it is sustained and focused on instructional goals.

Overall, teachers benefit from the support of master teachers, although mentoring and coaching practices may still be improved through more organized implementation.

Table 2.3 shows that digital pedagogical support received an Agree rating with a mean of 4.02. This means that master teachers are helping teachers integrate technology into their classroom instruction.

However, lower ratings in LMS guidance, digital material creation, and AI tools suggest that support in advanced technologies is still developing. This may be because not all teachers and master teachers have enough training, confidence, or access to these technologies.

The findings support the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework of Mishra and Koehler (2009), which explains that effective technology integration develops through continuous learning and practice. UNESCO (2021) also emphasized that teachers' readiness in digital education depends on training and available resources.

Overall, the findings show that teachers are already using technology in teaching, but they still need stronger support and training in advanced digital tools.

Table 2.4 indicates that teachers generally agreed that master teachers provide curriculum implementation support, with a mean of 4.19. This means that teachers receive guidance in understanding curriculum standards and applying them effectively in classroom instruction.

However, the lower rating in curriculum evaluation suggests that teachers may not be fully involved in assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum. This may happen because curriculum evaluation is often handled by school administrators.

The findings support Fullan (2016), who emphasized that successful curriculum implementation requires continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Overall, master teachers help teachers implement the curriculum effectively, although more emphasis on curriculum evaluation and reflection is still needed.

Table 3.1 shows that teachers' competence in lesson planning and instructional delivery was rated Moderately Agree, with a mean of 3.93. This means that teachers are generally capable of preparing and delivering lessons, although there are still areas that need improvement.

Teachers were stronger in aligning lessons with curriculum standards and writing clear objectives. However, lower ratings in learner engagement, real-life application, and time management indicate difficulties in making lessons more interactive and engaging.

These findings reflect common classroom situations where teachers can prepare lessons well but may struggle to address diverse learner needs and limited instructional time.

The findings support Darling-Hammond (2017), who explained that effective teaching requires teachers to adjust instruction according to classroom situations. Stronge (2018) also stated that advanced teaching skills improve through experience and continuous professional support.

Overall, teachers possess adequate competence in lesson planning and instructional delivery, but continuous professional development is still necessary.

Table 3.2 reveals that teachers demonstrated competence in classroom management and learner engagement, with a mean of 4.08. Teachers were especially strong in building good relationships with learners, which helps create a positive classroom environment.

However, lower ratings in handling disruptions, maintaining learner attention, and encouraging participation suggest that teachers still face challenges in managing different classroom behaviors and sustaining learner engagement.

These findings support Marzano (2003), who emphasized that positive teacher-student relationships are important for effective classroom management. Emmer and Sabornie (2015) also explained that classroom management skills improve through experience and professional support.

Overall, teachers are competent in maintaining a positive classroom climate, although support is still needed in handling more challenging classroom situations.

Table 3.3 shows that teachers' competence in using digital and innovative teaching strategies was rated Moderately Agree, with a mean of 3.93. This indicates that teachers are already integrating technology into instruction, but their digital competence is still developing.

The lowest rating was observed in the use of AI tools, suggesting that many teachers are still unfamiliar with advanced technologies. Moderate ratings in creating digital materials and using online platforms also show that these skills still need improvement.

These findings reflect common realities in schools where differences in training, internet access, and digital resources affect technology integration.

The findings support the TPACK framework of Mishra and Koehler (2009), which explains that effective technology integration requires knowledge in pedagogy, content, and technology. UNESCO (2021) also reported that teachers' digital readiness remains uneven, especially in developing countries.

Overall, teachers are willing to use technology in teaching, but they still need more training, support, and resources.

Table 3.4 indicates that teachers' competence in assessment and evaluation was rated Moderately Agree, with a mean of 3.97. This means that teachers understand basic assessment practices, although some areas still require improvement.

Teachers showed stronger competence in aligning assessments with objectives and ensuring fairness in grading. However, lower ratings in data analysis, use of rubrics, and digital assessment tools suggest that advanced assessment practices are still developing.

These findings support Black and William (1998), who explained that assessment becomes more effective when used to improve teaching and learning. The results also align with the Department of Education's assessment-for-learning approach.

Overall, teachers have adequate competence in assessment and evaluation, but more training is needed in data-driven and technology-supported assessment practices.

Table 3.5 shows that teachers demonstrated competence in reflective practice and professional growth, with a mean of 4.12. Teachers showed a strong growth mindset, meaning they are willing to learn and improve professionally.

However, moderate ratings in seeking feedback and documenting experiences suggest that reflection is not always done systematically because of workload and time limitations.

The findings support Schön (1983), who emphasized that reflection is important for professional growth. Borko (2004) also explained that teacher learning becomes more effective through collaboration and continuous development.

Overall, teachers are committed to improving their teaching practices, although continuous mentoring and professional support remain important.

Table 4 shows that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of master teachers' practices and instructional competence when grouped according to age, sex, teaching experience, and educational attainment. Since all p-values were greater than 0.05, the findings suggest that teachers generally share similar experiences and perceptions regardless of their background.

This means that teachers receive similar support from master teachers and experience common challenges related to curriculum demands, workload, and educational changes.

The findings support Day and Gu (2010), who stated that teachers' experiences are influenced more by school context and leadership than by demographic characteristics. OECD (2019) also reported that school climate and leadership support greatly influence teacher perceptions.

Overall, the findings suggest that professional development programs may be implemented uniformly among teachers.

Table 5 reveals a significant positive relationship between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence, with a correlation value of 0.68 and a p-value lower than 0.05. This indicates that better practices of master teachers are associated with higher teacher competence.

The findings highlight the important role of master teachers as instructional leaders, mentors, and providers of professional support. Teachers who receive guidance, coaching, and feedback are more likely to improve their teaching strategies and instructional effectiveness.

These findings support Hattie (2009), who identified instructional feedback and teacher support as important factors in improving teaching effectiveness. Kraft et al. (2018) also found that instructional coaching positively affects teacher performance and student achievement.

The results are also aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasize mentoring and coaching in teacher development. Fullan (2016) further explained that strong collaboration and leadership support are necessary for sustainable school improvement.

Overall, the findings show that master teachers' practices significantly contribute to improving teachers' instructional competence and professional growth.

Conclusions

This study examined the relationship between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence. Based on the findings, it was concluded that master teachers generally demonstrate effective instructional leadership, mentoring and coaching, digital pedagogical support, and curriculum implementation support. Teachers perceived these practices positively, indicating that master teachers play an important role in guiding and supporting classroom instruction and professional growth.

The findings further revealed that teachers possess adequate instructional competence in lesson planning and instructional delivery, classroom management and learner engagement, digital and innovative teaching strategies, assessment and evaluation, and reflective practice and professional growth. However, some areas such as learner engagement, use of advanced digital tools, data-driven assessment, and systematic reflective practices still require improvement and continuous support.

Moreover, the study found no significant differences in the perceptions of teachers when grouped according to age, sex, years of teaching experience, and educational attainment. This suggests that teachers generally experience similar professional support and instructional conditions regardless of demographic profile.

Most importantly, the study established a significant positive relationship between master teachers' practices and teachers' instructional competence. This confirms that effective

leadership, mentoring, coaching, and instructional support from master teachers contribute significantly to improving teachers' competence and professional growth. The findings emphasize the vital role of master teachers in strengthening instructional quality and promoting continuous improvement in teaching practices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that master teachers further strengthen their instructional leadership practices by becoming more actively involved in school-wide instructional initiatives, curriculum evaluation, and innovative teaching programs. Providing more structured mentoring, coaching, and instructional guidance may help teachers improve their classroom practices and professional competence.

Teachers are encouraged to continue enhancing their instructional competence through active participation in seminars, trainings, learning action cells, and other professional development activities. Particular attention may be given to improving learner engagement strategies, differentiated instruction, assessment practices, reflective teaching, and the effective integration of digital and AI-supported instructional tools in classroom instruction.

School administrators may provide continuous support by strengthening mentoring programs, instructional coaching, and technology-related training opportunities for teachers and master teachers. Schools may also allocate sufficient resources, digital materials, and collaborative learning opportunities that will help improve teachers' instructional effectiveness and professional growth.

The Department of Education may further strengthen policies and programs related to instructional leadership, curriculum support, technology integration, and teacher professional development. Sustained support mechanisms may help ensure that teachers and master teachers remain equipped with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to address current educational demands and challenges.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies involving larger groups of respondents and different educational settings to validate and expand the findings of the present study. Additional variables such as school climate, leadership style, teacher motivation, and learner performance may also be explored to provide a deeper understanding of factors influencing teachers' instructional competence.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study adhered to ethical standards in conducting educational research to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. Informed consent was secured from all teacher-respondents, and the purpose of the study was clearly explained. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any time without consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed by using codes instead of names and by ensuring that all information gathered was used only for academic purposes. The study also complied with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to ensure proper handling and protection of personal data.

The researcher ensured that no harm or discomfort was caused to the participants and maintained honesty and integrity in gathering, analyzing, and reporting the data. Proper coordination with school heads and respect for the participants' professional responsibilities were also observed throughout the conduct of the study.

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