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EXPLORING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY IN THE INFLUENCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHING PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study, completed in October 2026, examined whether teachers' instructional self-efficacy mediates the relationship between school heads' instructional leadership and teaching performance among public school teachers in Kalilangan East District, Division of Bukidnon, Philippines. A quantitative, descriptive, predictive-correlational design with mediation analysis was used. Through stratified random sampling, 200 teachers answered questionnaires adapted from the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale, and teaching performance was measured with indicators aligned with the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, canonical correlation, multiple regression, and structural equation modeling. Instructional leadership (M = 4.74) and self-efficacy (M = 4.55) were rated at a Very High Extent, and teaching performance was Outstanding (M = 4.67); classroom management was the lowest dimension of self-efficacy (M = 4.45). Canonical correlations were strong for leadership (Rc = .66) and very strong for self-efficacy (Rc = .82). Both variables predicted teaching performance (R^2 = .597), with self-efficacy the stronger predictor (β = .616 vs. .213). The mediation model fit the data; the indirect effect was significant (0.772, p = .016) while the direct effect was not (0.174, p = .227), consistent with full mediation. Because the data were cross-sectional and self-reported, the findings show association, not causation. School heads are encouraged to pair classroom observation with timely, supportive feedback that builds teachers' confidence.

Keywords: *instructional leadership*, *teacher self-efficacy*, *teaching performance*, *mediation*, *structural equation modeling*

INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership, the actions of school leaders that support teaching and learning, is regarded as one of the factors that shape teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes (Hallinger & Wang, 2022). Teachers' self-efficacy, their belief in their capability to manage teaching tasks and challenges, is likewise seen as a key driver of teacher quality (Bandura, 1997). Teachers with high self-efficacy set higher goals, persist longer when teaching becomes difficult, and are more willing to try innovative practices, which are behaviors expected to translate into stronger classroom performance (Bandura, 1997; Klassen & Tze, 2014).

Evidence suggests that these ideas are connected. Principals' leadership practices have been shown to influence teachers' motivation, instructional self-efficacy, and work outcomes (Liu et al., 2020), and a positive link between principal instructional leadership and teacher self-efficacy has been reported in student engagement and classroom management (Zhang et al., 2025). In Indonesia, Elfira et al. (2024) found that teacher self-efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between principal instructional leadership and teacher performance, and Khan et al. (2024) reported mediation through self-efficacy on teacher job satisfaction in India. These studies point to self-efficacy as the mechanism through which leadership may reach classroom practice, as expected from Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, in which personal beliefs, behavior, and the environment, including the leaders around teachers, influence one another.

Despite this, little is known about the pattern in Philippine public schools, where teaching performance is formally assessed through the Results-Based Performance Management System and the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF), which are aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) (Department of Education, 2017). Philippine studies on teacher self-efficacy and performance have mostly examined the two variables without the leadership context (Gamuza & Bautista, 2025; Padohinog et al., 2024), and few have tested instructional leadership, self-efficacy, and performance together in one model using their specific dimensions. This gap matters because teacher quality is central to Sustainable Development Goal 4, particularly Target 4.c on increasing the supply of qualified teachers (United Nations, 2015).

The study is anchored on Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which holds that personal factors such as self-efficacy, behavior, and the environment influence one another. In this study, the school head's instructional leadership represents the environment, teachers' self-efficacy the personal factor, and teaching performance the behavior. Instructional leadership was framed through the instructional management dimensions of communicating vision for learning, improving instructional quality, and developing teachers' capacity (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), self-efficacy through instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), and teaching performance through the four domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (Department of Education, 2017). It was hypothesized that instructional leadership is related to teaching performance both directly and indirectly through teachers' self-efficacy.

Research Questions

The general objective of the study was to examine the mediating role of teachers' self-efficacy in the influence of instructional leadership on teaching performance among public school teachers in Kalilangan East District, Division of Bukidnon. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the participants' assessment of the instructional leadership of their school heads in terms of communicating vision for learning, improving instructional quality, and developing teachers' capacity?
2. What is the participants' assessment of their self-efficacy in terms of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement?
3. What is the participants' level of teaching performance considering content knowledge and pedagogy, managing diverse learners, assessment, and professional advancement?
4. Is there a significant relationship between (a) instructional leadership and the dimensions of teaching performance, and (b) teachers' self-efficacy and the dimensions of teaching performance?
5. Do instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy significantly predict teaching performance?
6. Does the hypothesized mediation model fit the data, and does teachers' self-efficacy significantly mediate the relationship between instructional leadership and teaching performance?

Hypotheses H1 and H2 (Research Question 4), H3 (Research Question 5), and H4 (Research Question 6) were stated in the null form and tested at the .05 level of significance.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a quantitative, descriptive and predictive-correlational design with mediation analysis. The levels of the three variables were described first, and their relationships and the mediating role of self-efficacy were then tested.

Locale, Participants, and Sampling Procedure

The study was conducted in the 14 public elementary and secondary schools of Kalilangan East District, Division of Bukidnon, which employ 327 qualified teachers. Because teachers are unevenly distributed across schools, stratified random sampling was used, with each school as a stratum and proportionate allocation within strata. Respondents within each school were chosen with a random number generator applied to the school's list of qualified teachers. The Taro Yamane formula at a 5% margin of error gave a minimum sample of 180. To guard against incomplete questionnaires and to meet commonly recommended minimum sample sizes for structural equation modeling,

20 additional questionnaires were distributed in the two largest schools, giving a final sample of 200 teachers, all of whom were analyzed. Eligible teachers were regular full-time public school teachers who reported directly to a school head, had been under the current school head for at least one full rating period, had a school year 2025–2026 IPCRF rating, and gave informed consent. Substitute, part-time, contractual, and newly transferred teachers were excluded.

Research Instruments

School heads' instructional leadership was measured with a five-point survey adapted from the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger & Wang, 2022) covering three dimensions of 10 items each. Teachers' self-efficacy was measured with items based on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) covering instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement (10 items each). Teaching performance was measured with 10 items for each of four dimensions aligned with the IPCRF and the PPST: content knowledge and pedagogy, managing diverse learners, assessment, and professional advancement. All items used a five-point scale. Means of 4.51–5.00 were interpreted as Very High Extent (Always) for leadership and self-efficacy and as Outstanding for teaching performance; 3.51–4.50 as High Extent (Often) or Very Satisfactory; and lower ranges accordingly.

The instruments underwent content validation by experts and were pilot-tested with 30 teachers from a neighboring district not included in the study. McDonald's omega indicated adequate reliability for all ten dimensions (ω = .815 to .927), above the .70 criterion (Hair et al., 2019).

Data Gathering Procedure and Ethical Safeguards

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Lourdes College Research Ethics Committee, and permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent before data collection. Participation was voluntary and based on written informed consent obtained by the researcher and not by school heads. Responses were coded without names, stored securely, and reported in aggregate form. School heads were not involved in recruiting or monitoring participants.

Data Analysis

Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation described the levels of the variables. Canonical correlation analysis tested the relationship of instructional leadership, and of self-efficacy, with the dimensions of teaching performance. Multiple regression determined the joint and unique contribution of the two predictors to teaching performance. Structural equation modeling tested the mediation model, with each variable represented by its dimensions. Model fit was judged using Cmin/df (0–3), CFI (> .90), SRMR (< .08), RMSEA (< .08), and PClose (> .05) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Direct, indirect, and total effects were then examined. Descriptive and regression analyses used SPSS, and structural equation modeling used AMOS. The level of significance was .05.

Scope and Limitations

The study covered 200 teachers from the 14 public elementary and secondary schools of Kalilangan East District, Division of Bukidnon. It focused on school heads' instructional leadership as perceived by the teachers, teachers' instructional self-efficacy, and teaching performance, and on the relationships, prediction, and mediation among them. Other factors that may affect teaching performance, such as school climate and collective teacher efficacy, were not measured.

The study also has several limitations. First, the design was cross-sectional, so the mediation pattern is statistical and does not establish cause and effect or the direction of influence. Second, all variables came from teachers' own responses, so social desirability bias (Weerasinghe et al., 2025), the limits of self-reported data in educational research (Akbulut, 2025), and common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003) may have strengthened the relationships; confidentiality, coded questionnaires, and the exclusion of school heads from data collection were used to reduce them. Third, the participants came from one district, so generalization should be done with caution. Fourth, RMSEA (.075) was close to its cut-off, so the model fit is best described as acceptable to good. Fifth, the ratings were very high with little spread, which may limit the variability available for detecting relationships. Longitudinal, multi-source, and experimental studies are needed to test the proposed pathway.

RESULTS

Levels of Instructional Leadership, Self-Efficacy, and Teaching Performance

Research Question 1. *What is the participants' assessment of the instructional leadership of their school heads in terms of communicating vision for learning, improving instructional quality, and developing teachers' capacity?*

Table 1 shows that instructional leadership was rated at a Very High Extent overall (M = 4.74, SD = 0.33). Communicating vision for learning was highest (M = 4.81), followed by developing teachers' capacity (M = 4.76) and improving instructional quality (M = 4.65). Across the 30 leadership indicators, the three highest were in communicating vision for learning, led by discussing academic goals with teachers during faculty meetings (M = 4.84), and the three lowest were in improving instructional quality, led by conducting regular classroom observations (M = 4.60); all were still rated Always.

Research Question 2. *What is the participants' assessment of their self-efficacy in terms of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement?*

Table 1 shows that teachers' self-efficacy was Very High overall (M = 4.55, SD = 0.40). Efficacy in student engagement was highest (M = 4.63) and efficacy in classroom management was lowest (M = 4.45), the only dimension at a High Extent. The three highest indicators (M = 4.64) were all in student engagement, such as promoting

cooperative learning, while the three lowest were all in classroom management, led by responding effectively to defiant students (*M* = 4.42) and described as Often.

Research Question 3. *What is the participants' level of teaching performance considering content knowledge and pedagogy, managing diverse learners, assessment, and professional advancement?*

Table 1 shows that teaching performance was Outstanding overall (*M* = 4.67, *SD* = 0.35) and in every dimension. Professional advancement was highest (*M* = 4.80), with building relationships with colleagues and openness to change the top indicators (*M* = 4.82), and managing diverse learners was lowest (*M* = 4.60), with differentiated learning experiences the lowest indicator (*M* = 4.57).

Table 1
Levels of Instructional Leadership, Self-Efficacy, and Teaching Performance

Variable and dimension	*M*	*SD*	Interpretation
School heads' instructional leadership	4.74	0.33	Very High Extent
Communicating vision for learning	4.81	0.36	Very High Extent
Improving instructional quality	4.65	0.43	Very High Extent
Developing teachers' capacity	4.76	0.38	Very High Extent
Teachers' self-efficacy	4.55	0.40	Very High Extent
Efficacy in instructional strategies	4.58	0.44	Very High Extent
Efficacy in classroom management	4.45	0.49	High Extent
Efficacy in student engagement	4.63	0.45	Very High Extent
Teaching performance	4.67	0.35	Outstanding
Content knowledge and pedagogy	4.61	0.43	Outstanding
Managing diverse learners	4.60	0.45	Outstanding
Assessment	4.66	0.44	Outstanding
Professional advancement	4.80	0.36	Outstanding

Note. *N* = 200. Scale: 4.51–5.00 = Very High Extent (instructional leadership, self-efficacy) or Outstanding (teaching performance); 3.51–4.50 = High Extent or Very Satisfactory.

Relationships With Teaching Performance

Research Question 4. *Is there a significant relationship between (a) instructional leadership and the dimensions of teaching performance, and (b) teachers' self-efficacy and the dimensions of teaching performance?*

As shown in Table 2, instructional leadership had a significant, strong canonical correlation with teaching performance, and teachers' self-efficacy had a significant, very strong one. On the leadership side, improving instructional quality had the highest cross loading (.64), followed by developing teachers' capacity (.52) and communicating vision for learning (.49); content knowledge and pedagogy (.60) and assessment (.57) were the strongest on the performance side. For self-efficacy, efficacy in instructional strategies (.76), student engagement (.68), and classroom management (.63) contributed in that order, while content knowledge and pedagogy (.76) and managing diverse learners (.72) were strongest on the performance side. Hypotheses H1 and H2 were rejected.

Table 2
Canonical Correlation of Instructional Leadership and Self-Efficacy With Teaching Performance

Variable set pair	*Rc*	*Rc*²	F(12, 511)	p
Instructional leadership and teaching performance	.66	.44	11.451	< .001
Teachers' self-efficacy and teaching performance	.82	.67	24.783	< .001

Note. N = 200. *Rc* = canonical correlation; *Rc*² = shared variance between the canonical variates. Both tests were significant at the .05 level.

Prediction of Teaching Performance

Research Question 5. *Do instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy significantly predict teaching performance?*

The regression model was significant, $F(2, 197) = 145.984$, $p < .001$, $R = .773$, $R^2 = .597$, adjusted $R^2 = .593$ (Table 3). Both predictors made significant positive contributions, but teachers' self-efficacy (β = .616) contributed more than instructional leadership (β = .213), so H3 was rejected. The regression equation was TP = 0.23SHIL + 0.55TS + 1.10.

Table 3
Multiple Regression of Teaching Performance on Instructional Leadership and Self-Efficacy

Predictor	*B*	*SE*	β	95% CI	*t*	*p*
Constant	1.10	0.23	—	[0.64, 1.56]	4.710	< .001
Instructional leadership	0.23	0.06	.213	[0.10, 0.35]	3.565	< .001
Teachers' self-efficacy	0.55	0.05	.616	[0.44, 0.65]	10.304	< .001

Note. N = 200. $R^2 = .597$; adjusted $R^2 = .593$. CI = confidence interval. TP = teaching performance; SHIL = school head's instructional leadership; TS = teachers' self-efficacy.

Model Fit and Mediation

Research Question 6. *Does the hypothesized mediation model fit the data, and does teachers' self-efficacy significantly mediate the relationship between instructional leadership and teaching performance?*

The mediation model met the cut-off for all five fit indices (Table 4). Standardized paths (Figure 1) showed that instructional leadership was strongly related to self-efficacy (.77) and that self-efficacy was strongly related to teaching performance (.81), while the direct path from leadership to teaching performance was weak (.14). The total effect of instructional leadership on teaching performance was significant (0.946, $p = .010$), the direct effect was not (0.174, $p = .227$), and the indirect effect through self-efficacy was significant (0.772, $p = .016$) (Table 5), a pattern consistent with full mediation. H4 was therefore rejected.

Table 4
Fit Indices of the Mediation Model

Index	Estimate	Cut-off criterion	Meets criterion
Cmin/df	2.105	0–3	Yes
CFI	.974	> .90	Yes
SRMR	.036	< .08	Yes
RMSEA	.075	< .08	Yes (close to limit)
PClose	.062	> .05	Yes

Note. Cmin/df = minimum discrepancy divided by degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; PClose = probability of close fit. Criteria follow Hu and Bentler (1999).

Table 5
Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of Instructional Leadership on Teaching Performance

Effect	Estimate	p	Result
Total	0.946	= .010	Significant
Direct	0.174	= .227	Not significant
Indirect (through self-efficacy)	0.772	= .016	Significant

Note. N = 200. Significance at the .05 level, two-tailed. The pattern indicates full statistical mediation

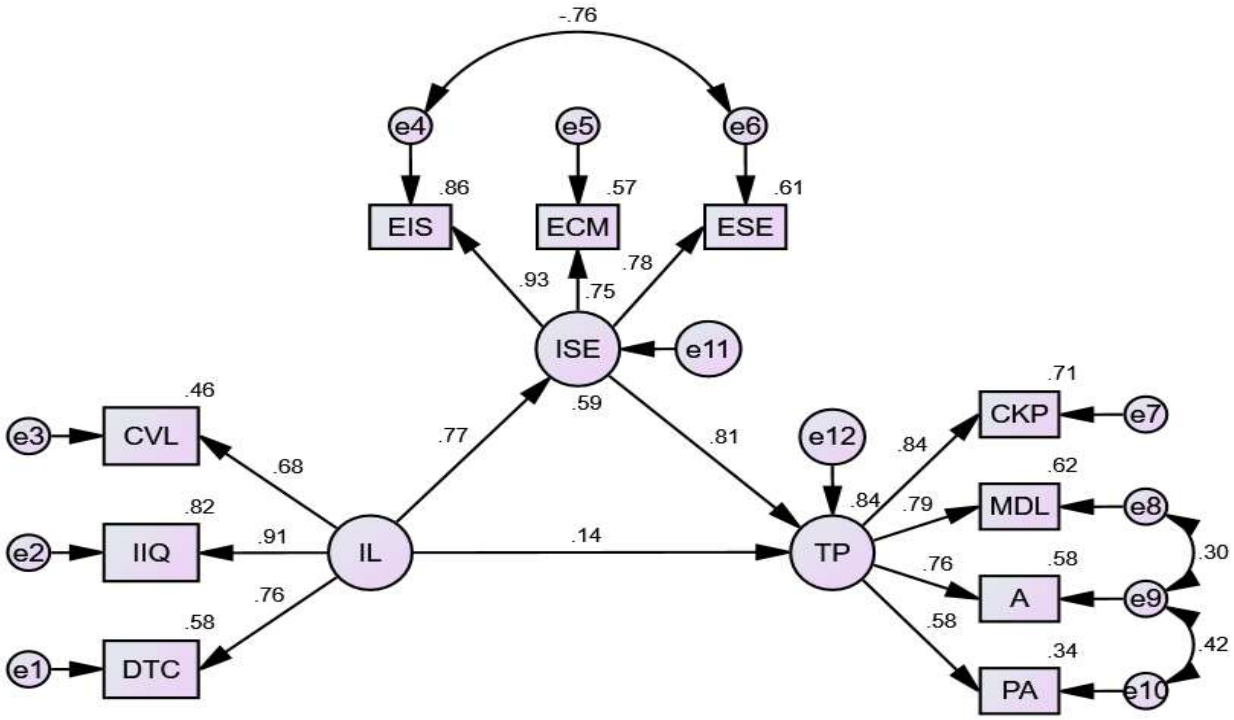


Figure 1
Mediation Model of Instructional Leadership, Instructional Self-Efficacy, and Teaching Performance

Note. IL = instructional leadership (CVL = communicating vision for learning; IIQ = improving instructional quality; DTC = developing teachers' capacity); ISE = instructional self-efficacy (EIS = instructional strategies; ECM = classroom management; ESE = student engagement); TP = teaching performance (CKP = content knowledge and pedagogy; MDL = managing diverse learners; A = assessment; PA = professional advancement).

DISCUSSION

The very high ratings of instructional leadership (Table 1) agree with Aureada (2021), who found that school heads commonly performed instructional leadership functions on the school mission, curriculum and instruction, supervision, and support for teaching. The slightly lower rating for classroom observation is notable, since Kellermann et al. (2023) found that school leaders' classroom observation with feedback was associated with better teaching quality as perceived by students, so observation and feedback is where leadership may still grow.

Teachers' self-efficacy was strongest in student engagement (Table 1), consistent with Padohinog et al. (2024), who found student engagement to be the most positive indicator of teacher self-efficacy among Philippine teachers. Classroom management was lowest, with the lowest indicators about defiant and off-task learners. Hettinger et al. (2021) described classroom management self-efficacy as confidence in controlling disruptive behavior and helping students follow rules, and Fackler et al. (2021) found that classroom characteristics were especially relevant to differences in teacher self-efficacy, which suggests that confidence in handling difficult behavior depends on the classroom conditions teachers face.

The Outstanding teaching performance across all PPST-aligned dimensions (Table 1) parallels Estrada and Gumban (2024) and Cordero and Solar (2025), who also found strong performance across domains, although at a Very Satisfactory level. The lowest indicators under managing diverse learners concerned differentiated instruction, an area that Woodcock et al. (2022) and Alnahdi et al. (2022) link with teachers' confidence in inclusive practice.

The significant canonical relationships (Table 2) agree with Elfira et al. (2024), who found a significant positive relationship between principal instructional leadership and teacher performance, and with Abarquez and Sangcad (2024), who reported that areas of teacher self-efficacy were related to work performance. The strongest contributions of improving instructional quality and developing teachers' capacity are consistent with Amzat et al. (2022), who found that principals' instructional leadership had a significant effect on teacher professional development. That efficacy in instructional strategies and content knowledge and pedagogy had the highest loadings on the self-efficacy side suggests that confidence in choosing and applying teaching methods is closely connected with teachers' subject and pedagogical competence, in line with Perera et al. (2022), who found that teaching self-efficacy was associated with instructional practices.

In the regression (Table 3), self-efficacy was the stronger predictor, while leadership still contributed significantly. This agrees with Paguntalan (2023), who found that teachers' self-efficacy was related to their teaching performance. Together with the mediation

results, it supports the view that leadership matters partly through the confidence teachers develop in their own work.

The mediation result (Tables 4 and 5 and Figure 1) is the central finding. The significant indirect effect and the non-significant direct effect are consistent with full mediation, as reported by Elfira et al. (2024) for principal instructional leadership and teacher performance. Khan et al. (2024) found a similar mediating role of self-efficacy for job satisfaction, Hasna et al. (2025) identified self-efficacy as an important factor in the effect of instructional leadership on teacher performance, and Karakose et al. (2024) reported a positive association between principal instructional leadership and teacher self-efficacy in a meta-analytic structural equation model. Long and Xia (2025) likewise modeled teacher self-efficacy as a mediator in the relation of leadership to teacher development. Within social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), school heads who communicate a clear vision, support instruction, and develop teachers may strengthen teachers' beliefs in their capability, and these beliefs in turn are associated with how well teachers perform.

Conclusions

1. Teachers perceived their school heads' instructional leadership at a Very High Extent in communicating a vision for learning, improving instructional quality, and developing teachers' capacity, with classroom observation and feedback as the relatively weakest practices.

2. Teachers were highly confident in their instructional capability, most in engaging students and least in classroom management, particularly in responding to defiant and off-task learners.

3. Teaching performance was Outstanding in all four dimensions, with managing diverse learners, especially differentiated instruction, as the relatively lowest area.

4. Both instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy were significantly related to teaching performance, and self-efficacy had the stronger relationship; hypotheses H1 and H2 were rejected.

5. Instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy together significantly predicted teaching performance, with self-efficacy as the stronger predictor; hypothesis H3 was rejected.

6. The mediation model fit the data, and teachers' self-efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between instructional leadership and teaching performance, a pattern consistent with full mediation; hypothesis H4 was rejected. Because the data were cross-sectional and self-reported, this shows association and not cause and effect.

Recommendations

School heads may strengthen classroom observation with timely, supportive feedback, since observation was the lowest-rated leadership practice, and build teachers'

confidence through coaching, mentoring, and peer observation, since self-efficacy was the stronger predictor and carried the effect of leadership.

Teachers may give more attention to classroom management and differentiated instruction, which were the lowest-rated areas of self-efficacy and performance.

District supervisors and division program specialists may include teacher self-efficacy in the design of professional development and of leadership programs for school heads.

Future studies may replicate the model in other districts, use longitudinal or experimental designs and multiple sources of data, and test other mediators such as collective efficacy and school culture.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The study complied with ethical standards. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Lourdes College Research Ethics Committee, and permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent before data collection. All participants gave written informed consent, were told that participation was voluntary, and were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Anonymity was maintained through coded questionnaires without names, responses were stored securely and reported only in aggregate form in keeping with data privacy requirements, and the participants' well-being was safeguarded; school heads were not involved in recruiting or monitoring the participants. The researcher declares that no conflict of interest exists, that plagiarism was strictly avoided, that the findings were interpreted without bias, and that the results were used purely for research. [AI disclosure: the author should state here whether any AI tool was used and how.]

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