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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP OF MASTER TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACTS

This study examines the role of master teachers in public elementary schools in ensuring high-quality education and enhancing student learning outcomes. The research found a significant correlation between instructional leadership and performance of instruction. Master teachers excel in monitoring, providing technical support, and assessing student learning. However, they face challenges in balancing teaching responsibilities with leadership duties. The study suggests the need for focused leadership training and cooperative knowledge-sharing platforms to improve instructional effectiveness and maintain quality education.

KEYWORDS: *Instructional Leadership, Master Teachers, Professional Development, Quality Education, Teaching Effectiveness*

I. INTRODUCTION

Goal 4c of the Education 2030 Agenda, which says that more teachers need to be educated, discusses the need for school leadership development. Because of this, education gets better (UNESCO, 2016; United Nations, 2015). Studies show that only classroom instruction dramatically affects how well students learn in school (UNESCO, 2018; VVOB, 2018). School administrators can also help reach Goal 4 by taking a management approach that requires the creation of inclusive, safe, and fair learning environments. Also, they can help their schools reach goals 4.1 (equal and high-quality education for all) and 4.5 by laying out a clear vision and creating a positive culture (eliminating gender disparities and allowing equal access to education for all vulnerable populations).

Quality education is essential for national transformation since it helps people develop their human capacity and properly use resources, improving their general quality of living. Since it provides people with the knowledge, skills, and tools required to benefit society greatly, it is a social and economic development engine. Emphasizing the need for inclusive, fair, and high-quality education as essential in advancing national and worldwide progress, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize education's critical role in sustainable development. By generating a more skilled workforce, reducing inequality, and supporting innovation, education-investing countries can help to promote long-term growth and prosperity.

Primary agents of learning, educational institutions are crucial in equipping students to compete in a more global world. Schools must ensure that students get top-notch education from qualified teachers with excellent pedagogical knowledge, instructional mastery, classroom management techniques, and assessment skills to reach this aim. Highly qualified teachers create significant and engaging learning opportunities that hone students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Moreover, a good education depends on instructional leadership, which emphasizes constantly enhancing teaching and learning strategies. Instructional leaders develop professional development initiatives, oversee and mentor teachers, and create an environment encouraging academic excellence. Their leadership encourages and empowers educators, supporting their dedication to student success and raising general performance. Good instructional leadership directly affects teacher motivation, instructional quality, and student outcomes, greatly enhancing the educational system (McBrayer et al., 2020).

Master teachers are important in determining the Philippine educational system's instructional quality and student learning results. As mentors, curriculum designers, and instructional supervisors, experienced teachers help colleagues apply successful teaching strategies that raise student involvement and achievement. Often assigned as instructional leaders within the Department of Education (DepEd), master teachers help school principals with curriculum planning, lesson framework design, and ensuring instructional goals. They also actively assist colleagues, especially in tackling teaching difficulties and raising instructional quality. By pushing research-based teaching approaches, peer coaching, and teacher collaboration, master teachers significantly advance the professional development of their colleagues. Their leadership influences policy execution and instructional strategies outside the classroom.

The Philippine educational system still suffers from many difficulties that hinder student learning and academic success, notwithstanding their significant contributions. In recent years, Filipino students have routinely underperformed in international tests, including PISA and TIMSS, exposing notable gaps in important topics, including literacy, mathematics, and science (OECD, 2022). These performance gaps draw attention to the need for more forceful instructional leadership to solve structural educational problems, close learning gaps, and improve teaching effectiveness. Master teachers have a unique opportunity to

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advance development as instructional leaders using targeted professional development programs, validation of instructional resources, and application of best teaching strategies. However, their efforts have been hindered by large class sizes, insufficient school funding, limited access to current instructional resources, and rising demand for continuous teacher training (DepEd, 2022).

Given these pressing concerns, this study aimed to investigate instructional leadership strategies of master teachers and develop strategies for improving their position in advancing high-quality education. Through their impact on classroom instruction and teacher performance, this study provided a perceptive analysis of strategies to enhance professional development frameworks, instructional supervision models, and leadership training programs (Leithwood et al., 2020). Based on the study findings, policy recommendations might maximize the roles of master teachers in supporting instructional excellence and enabling a transformation of the Philippine educational system. Furthermore, this study aimed to identify effective leadership styles that master teachers should implement to get beyond challenges and increase their capacity for mentoring, guiding, and supporting colleagues.

Finally, enabling master teachers to work on capacity-building projects, policy changes, and targeted resource allocation helped them properly fulfill their instructional leadership roles. Master teachers became more suited to inspire their colleagues, improve their teaching strategies, and assist the educational system in developing and strengthening their leadership qualities. Strengthening instructional leadership at the school level in front of ongoing educational challenges helped to achieve long-lasting increases in student learning and academic success. This study thus underlined the need for master teachers to be the main drivers of educational transformation that aimed to provide practical suggestions for raising teaching and learning standards in the Philippines.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEMS

This study assessed instructional leadership of master teachers in public elementary schools.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the instructional leadership of the master teachers be described in terms of the following:
    - 1.1. instructional monitoring; and
    - 1.2. technical assistance?
2. How may the performance of the master teachers be assessed in terms of the following:
    - 2.1. lesson delivery;
    - 2.2. classroom management; and
    - 2.3. evaluation skills?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the instructional leadership and performance of master teachers?
4. Is there a significant difference between the self-assessment and the school heads' assessment of master teachers' instructional leadership and performance?
5. What challenges may be encountered by the master teachers in instructional leadership in terms of the following:
    - 5.1. instructional monitoring; and
    - 5.2. technical assistance?

III. SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study examined the instructional leadership of master teachers in public elementary schools in the Division of Nueva Ecija, focusing on monitoring and technical assistance, lesson delivery, classroom management, and evaluation skills, as per DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 and DepEd Order No. 2, s. 2015, during the First Semester of the 2024-2025 academic year.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used descriptive correlational research design to examine the relationship between master teachers' instructional leadership performance and their ability to balance their tasks. Descriptive research uses quantitative methods to describe and analyze existing conditions, focusing on the present and past events. The study aimed to test the significant relationship between instructional leadership tasks and teacher efficiency, as well as the profile of teachers and their efficiency. The primary data-gathering instrument was a structured questionnaire, designed to assess the effectiveness of master teachers in balancing their instructional tasks while fulfilling their leadership roles. This descriptive design allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter and provided a more accurate understanding of the relationship between variables.

2. RESPONDENTS

The study focused specifically on Master Teachers assigned to public elementary schools in the Division of Nueva Ecija, with the goal of examining their roles and performance in instructional leadership tasks. To ensure the data's credibility and accuracy, selected School Heads took part in the research, validating the Master Teachers' self-assessments. This collaborative approach enabled a more in-depth understanding of how Master Teachers perceive their effectiveness in their leadership roles, as well as how these perceptions correspond to the observations of their immediate supervisors. The study aimed to provide a well-rounded evaluation of the division's instructional leadership practices by incorporating both perspectives.

3. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The study used stratified random sampling to ensure fair representation and minimize sampling bias. The population was stratified by congressional districts, considering variations in master teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select 20 school heads, based on predetermined criteria. The study's participants were public elementary school heads in small schools with only one master teacher. The specific details of the school assignment were not explicitly disclosed to uphold respondents' preferences, ensure confidentiality, and adhere to ethical research concerns.

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4. DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

This study used a survey questionnaire to collect data on instructional leadership tasks, performance of master teachers, and challenges encountered in performing these tasks. The questionnaire was reviewed for validity by experts in educational leadership and English critics. The researcher interviewed five master teachers and created a questionnaire for instructional monitoring, technical assistance, lesson delivery, classroom management, evaluation skills, and challenges encountered in performing these tasks. The School Division of Nueva Ecija approved the instrument for data collection. The validity of the surveys was determined using Aiken's V technique, with the critical value for the five raters being 0.8 less than the computed values for each item in the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was established by measuring its internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha with the help of SPSS. All six components of the questionnaire exhibited strong reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.832 to 0.951. Instructional Monitoring, Classroom Management, and Challenges Encountered demonstrated excellent internal consistency, while Technical Assistance, Lesson Delivery, and Evaluation Skills showed good to excellent reliability.

5. DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

The researcher conducted a study on the teaching efficiency of master teachers in the Schools Division of Nueva Ecija, using a digital survey questionnaire. The study was conducted with confidentiality and voluntary participation. The data was analyzed to identify challenges faced in instructional leadership tasks.

6. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The study analyzed master teachers' efficiency and challenges in instructional leadership tasks using statistical tools like Likert scale, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and independent t-test. Challenges included challenging, unchallenging, and very unchallenging experiences. Results were computed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 25.

V. RESULTS

Master teachers ensured quality education through instructional leadership tasks, monitoring, and technical assistance. They supported their colleagues, enhanced teaching strategies, and contributed to school improvement, fostering a high standard of education and a productive learning environment for teachers and students. Instructional monitoring and technical assistance were determined to describe the instructional leadership of the master teachers.

1. Instructional Leadership Tasks of Master Teachers

Master teachers ensured quality education through instructional leadership tasks, monitoring, and technical assistance. They supported their colleagues, enhanced teaching strategies, and contributed to school improvement, fostering a high standard of education and a productive learning environment for teachers and students. Instructional monitoring and technical assistance were determined to describe the instructional leadership of the master teachers.

Table 1
Instructional Leadership Tasks of Master Teachers

Variables	MT	VD	SH	VD
Lesson Delivery	**3.72**	**VE**	**3.56**	**VE**
Technical Assistance	**3.67**	**VE**	**3.58**	**VE**

Legend: 1.00-1.74 Very Inefficient (VI), 1.75-2.49 Inefficient(I), 2.50-3.24 Efficient(E), 3.25-4.00 Very Efficient

Table 1 presents the perceived efficiency of Master Teachers (MTs) in performing key instructional leadership tasks, as assessed by both the Master Teachers themselves and their School Heads (SHs). The results show that MTs rated their performance in lesson delivery at 3.72, while SHs rated them slightly lower at 3.56; both ratings fall under the "Very Efficient" (VE) category. Similarly, in providing technical assistance, MTs gave themselves a rating of 3.67, and SHs provided a comparable rating of 3.58—again, both within the "Very Efficient" range. These findings indicate a strong consensus between MTs and SHs regarding the high level of competence demonstrated by Master Teachers in these areas. The consistently high ratings suggest that Master Teachers are effectively fulfilling their roles as instructional leaders, particularly in guiding lesson implementation and supporting their colleagues through technical assistance.

2. Teaching Performance of Master Teachers

Master teachers' teaching performance is crucial in maintaining high educational standards and fostering student success. Their responsibilities include effective lesson delivery, efficient classroom management, and accurate evaluation of student learning. As instructional leaders, they serve as role models for fellow teachers, ensuring quality instruction and continuous professional development.

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Table 2
Teaching Performance of Master Teachers

Lesson Delivery	MT	VD	SH	VD
Lesson Delivery	**3.81**	**VE**	**3.72**	**VE**
Classroom Management Skills	**3.82**	**VE**	**3.75**	**VE**
Evaluation Skills	**3.82**	**VE**	**3.57**	**VE**

Legend: 1.00-1.74 Very Inefficient (VI), 1.75-2.49 Inefficient(I), 2.50-3.24 Efficient€, 3.25-4.00 Very Efficient (VI)

Table 2 presents the teaching performance of Master Teachers (MTs) based on their self-assessment and the evaluations of their School Heads (SHs) across three key areas: lesson delivery, classroom management skills, and evaluation skills. Both groups rated the MTs' performance as *Very Efficient* in all areas. Specifically, in lesson delivery, MTs gave themselves a rating of 3.81, while SHs rated them at 3.72. In classroom management skills, MTs scored 3.82, with SHs giving a slightly lower score of 3.75. For evaluation skills, MTs again rated themselves at 3.82, while SHs gave a slightly more conservative rating of 3.57. Despite minor differences in scores, both perspectives consistently fall within the "Very Efficient" range (3.25–4.00). This indicates a shared perception that Master Teachers demonstrate a high level of competence in their teaching responsibilities, particularly in delivering lessons effectively, managing classrooms, and evaluating student learning outcomes.

3. Significant Relationship Between the Master Teacher's Instructional Leadership Tasks and their Teaching Performance

Table 3 shows the significant relationship between the performance of Master Teachers in their instructional leadership tasks and their efficiency in carrying out teaching functions.

Table 3
Significant Relationship Between the Performance of Master Teacher's Instructional Leadership Tasks and their Teaching Efficiency in Performing Functions

Master Teacher's Instructional Leadership Tasks		Teaching Performance of Master Teachers		
		Lesson Delivery	Classroom Management	Evaluation
Instructional Monitoring	*r – value*	**.764****	**.645****	**.625****
	p – value	.000	.000	.000
Technical Assistance	*r – value*	**.783****	**.676****	**.648****
	p – value	.000	.000	.000

Table 3 showed a strong positive correlation between the efficiency of the master teachers in carrying out critical instructional activities, including lesson delivery, classroom management, and evaluation, their assigned leadership performance, and technical assistance and instructional monitoring. With every function, the correlation values for instructional monitoring showed a noteworthy relationship. With lesson delivery, the r- value of.764 ($p < .001$) showed a strong positive relationship. This implied that their effectiveness in delivering lessons was much higher as master teachers improved their capacity to monitor instructional practices. This association also implied constant monitoring and improvement of teaching strategies which enabled teachers to present materials more precisely. Comparably, classroom management ($r = .645$, $p < .001$) and evaluation ($r = .625$, $p < .001$) were strongly correlated with instructional monitoring.

4. Significant Difference between Instructional Leadership and Performance as Assessed by Master Teachers and School Heads

Table 4 shows the significant difference between instructional leadership and performance as assessed by master teachers and school leaders.

Table 4
Significant Difference between Instructional Leadership and Performance as Assessed by Master Teachers and School Leaders

	t-value	p-value	VD
Instructional Monitoring	9.878	.000	**Significant**
Technical Assistance	3.675	.000	**Significant**
Lesson Delivery	6.759	.000	**Significant**
Classroom Management	5.502	.000	**Significant**
Evaluation Skills	20.572	.000	**Significant**

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Table 4 indicates a significant difference between the self-assessments of Master Teachers and the evaluations made by School Leaders regarding both instructional leadership and teaching performance. The t-values for all areas—instructional monitoring (t = 9.878), technical assistance (t = 3.675), lesson delivery (t = 6.759), classroom management (t = 5.502), and evaluation skills (t = 20.572)—are accompanied by p-values of .000, confirming that the differences are statistically significant. These findings suggest that Master Teachers and School Leaders have differing perceptions of the former's performance, with Master Teachers likely rating themselves more favorably. The consistent disparity across all indicators highlights the need for a more calibrated and collaborative approach to performance evaluation, ensuring that both self-perceptions and external assessments are considered in developing a clearer picture of instructional effectiveness.

Table 5

Challenges Encountered by Master Teachers

	Mean	VD
Instructional Monitoring	**3.63**	**VC**
Technical Assistance	**3.57**	**VC**

Legend: 1.00-1.74 Very Unchallenging, (VU), 1.75-2.49 Unchallenging(U), 2.50-3.24 Challenging (C) 3.25-4.00 Very Challenging (VC)

Table 5 shows the challenges encountered by Master Teachers in performing their instructional leadership roles, particularly in the areas of instructional monitoring and technical assistance. Both tasks were rated as Very Challenging (VC), with instructional monitoring receiving a mean score of 3.63 and technical assistance slightly lower at 3.57. These results indicate that Master Teachers perceive significant difficulties in carrying out these responsibilities. Despite being rated as very efficient in these same areas (as shown in earlier tables), the findings suggest that the complexity and demands of instructional monitoring and providing technical assistance present considerable challenges. This highlights the need for sustained support, resources, and capacity-building efforts to help Master Teachers effectively manage the pressures associated with their roles.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

1. Master teachers and school heads both rated their effectiveness high, with remedial classes and expertise sharing being the most important tasks.
2. Master teachers rated themselves highly efficient in technical assistance, with the highest task being disseminating and implementing school policies.
3. Master teachers rated themselves adequate in lesson delivery, focusing on flexible instruction and adapting methods to students' needs.
4. Master teachers scored high on classroom management skills, with punctuality as their strongest strength.
5. Master teachers rated their evaluation skills as somewhat effective, with strengths in student performance assessment and grading fairness.
6. A strong correlation was found between lesson delivery, instructional monitoring, classroom management, and evaluation, with technical assistance being critical.
7. Master teachers face challenges in instructional monitoring, including supervising students and matching instructional strategies with teacher and student needs.
8. Mismatched assignments and lack of clear policies complicate efficient monitoring and feedback provision.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) can use the study's findings to develop training programs focusing on instructional monitoring and technical assistance.
2. Program chairs can enhance instructional leadership training by focusing on faculty supervision, technical assistance, and performance evaluation.
3. The Department of Education (DepEd) can use the study's findings to strengthen the instructional leadership of master teachers.
4. School administrators can develop clear guidelines on instructional leadership, focusing on instructional monitoring, student behavior management, and leadership delegation.
5. Master teachers can engage in professional development on interdisciplinary instruction, ICT integration, and critical thinking strategies.
6. The study's recommendations can improve lesson delivery, better classroom management, and enhanced evaluation methods for students.
7. The study can serve as a foundation for policy recommendations and further research to refine best practices in education.
8. Future researchers can further examine the relationship between instructional leadership tasks and school performance, and explore other factors like school culture, administrative support, and professional development opportunities.

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