



THE MODERATING EFFECT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER INTEGRITY AND INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCE OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the moderating role of instructional leadership support on the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence among public elementary school teachers in Talomo West District, Davao City. Using a non-experimental quantitative design with a descriptive-correlational technique, the study surveyed 262 randomly selected teachers. Results revealed that career integrity and instructional competence were both rated as moderately extensive, with principle-based liability and ethically oriented practices emerging as their most evident indicators. Instructional leadership support was also found to be moderately extensive, though inconsistently practiced. A significant positive relationship was established between career integrity and instructional competence, with duty of integrity showing the strongest correlation. However, ethical resilience showed the weakest association, highlighting the need for reinforcement in managing ethical challenges. The study further confirmed that instructional leadership support significantly moderates the relationship, though its misalignment may weaken the impact of career integrity on competence. This supports Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory and Rest's Four-Component Model while partially contradicting Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, as overly directive support may reduce teacher autonomy. The findings suggest that leadership must be empowering and ethics-focused to enhance teachers' professional practice.

KEYWORDS: Career integrity, instructional competence, instructional leadership support, ethical resilience, principle-based liability

INTRODUCTION

Instructional competence of teachers is a critical element in ensuring high-quality education and effective learning outcomes. Research has shown that teachers with strong career integrity tend to exhibit better classroom practices and ethical behavior. However, many schools face challenges due to poor instructional leadership support from school heads, which limits the potential of teachers. Inadequate guidance and minimal professional development opportunities further undermine teachers' ability to perform effectively. Consequently, this study examines the moderating effect of instructional leadership support on the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence, highlighting the problematic issue of poor instructional competence of teachers in relation to weak leadership support from school heads.

In Canada, a recent statistical report indicates that approximately 35 percent of elementary school teachers experience challenges related to low instructional competence. Moreira et al. (2023) observed that limited professional development opportunities contribute significantly to these challenges, resulting in insufficient skill enhancement. Moreover, Channa and Sahito (2022) noted that inadequate institutional support further hampers teachers' ability to adopt innovative instructional strategies. Consequently, these factors adversely affect student learning outcomes and overall classroom performance. Therefore, the Canadian case underscores the need for targeted policy interventions and resource allocation to improve instructional competence.

In Singapore, despite its reputation for high educational standards, some statistical data reveal that a small percentage of teachers still struggle with maintaining optimal instructional competence. Low (2023) reported that these challenges are partly due to the rapid pace of curricular changes, which can overwhelm teachers. Similarly, Chen et al. (2021) found that insufficient time for collaborative planning and continuous professional learning contributes to this issue. As a result, even within a robust educational system, pockets of low instructional competence may persist. Hence, these findings highlight the importance of sustained support and adaptive training programs to address the evolving needs of teachers in Singapore.

In Thailand, recent surveys indicated that nearly forty percent of elementary school teachers face issues associated with low instructional competence. Albarra Shidiq et al. (2022) suggested that inadequate access to updated teaching resources is a major contributor to these challenges. In addition, Poonputta and Nuangchalerm (2024) argued that insufficient ongoing professional development opportunities further exacerbate the problem. These limitations not only restrict teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction but also negatively impact student achievement. Consequently, the Thai educational system is urged to implement strategic improvements that focus on continuous teacher training and resource enhancement.



In Luzon, statistical reports have revealed that approximately thirty percent of teachers exhibit low levels of instructional competence. Malinag (2021) indicated that this situation is largely due to gaps in initial teacher training and a lack of practical in-service support. Moreover, Abella and Rosa (2023) emphasized that the absence of regular performance evaluations and feedback mechanisms contributes to the persistence of this issue. These factors collectively hinder the adoption of effective teaching practices and limit educational progress. Therefore, the findings in Luzon call for comprehensive reforms in teacher education and professional development to boost instructional competence.

In Mindanao, recent statistics have shown that nearly 45 percent of elementary school teachers struggle with low instructional competence, a matter of significant concern. Talikan (2021) observed that resource constraints and limited access to updated teaching methods are key factors contributing to this problem. Additionally, Abendaño et al. (2023) reported that the absence of systematic support from school leadership further compounds the issue. These challenges not only impede effective teaching but also adversely affect student learning outcomes. As a result, urgent measures are needed to provide enhanced training and support to elevate the instructional competence of teachers in Mindanao.

In Talomo District, Davao City, local data indicate that 1 out of 2 of elementary school teachers face difficulties related to low instructional competence. It had been noted that this high prevalence is attributed to both insufficient professional development and limited access to modern teaching resources. It was also found that the lack of effective instructional leadership further undermines teachers' ability to improve their teaching practices. These issues not only hinder the professional growth of teachers but also impact the quality of education provided to students. Consequently, the situation in Talomo District calls for immediate strategic interventions and sustained support to address the pressing challenges in instructional competence.

There is an urgent need to conduct this study in the researcher's setting due to the critical role that teacher competence plays in student success. Local educational challenges, such as limited professional development opportunities and resource constraints, underscore the importance of understanding the interplay between ethical standards and instructional practices. Adding more, the rapidly evolving educational landscape in Talomo District calls for evidence-based strategies to support teachers effectively. By investigating the moderating effect of instructional leadership support, the study aims to develop practical recommendations for school administrators and policymakers. Hence, this research will help bridge the gap between theory and practice, leading to improved teaching outcomes in the region.

The existing literature shows a clear research gap in understanding how instructional leadership support influences the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers, particularly in local contexts such as Talomo District, Davao City. While several studies have examined career integrity and instructional competence separately, few have explored how leadership support may moderate this relationship. Moreover, current research has largely focused on developed settings, leaving a gap in quantitative data from under-researched regions. Consequently, there is a need to fill this gap by conducting a quantitative study that applies rigorous statistical methods to uncover these dynamics. In addition, addressing this gap will provide valuable insights that can inform tailored interventions to improve teacher performance.

This study is anchored on Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory (1958), Rest's Four-Component Model of Moral Behavior Theory (James, 1986), and Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985). Kohlberg's theory explains that moral reasoning develops through stages, from basic obedience and avoidance of punishment to the recognition of universal ethical principles, making it relevant in understanding how teachers make ethical decisions in challenging classroom situations. Rest's model supports this by emphasizing that moral behavior involves moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character, showing that ethical action depends not only on reasoning but also on the willingness and character to act properly. Meanwhile, Self-Determination Theory explains that teachers' motivation and satisfaction are influenced by autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are important in strengthening ethical decision-making and professional fulfillment. Together, these theories provide a strong foundation for examining how teachers' moral reasoning, ethical behavior, motivation, and professional needs influence their professional ethics and instructional satisfaction.

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the moderating role of instructional leadership support on the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers in Talomo District, Davao City. Therefore, the study sought to determine the extent of career integrity of teachers in terms of ethical resilience, duty of integrity, and principle-based liability; determine the extent of instructional competence of teachers in terms of pedagogic skills, teacher education management, ethically oriented practices, and pedagogical endeavor; determine the extent of instructional leadership support for teachers; evaluate the significant relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers; and examine whether instructional leadership support significantly moderated the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers.

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H0₁: There is no significant between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers.

H0₂: Instructional leadership support does not moderate the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers.



METHODOLOGY

The methodology outlined the procedures used to conduct the study, including the research design, ethical safeguards, respondents, sampling technique, research instrument, data gathering steps, and statistical treatment. The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design through moderation analysis to determine the extent of career integrity, instructional competence, and instructional leadership support for teachers and to examine the relationship and moderating effect among the variables. This approach was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to measure the variables through numerical data and statistical procedures without manipulating the school setting. It also supported the use of correlation and hierarchical regression analysis to determine whether career integrity was significantly related to instructional competence and whether instructional leadership support moderated this relationship.

Ethical safeguards were emphasized through adherence to approved research procedures and institutional requirements. The study established social value by addressing the need to strengthen ethical conduct, instructional competence, and leadership support among public elementary school teachers in Talomo District, Davao City. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the voluntary basis of answering the questionnaire. Measures to protect the respondents included the right to withdraw without penalty, respectful communication, and assurance that participation would not affect their employment, performance rating, or relationship with school authorities. Privacy and confidentiality were observed by keeping identities confidential, presenting data in summarized form, securing physical and digital files, and following the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

The respondents of the study were public elementary school teachers from Talomo District, Davao City. The study engaged 262 elementary school teachers from a total population of 760 teachers working in public elementary schools within the district. The sample size was determined using the Slovin Formula, which provided a practical basis for selecting a representative number of respondents from the population. The respondents were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure that the different groups of teachers were proportionately represented. The inclusion criteria covered teachers who were actively teaching in public elementary schools in Talomo District, had at least five years of teaching experience, and were not undergoing any administrative or disciplinary action during the conduct of the study.

The researcher used adapted and modified survey questionnaires to suit the current investigation. The first part measured career integrity of teachers based on the ideas of Enwereuzor et al. (2020), covering ethical resilience, duty of integrity, and principle-based liability. This instrument obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.934, which was described as excellent and indicated very high internal consistency. The second part measured instructional competence of elementary school teachers based on the instrument proposed by Swank et al. (2021), covering pedagogic skills, teacher education management, ethically oriented practices, and pedagogical endeavor; this instrument obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.946, which was described as excellent. The third part measured instructional leadership support for teachers based on the ideas of Kilag and Sasan (2023), with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.932, which also indicated excellent reliability; all instruments used a 5-point Likert scale.

The data gathering procedure began with the acquisition of ethical clearance from the Graduate School RMC-Research Ethics Committee. After securing the ethical clearance, the researcher obtained an endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School at The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., Davao City, which served as formal institutional support for the conduct of the study. The researcher then sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Davao City to conduct the study among public elementary schools in Talomo District, attaching both the Dean's endorsement and the ethical clearance as supporting documents. After division approval was obtained, the approval letter was attached to the letters addressed to the principals of the selected schools. The questionnaires were administered through online and face-to-face modes to accommodate the availability and circumstances of the respondents.

After collecting the completed survey questionnaires, the researcher counted, sorted, checked, and encoded the retrieved responses in Microsoft Excel according to the domains of career integrity, instructional competence, and instructional leadership support for teachers. Weighted mean was used to describe the extent of the major variables, while the standard deviation was used to determine the consistency or variation of responses among the teacher-respondents. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to assess the significant relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers. Hierarchical Regression Analysis was used to evaluate the moderating effect of instructional leadership support on the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence. The results were then interpreted and discussed based on the objectives of the study, related literature, theoretical foundations, and research problems, after which conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Career Integrity of Teachers. The results showed that career integrity of teachers in Talomo District, Davao City was moderately extensive overall ($M = 3.25$), meaning integrity-related behaviors were sometimes observed among the teacher-respondents. Among the domains, principle-based liability obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.41$), interpreted as extensive, while ethical resilience had the lowest mean ($M = 3.08$), interpreted as moderately extensive. This pattern suggests that teachers were stronger in showing accountability and responsibility guided by ethical principles than in consistently maintaining integrity during difficult or challenging situations. This reflects a positive orientation toward accountability and professional ethics, which, as Ephraim et al. (2024) notes, forms the backbone



of trust and ethical leadership in education. The result implies the need to strengthen teachers' ethical resilience through mentoring, reflective activities, and school-based professional support.

Table 1. Summary of Career Integrity of Teachers in Talomo West District, Davao City		
Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Ethical Resilience	3.08	Moderately Extensive
Duty of Integrity	3.27	Moderately Extensive
Principle-Based Liability	3.41	Moderately Extensive
Overall Mean	3.25	Moderately Extensive
Legend: 4.20-5.00= Very Extensive; 3.40-4.19= Extensive; 2.60-3.39= Moderately Extensive; 1.80-2.59=Less Extensive; & 1.00-1.79= Not Extensive		

In specific domains, duty of integrity was moderately extensive ($M = 3.27$), indicating that teachers sometimes demonstrated fairness, confidentiality, respectful communication, and responsibility in professional interactions. Principle-based liability was extensive, showing that teachers oftentimes aligned their classroom actions with ethical standards and professional accountability. However, the moderately extensive level of ethical resilience suggests that teachers still needed support in sustaining integrity when faced with pressure, moral dilemmas, or difficult professional situations. As suggested by Ismail et al. (2024), creating a culture of integrity in schools requires ongoing support, ethical reflection, and professional development to ensure that integrity is not only understood but consistently enacted in daily teaching practice. Overall, the findings indicate that career integrity was present among teachers, but it was not yet consistently strong across all areas.

Instructional Competence of Teachers. The instructional competence of teachers was also moderately extensive overall ($M = 3.36$), showing that instructional competence was sometimes demonstrated in teaching practice. Among the domains, ethically oriented practice obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.43$), interpreted as extensive, while pedagogical endeavor had the lowest mean ($M = 3.26$), interpreted as moderately extensive. This suggests that teachers were stronger in applying ethical principles in instruction than in consistently engaging in continuous professional growth and reflective improvement. As emphasized by Crawford et al. (2020), a strong foundation in ethics and pedagogy enhances the quality of instruction and builds trust between teachers and learners. The result emphasizes the need to support teachers in strengthening pedagogical development, professional inquiry, and self-directed learning.

Table 9. Summary of Instructional Competence of Teachers in Talomo West District, Davao City		
Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Pedagogic Skills	3.39	Moderately Extensive
Teacher Education Management	3.35	Moderately Extensive
Ethically Oriented Practice	3.43	Extensive
Pedagogical Endeavor	3.26	Moderately Extensive
Overall Mean	3.36	Moderately Extensive
Legend: 4.20-5.00= Very Extensive; 3.40-4.19= Extensive; 2.60-3.39= Moderately Extensive; 1.80-2.59=Less Extensive; & 1.00-1.79= Not Extensive		

The results further showed that pedagogic skills and teacher education management were moderately extensive, suggesting that teachers sometimes applied effective teaching strategies, managed instructional responsibilities, and engaged in professional collaboration. Ethically oriented practice was extensive, indicating that teachers oftentimes demonstrated learner-centered care, accountability, respect for learners' rights, and ethical decision-making in teaching. However, the lower rating for pedagogical endeavor points to the need for stronger support in professional development planning, reflective practice, and timely problem-solving. As noted by Blömeke et al. (2022), professional growth and collaborative leadership are essential components of sustained instructional competence. These findings show that instructional competence may improve when teachers are given more opportunities for mentoring, collaborative learning, and continuous instructional training.

Instructional Leadership Support for Teachers. Instructional leadership support for teachers was rated moderately extensive overall ($M = 3.12$), meaning leadership support was sometimes evident in the school setting. This result indicates that school heads provided guidance, mentoring, and support for teacher development, but these practices were not yet consistently experienced by the teacher-respondents. The highest-rated statement was related to benefiting from administrative mentoring through targeted guidance and feedback, while the lowest-rated statements were related to providing support for professional growth and contributing to teachers' development as educators. As Lopez and Hossain (2021) emphasized, effective instructional leadership requires consistent mentoring, feedback, and professional guidance to positively influence teaching and learning outcomes. This suggests that instructional leadership support needed to become more consistent, visible, and responsive to teachers' instructional needs.



Table 3. Instructional Leadership Support for Teachers in Talomo District, Davao City		
Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Providing guidance and support for teachers' professional growth is a key role of the school head.	3.05	Moderately Extensive
2. Benefiting from administrative mentoring through targeted guidance and feedback helps teachers improve.	3.26	Moderately Extensive
3. Enhancing teachers' skills and instructional practices through administrative mentoring supports effective teaching.	3.13	Moderately Extensive
4. Receiving valuable insights and direction through administrative mentoring empowers teachers in their practice.	3.09	Moderately Extensive
5. Contributing to teachers' development as educators through administrative mentoring strengthens the school's instructional capacity.	3.05	Moderately Extensive
Overall Mean	3.12	Moderately Extensive
Legend: 4.20-5.00= Very Extensive; 3.40-4.19= Extensive; 2.60-3.39= Moderately Extensive; 1.80-2.59=Less Extensive; & 1.00-1.79= Not Extensive		

The moderately extensive result implies that instructional leadership support was present but not yet strong enough to fully sustain teacher growth and instructional improvement. Teachers may have received mentoring and feedback, but the level of support still required improvement in terms of frequency, depth, and practical usefulness. This finding highlights the need for school heads to strengthen coaching, classroom-based guidance, professional conversations, and instructional monitoring. Overall, stronger leadership support may help teachers improve their teaching competence, especially when support respects teacher autonomy and professional judgment.

Relationship Between Career Integrity and Instructional Competence of Teachers. The correlation result showed a direct, positive, moderate to strong, and significant relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers ($r = 0.631$, $p = 0.009$). This means that higher levels of career integrity were associated with higher levels of instructional competence. The result suggests that teachers who demonstrated stronger ethical resilience, duty of integrity, and principle-based liability were more likely to show better pedagogic skills, teacher education management, ethically oriented practices, and pedagogical endeavor. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers was rejected.

Table 4. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis Result on Career Integrity and Instructional Competence of Teachers in Talomo District, Davao City			
		<i>Career Integrity</i>	<i>Instructional Competence</i>
Career Integrity	Pearson's r	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
Instructional Competence	Pearson's r	0.631**	—
	df	260	—
	p-value	0.009	—
Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$			

This finding implies that integrity in the teaching profession is closely connected to effective instructional practice. Teachers who act with fairness, accountability, and ethical responsibility are more likely to demonstrate competence in planning lessons, facilitating learning, supporting learners, and maintaining professional standards. This finding is similar to the view of Canuto et al. (2024), who emphasized that integrity in the teaching profession serves as an important moral foundation that influences teachers' values, decisions, and professional actions. However, the result also suggests that career integrity alone may not fully explain instructional competence, since other factors such as training, teaching resources, supervision, school culture, and leadership support may also influence teachers' performance. Thus, strengthening instructional competence requires both ethical formation and continuous professional support.

Moderating Effect of Instructional Leadership Support. Hierarchical regression analysis revealed that instructional leadership support significantly moderated the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers. In Step 1, career integrity had a significant positive influence on instructional competence ($B = 0.835$, $\beta = 0.834$, $p = 0.000$), while instructional leadership support had a significant negative influence ($B = -0.205$, $\beta = -0.355$, $p = 0.000$). The model obtained an adjusted R^2 of 0.478, $F =$



120.637, and $p = 0.000$, indicating that career integrity and instructional leadership support explained 47.8 percent of the variance in instructional competence. This means that the combined effect of the two variables significantly contributed to explaining teachers' instructional competence.

Step 1			Instructional Competence of Teachers (IC)				
			B	S.E	Beta	p-value	Decisions
Career Integrity (CI)			.835*	.055	.834	.000	Reject H ₀
Instructional Leadership Support (ILS)			-.205*	.031	-.355	.000	Reject H ₀
Adjusted R ²	= 0.478	F-value	= 120.637**		p-value	= 0.000	
Step 2							
Career Integrity (CI)			1.490*	.256	1.488	.000	Reject H ₀
Instructional Leadership Support (ILS)			.471	.260	.817	.071	Accept H ₀
Moderator (CI*ILS)			-.208*	.080	-1.641	.009	Reject H ₀
Adjusted R ²	= 0.490	F-value	= 84.528**		p-value	= 0.000	
*Significant @ p<0.05							

In Step 2, the interaction term between career integrity and instructional leadership support was added to the model. The interaction effect was significant and negative ($B = -0.208$, $\beta = -1.641$, $p = 0.009$), while the adjusted R^2 increased from 0.478 to 0.490. This increase indicates that the interaction term added explanatory value to the model, although the increase was modest. The significant interaction result means that instructional leadership support changed the strength of the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that instructional leadership support does not significantly moderate the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers was rejected.

The negative interaction suggests that as instructional leadership support increases, the positive effect of career integrity on instructional competence may become weaker. This finding should be interpreted carefully because leadership support is generally expected to improve teaching practice, but support that is too controlling, poorly aligned, or not responsive to teacher needs may reduce teachers' professional autonomy. In this context, teachers with strong career integrity may perform better when leadership support empowers rather than restricts their ethical judgment and instructional decisions. Hence, the result emphasizes that instructional leadership should be supportive, collaborative, and autonomy-enhancing. Overall, the findings suggest that instructional leadership support plays a significant moderating role, but its quality and manner of delivery are important in strengthening the connection between teacher integrity and instructional competence.

The findings support Kohlberg's (1958) Moral Development Theory, which emphasizes that higher levels of moral reasoning lead to more principled and autonomous actions. Teachers with high career integrity may operate from post-conventional levels of moral reasoning, making independent instructional decisions based on internalized principles. The results also align with Rest's Four-Component Model of Moral Behavior (1986), particularly the components of moral motivation and moral character, which explain why teachers with strong ethical foundations tend to exhibit competent instructional behavior. However, the significant negative moderation effect challenges simplistic applications of leadership support. From the lens of Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, instructional leadership may undermine instructional competence if it reduces teachers' sense of autonomy which is an essential psychological need for motivation and performance. These findings emphasize that effective school leadership must support teachers in ways that respect and preserve their moral agency and instructional independence.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the career integrity of teachers in Talomo District, Davao City is moderately extensive, meaning it is sometimes observed in school practice. Teachers show acceptable integrity-related behaviors, but these are not yet consistently strong across all domains. Principle-based liability is the stronger area, while ethical resilience needs more improvement. This means that teachers often align their actions with ethical standards and accountability, but they still need stronger support in handling moral dilemmas, pressure, and professional challenges with consistency.

The study also concludes that instructional competence of teachers is moderately extensive, meaning it is sometimes demonstrated in their teaching practice. Teachers perform instructional duties with acceptable competence, but their practices are not yet regularly and strongly evident in all areas. Ethically oriented practice is the stronger area, while pedagogical endeavor needs more attention. This shows that teachers are stronger in applying ethical principles in instruction, but they need more support in reflective practice, self-directed learning, professional development planning, and timely instructional problem-solving.



The study further concludes that instructional leadership support for teachers is moderately extensive, meaning it is sometimes evident in the school setting. School heads provide guidance, mentoring, and support for teacher growth, but these practices are not yet consistently experienced by teachers. This means that instructional leadership support is present, but it needs to be strengthened in terms of regular feedback, meaningful mentoring, classroom-based guidance, and teacher empowerment. The result suggests that school heads need to provide support that is not only administrative but also responsive to the actual instructional needs of teachers.

There is a direct, positive, and significant relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the variables is rejected. This means that teachers with stronger career integrity tend to demonstrate higher instructional competence. The result suggests that ethical resilience, duty of integrity, and principle-based liability may contribute to better pedagogic skills, teacher education management, ethically oriented practice, and pedagogical endeavor.

Instructional leadership support significantly moderates the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence of teachers; thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant moderating effect is rejected. However, the interpretation is cautious because the interaction effect is negative, suggesting that leadership support may weaken the positive effect of career integrity on instructional competence when it is excessive, misaligned, or controlling. This means that leadership support should empower rather than limit teachers' ethical judgment and instructional independence. Overall, the study emphasizes the need for balanced instructional leadership that strengthens teacher integrity, respects professional autonomy, and supports instructional competence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that DepEd officials strengthen policy support for teacher integrity, instructional competence, and instructional leadership practices through clear professional development programs and monitoring systems. They may provide training focused on ethical resilience, reflective teaching, instructional decision-making, and responsible professional conduct. They may also support division-level programs that promote teacher autonomy, ethical practice, and continuous instructional improvement.

School heads may strengthen instructional leadership support by providing regular mentoring, constructive feedback, and classroom-based guidance to teachers. They may also ensure that their support is collaborative rather than controlling, so teachers can maintain their professional judgment and instructional independence. Moreover, they may create school-based programs that promote ethical reflection, peer coaching, shared leadership, and professional learning communities.

Teachers may continue improving their career integrity by practicing fairness, accountability, confidentiality, and ethical decision-making in daily school work. They may also strengthen their instructional competence by engaging in reflective teaching, self-assessment, peer mentoring, and continuous professional learning. Furthermore, they may give more attention to pedagogical endeavor by identifying their learning needs, seeking timely solutions to instructional concerns, and developing personal growth plans.

Stakeholders may help build a school culture that supports trust, ethical practice, and teacher empowerment. They may work with school heads and teachers in creating programs that strengthen professional values, instructional quality, and collaborative decision-making. They may also support initiatives that allow teachers to grow professionally while preserving their autonomy and moral agency in teaching.

Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other districts, divisions, or school levels to determine whether the same findings will emerge in different contexts. They may also use qualitative or mixed-methods designs to explore why instructional leadership support weakens or strengthens the relationship between career integrity and instructional competence. In addition, future studies may include other variables such as school climate, teacher motivation, workload, professional development exposure, and administrative support.

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