

# Learning-Centered Leadership Practices: Its Influence to Teachers' Professional Development

Rocelyn V. Cereno, Daryl I. Quinito, PhD

Mabini Colleges, Incorporated, Daet, Camarines Norte

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9020144>

Received: 29 January 2025; Accepted: 06 February 2024; Published: 07 March 2025

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the relationship between school heads' learning-centered leadership practices and teachers' professional development in Vinzons District. The respondents consisted of 186 teachers and 8 school heads from public secondary schools, selected through stratified random sampling. Using a descriptive-correlational design, the research focused on three leadership dimensions: vision for learning, instructional programs, and social advocacy. The findings reveal that school heads effectively practice these leadership dimensions, as evidenced by weighted means of 4.21 for both Vision for Learning and Instructional Programs, and 4.23 for Social Advocacy, all interpreted as "Always Practiced." Pearson's correlation analysis indicated significant positive relationships between leadership practices and teacher professional development, with the strongest correlation observed in instructional programs ( $r = 0.673$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The study concludes that school heads significantly influence teacher development by fostering collaboration, maintaining ethical standards, and managing instructional environments. However, areas such as resource allocation and diversity promotion require further improvement. To address these gaps, the ELEVATE program was proposed, integrating mentorship, barrier mapping, and resource support initiatives. It is recommended that school heads implement structured, collaborative interventions to enhance professional development, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and growth-oriented educational system.

**Keywords:** Learning-centered leadership, teacher professional development, transformational leadership, secondary education, educational leadership practices

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership in education has evolved from being a static, individual-driven trait to a dynamic, process-oriented approach emphasizing collaboration, influence, and purpose. Contemporary educational leadership, particularly learning-centered leadership, integrates the proactive nature of instructional leadership with the transformational capacity to foster change. This holistic framework focuses on enhancing student outcomes by supporting teacher professional growth within a collaborative and adaptive school environment (Brookfield et al., 2023).

Learning-centered leadership is pivotal in empowering teachers through shared vision-building, effective instructional practices, and social advocacy. Studies by Hargreaves and Goodson (2024) and Dholkawa (2023) highlight its capacity to influence not only educators' development but also broader school ecosystems. However, challenges such as limited opportunities for advancement and barriers to professional growth persist, particularly in contexts like the Vinzons District, where educators often face lengthy promotion processes and systemic constraints.

This study aims to explore the relationship between school heads' learning-centered leadership practices and teachers' professional development. Specifically, it examines three dimensions: vision for learning, instructional program management, and social advocacy. By investigating these relationships, the research seeks to provide actionable insights into fostering an environment that promotes continuous professional development, enhances instructional quality, and ultimately elevates educational outcomes in the Vinzons District.

## METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design with a descriptive-correlational approach to examine the learning-centered leadership practices of school heads and their influence on teachers' professional development. The descriptive aspect aimed to provide a detailed overview of leadership practices, focusing on three dimensions: vision for learning, instructional programs, and social advocacy. The correlational component sought to explore the strength and direction of the relationship between these practices and teacher development.

The study included 194 respondents, comprising 186 secondary school teachers and 8 school heads from six public secondary schools in the Vinzons District. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, ensuring a representative population. The presence of assistant principals in two large schools provided additional depth to the analysis, as their roles may influence leadership dynamics. Respondents varied in demographics, educational backgrounds, and teaching assignments, offering diverse insights into leadership practices and professional development.

A self-developed survey instrument was used to measure the leadership practices of school heads and their influence on teacher development. The instrument underwent a thorough validation process by a panel of five expert educators, consisting of three master teachers and two head teachers III. The validators provided 16–18 positive responses to the instrument's 18 statements, which indicated that it was highly valid and reliable. The survey employed a 5-point Likert scale to capture respondents' perceptions, ensuring that data reflected nuanced views of leadership practices.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Learning-Centered Leadership Practices of the School Heads.** In today's educational landscape, the role of school leaders is vital. They set academic standards, foster innovative teaching, and support teachers' professional growth—all of which boost student achievement. This study focuses on the ways school heads engage teachers, enhance curriculum, and build a collaborative school culture. Tables 1....

**Vision for Learning.** The findings indicate that school heads effectively foster a learning-centered vision, with inclusivity being a key strength. The highest-rated indicator (4.33) highlights their ability to involve diverse stakeholders in shaping the school's vision, reflecting a commitment to collaboration and shared goals. However, resource allocation, rated lowest at 4.08, presents an area for improvement, suggesting the need to enhance support mechanisms for achieving the school's vision. With an overall weighted mean of 4.21, interpreted as "Always Practiced," the data confirm that school heads consistently engage in vision-driven leadership practices, creating collaborative and goal-oriented environments. These findings align with studies by Mtinkulu and Kwatubana (2023), who emphasized the importance of clear and inclusive visions in improving school outcomes, and Alhassan and Ibrahim (2023), who highlighted the role of shared vision in enhancing student engagement. Addressing gaps in resource management will further empower school heads to optimize educational initiatives and foster sustainable academic and professional growth.

Table 1 Learning-Centered Leadership Practices of School Heads in Terms of Vision for Learning

Indicator		Weighted Mean
1	The school head effectively involves stakeholders, including teachers, students, and community members, in the development of the school's vision for learning.	4.33
2	The school head ensures a comprehensive consideration of various data sources, including assessment data, demographic information, and patterns of opportunity to learn, in formulating the school's vision.	4.18
3	The school head consistently models and demonstrates a commitment to the values and beliefs central to the school's vision for learning in daily interactions and activities.	4.28
4	The school head actively communicates the school's mission and agenda to staff, students, parents, and the extended school community, ensuring it remains a focal point of attention.	4.19
5	The school head establishes clear timelines and expectations for achieving goals outlined in the vision, ensuring accountability among staff and faculty.	4.18
6	The school head proactively identifies and allocates necessary resources to support the realization of the school's vision for learning.	4.08
7	The school head inspires enthusiasm and optimism, especially during challenging periods, to maintain momentum toward realizing the school's vision.	4.18
8	The school head promotes a culture of continuous improvement by addressing shortcomings and failures in alignment with the school's vision.	4.29
Overall Weighted Mean		4.21
Rating Scale:		Descriptive Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	- Always Practiced (AP)	
3.40 – 4.19	- Often Practiced (OP))	
2.60 – 3.39	- Sometimes Practiced (SP)	
1.80 – 2.59	- Rarely Practiced (RP))	
1.00 – 1.79	- Never Practiced (NP)	

**Instructional Program.** The findings show that school heads place a high priority on maximizing academic learning time, as reflected in the highest-rated indicator (4.26) about dedicating time to instructional activities and core academic subjects. This reflects a strong commitment to enhancing student learning outcomes through focused leadership. However, the lowest-rated indicator (4.09) highlights the need for further support in providing high-quality professional development opportunities and removing barriers hindering teachers' work. With an overall weighted mean of 4.21, the study suggests that school heads generally demonstrate effective instructional leadership. However, the slight gap in supporting teachers' professional development indicates an opportunity for improvement. Targeted initiatives to address this gap could empower teachers and positively impact student achievement. These findings align with Alfonso (2023), who stressed the importance of shared leadership in enhancing teacher competencies, and Rodulfa (2022), who emphasized the role of instructional leadership in optimizing learning outcomes, particularly in blended learning environments.

Table 2 Learning-Centered Leadership Practices of School Heads in Terms of Instructional Programs

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Description
1	The school head demonstrates a deep understanding of instructional programs and is actively involved in designing and implementing innovative teaching approaches.	4.21	AP
2	The school head invests considerable time in staying informed about advancements in pedagogy, consistently integrating new and effective instructional strategies.	4.21	AP
3	The school head carefully plans and ensures that the school is staffed with excellent teachers whose values align with the mission and culture of the school.	4.23	AP
4	The school head prioritizes educational criteria, such as student needs, over less appropriate foundations like staff seniority and school politics when assigning teachers to responsibilities.	4.21	AP
5	Learning-centered school head actively supports colleagues by identifying and removing barriers that hinder their work, providing intellectual stimulation, and offering high-quality job-embedded opportunities for professional development.	4.09	OP
6	The school head demonstrates personal interest in staff members and makes themselves available, fostering a supportive environment for teachers to thrive in their roles.	4.23	AP
7	Learning-centered school head works tirelessly to maximize academic learning time by ensuring that the majority of time is devoted to instructional activities and core academic subjects.	4.26	AP
8	The school head undertakes various activities to protect valuable instructional time from interruptions, including strategic scheduling of academic subjects, minimizing distractions, and coordinating time usage among teachers.	4.22	AP
Overall Weighted Mean		4.21	AP
Rating Scale:			Descriptive Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	- Always Practiced (AP)		
3.40 – 4.19	- Often Practiced (OP)		
2.60 – 3.39	- Sometimes Practiced (SP))		
1.80 – 2.59	- Rarely Practiced (RP)		
1.00 – 1.79	- Never Practiced (NP)		

**Social Advocacy.** The findings reveal that school heads are highly regarded as ethical leaders, with the highest-rated indicator (4.28) highlighting their role as ethical role models who prioritize the well-being of students and families. This behavior positively influences teachers' professional attitudes and fosters a culture of trust and collaboration. However, the lowest-rated indicator (4.17), which addresses the commitment to promoting diversity, suggests room for improvement in translating diversity into concrete actions. This indicates that while school heads recognize the importance of diversity, their efforts to incorporate culturally rich materials and engage with diverse stakeholders may not be as consistently applied across the school environment. With an overall weighted mean of 4.23, the findings suggest that school heads are generally effective in demonstrating learning-centered leadership, particularly in social advocacy. Strengthening diversity initiatives, through professional development and school-wide policies focused on cultural competency and representation, could enhance inclusivity and create a more supportive learning environment. These findings align with Jerab and Mabrouk (2023), who emphasize the role of ethical leadership in shaping organizational culture and building trust, and Webster and Litchka (2020), who highlight the importance of modeling ethical behavior for fostering professional growth and student success. Strengthening commitment to diversity would further amplify the positive impact of ethical leadership in creating an inclusive school culture.

Table 3 Learning-Centered Leadership Practices of School Heads in Terms of Social Advocacy

Indicators		Weighted Mean
1	The school head effectively communicates with various stakeholders, including parents, community members, and influential actors in religious, business, and political sectors, to ensure that the school and the community mutually benefit from each other as valuable resources.	4.24
2	Learning-centered school head actively involves families in school operations, establishes norms emphasizing the importance of parent connections, and provide opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills to work effectively with parents.	4.24
3	Effective school heads recognize and utilize the cultural, ethnic, racial, and economic diversity of the school community to create educational experiences that honor diversity and enhance instruction.	4.22
4	The school head demonstrates a commitment to promoting diversity by employing strategies such as using culturally rich educational materials and fostering ongoing dialogue with diverse groups of stakeholders.	4.17
5	Learning-centered school head proactively responds to external policy initiatives, ensuring that public policies support the students in their schools and their families.	4.22
6	Effective school head understands and manipulates the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context of schooling to promote the success of all students.	4.24
7	The school head acts with integrity, fairness, and ethics, fulfilling legal and contractual obligations and applying laws and policies fairly and considerately.	4.26
8	An effective school head is more cognizant of his values and beliefs, shaping his behavior following personal and professional codes of ethics, and serving as a role model for accepting responsibility for the well-being of children and families in their school community.	4.28
Overall Weighted Mean		4.23
Rating Scale:		Descriptive Interpretation:
4.20 – 5.00	- Always Practiced (AP)	
3.40 – 4.19	- Often Practiced (OP)	
2.60 – 3.39	- Sometimes Practiced (SP))	
1.80 – 2.59	- Rarely Practiced (RP)	
1.00 – 1.79	- Never Practiced (NP)	

**Level of Influence of School Heads in Learning Centered Leadership Practices .** The "Level of Influence of School Heads in Learning-Centered Leadership Practices" explores the extent to which school heads impact and shape the instructional landscape within their schools. The findings reveal that school heads significantly influence teachers' professional development, with the highest-rated indicator (4.25) showing their ability to motivate and inspire teachers to pursue further education. This suggests that school heads play a key role in fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth, aligning with Thien et al. (2024), who highlighted the importance of effective instructional leadership in enhancing teacher professional development. However, the lowest-rated indicator (4.02), which addresses prioritizing merit and educational effectiveness over seniority, indicates an area where school heads could further improve by focusing more on effectiveness than other factors. Despite this, the overall weighted mean of 4.08 suggests that school heads generally engage in leadership practices that foster collaboration and professional growth. The results indicate that school heads are successfully implementing a balanced leadership approach, which supports a collaborative and growth-oriented environment for teachers. However, improvements in resource allocation, particularly for diversity and culturally rich educational materials, could further enhance the inclusiveness and effectiveness of their leadership. These findings align with Thien et al. (2024), who emphasized the role of

school heads in developing a vision for learning and supporting continuous professional growth, underscoring their significant impact on educational outcomes.

Table 4 Influence of School Heads' Learning-Centered Leadership

Statements		Weighted Mean	Adjectival Description
1	An effective school head serves as a motivating force, inspiring and encouraging teachers to actively pursue post-education opportunities.	4.25	Highly Influential
2	An effective school head serves as an inspirational leader, motivating and empowering teachers to actively participate in diverse professional development opportunities such as seminars, workshops, and training sessions.	4.06	Influential
3	A learning-centered school head inspires teachers to embrace a growth mindset to explore innovative teaching methods, engage in reflective practices, and contribute collectively to the ongoing improvement of the teaching and learning environment.	4.06	Influential
4	The school head actively engages in the development, articulation, and implementation of a vision for learning that fosters a culture of continuous professional development among teachers.	4.06	Influential
5	Learning-centered school head ensures that the school's vision reflects high standards of learning and a commitment to the professional growth of all teachers..	4.08	Influential
6	The school head fosters a supportive environment where teachers are encouraged to participate in ongoing professional learning opportunities.	4.09	Influential
7	Effective school head provides resources and opportunities for teachers to enhance their instructional skills and stay abreast of current educational practices.	4.08	Influential
8	A learning-centered school head models the importance of teaching by being directly involved in instructional program design and implementation.	4.03	Influential
9	The school head recognizes and values the diversity of teachers' backgrounds and experiences, promoting a collaborative learning culture.	4.03	Influential
10	A school head provides regular feedback and constructive evaluations to teachers, identifying areas for improvement and growth in their professional practice.	4.08	Influential
11	An effective school head prioritizes merit and educational effectiveness over less relevant factors like seniority thus fostering an environment conducive to continuous learning to proactively adapt and grow to meet the evolving educational demands.	4.02	Influential
Overall Weighted Mean		4.08	Influential
Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation			
4.20 – 5.00	- Highly Influential		
3.40 – 4.19	- Influential		
2.60 – 3.39	- Moderately Influential		
1.80 – 2.59	- Somewhat Influential		
1.00 – 1.79	- Not Influential		

**Relationship Between the School Heads' Learning-Centered Leadership Practices and Teachers' Professional Development.** The analysis revealed significant positive correlations between school heads' learning-centered leadership practices and teachers' professional development in the areas of vision for learning ( $r = 0.637$ ), instructional programs ( $r = 0.673$ ), and social advocacy ( $r = 0.654$ ), all with  $p$ -values less than 0.01. These results indicate moderate to strong relationships, suggesting that as teachers engage in professional growth, there is a corresponding enhancement in school leadership practices, particularly in establishing a clear vision, improving instructional programs, and becoming more involved in social advocacy. The data led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that effective leadership practices are significantly related to teachers' professional development. These findings emphasize the pivotal role of school heads in creating environments that support teacher growth. By promoting a shared vision for learning, managing instructional programs effectively, and advocating for social causes, school leaders foster a culture of continuous development that benefits both educators and students. These results align with Mtimkulu and Kwatubana (2023), who highlighted the importance of leadership in creating an inclusive and supportive environment, and demonstrate how such practices can lead to improved professional growth and overall school success. Effective leadership in these areas empowers teachers, fostering a positive educational atmosphere that ultimately enhances student learning outcomes.

Test for Significant Relationships between School Heads' Leadership Practices and Influence of School Heads' Learning-Centered Leadership

	School Heads' Leadership Practices					
	Vision of Learning		Instructional Program		Social Advocacy	
	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value
Influence of School Heads' Learning Centered Leadership	.637**0		.673**0		.654**0	

\*\*Correlation is Significant @0.01 level (Two-tailed)

**Interventions Developed to Enhance the Professional Development of the Teachers.** The study highlights the need for targeted interventions to enhance teachers' professional development, particularly in overcoming instructional barriers and fostering collaboration. In response, the ELEVATE program—Enabling Leadership, Engagement, and Vision for All Teachers' Excellence—was designed to address these challenges. Two key areas for improvement were identified: limited resources and inadequate support for professional development, as well as the need for stronger collaboration and mentorship among teachers. The ELEVATE program tackles these issues through several interconnected components. The Barrier Breakers Program focuses on resolving instructional challenges by holding quarterly workshops where teachers identify obstacles and receive micro-grants for teacher-led projects. The Learning Advocate Mentorship (LAM) pairs teachers with mentors to set growth goals and engage in skill-building sessions. The Digital Resource Suite provides on-demand instructional materials, while a resource request tool allows school leaders to address teachers' needs effectively. Additionally, the Teacher Leadership Labs foster collaboration by offering peer-led workshops, and the Symposium & Showcase serves as an annual event where successful strategies are shared and documented in a Best Practices Handbook. Overall, the ELEVATE program creates a sustainable framework for professional development by promoting mentorship, collaboration, and resource access. It aligns leadership practices with teachers' needs, creating an inclusive and growth-oriented environment that enhances both instructional practices and educational outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the obtained results, the researcher formulated the following conclusions.

1. School heads in the Vinzons District are highly effective in practicing learning-centered leadership, particularly in fostering a vision for learning, managing instructional programs, and engaging in social advocacy. They are proactive, inclusive, and consistent in these practices, contributing significantly to a supportive school environment. However, improvements in resource allocation and promoting diversity could further enhance their effectiveness.
2. The influence of school heads' learning-centered leadership practices on teachers' professional development is substantial. Their engagement in collaborative leadership, clear vision setting, and effective instructional management positively impact teachers' professional growth. While resource management shows potential for enhancement, the overall influence remains strong, highlighting the critical role of school heads in shaping professional development.
3. There is a significant positive relationship between school heads' learning-centered leadership practices and teachers' professional development. The moderate to strong correlations across vision for learning, instructional programs, and social advocacy underscore the importance of effective leadership in fostering a growth-oriented school environment. This relationship validates the critical role of leadership in enhancing teachers' continuous development.
4. Targeted interventions, such as the "ELEVATE" program, are essential for enhancing teachers' professional development. These interventions, focused on addressing instructional barriers, fostering continuous development, and creating a supportive network, align with the needs highlighted in the study. Implementing these strategies will empower teachers, promote collaborative learning, and support continuous improvement in their instructional roles, ultimately benefiting the entire school community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions lead to the following proposed recommendations:

1. School heads may implement strategies to improve resource allocation, such as conducting regular needs assessments and prioritizing resources that directly support the school's vision for learning. By addressing gaps in resource management, school heads can further enhance their effectiveness in fostering a vision-driven educational environment.
2. School administrators may focus on strengthening professional development support by identifying and mitigating barriers to teacher effectiveness. This could include providing more high-quality job-embedded professional development opportunities, intellectual stimulation, and creating a supportive work environment to further enhance teachers' professional growth.
3. Education policymakers and school leaders may develop programs that emphasize the importance of effective leadership practices in enhancing teachers' professional development. This could involve regular training and workshops on learning-centered leadership practices, ensuring that school heads are well-equipped to support teachers' continuous development.
4. School heads may implement the "ELEVATE" program to address the identified areas for improvement in professional development. This involves creating a structured, community-focused development model that includes barrier removal, personalized mentoring, digital resource suites, leadership labs, and annual showcases. These initiatives will empower teachers, promote collaborative learning, and support continuous improvement in their instructional roles.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher would like to express profound gratitude to the thesis adviser for offering vital counsel and unwavering support throughout the study process. The study is substantially enriched by the participants' generous sharing of experiences, for which gratitude is expressed. The researcher expresses gratitude to the

family and friends for their support and comprehension during the arduous stages of thesis finalization. Moreover, acknowledgment is extended to the scholarly resources and literature that provided the foundation for this research.

## REFERENCES

1. Brookfield, S. D., Rudolph, J., & Tan, S. (2023). *Teaching well: Understanding key dynamics of learning-centered classrooms*. Taylor & Francis.
2. Hargreaves, A., & Goodson, I. (2006). Educational change over time? The sustainability and non sustainability of three decades of secondary school change and continuity. *Educational administration quarterly*, 42(1), 3-41.
3. Dholkawala, S. (2023). Perceptions of Educational Leadership in India-Exploring the Dynamics of Educational Leadership. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2023121135975>
4. Mtinkulu, M. & Kwatubana, S., (2024). The School Principal as a Systems Thinker: A Case of School Health Promotion in a Public School in South Africa. *Research in Educational Policy and Management*, 6(1), 285-302.
5. Alhassan, A., & Ibrahim, T. (2023) *Empowering Nations through Education: A Curriculum Revolution in Ghana and Beyond*.
6. Alfonso, A., (2023). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in Selected Secondary Schools: Implementation, Challenges and Opportunities. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Review*, 4(6), 38-69.
7. Rodulfa, L. (2022). School Heads' Instructional Leadership and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy in the Implementation of Blended Teaching Modality in Sarangani Province. *AIDE Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, 294-312.
8. Jerab, D., & Mabrouk, T. (2023). The role of leadership in changing organizational culture. Available at SSRN 4574324.
9. Webster, K., & Litchka, P. (2020). Planning for Effective School Leadership: Teachers' Perceptions of the Leadership Skills and Ethical Behaviors of School Principals. *Educational Planning*, 27(1), 31-47.
10. Thien, L. M., & Liu, P. (2024). Linear and nonlinear relationships between instructional leadership and teacher professional learning through teacher self-efficacy as a mediator: a partial least squares analysis. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1-13.