

The Nexus between Leadership Hygiene Practices of School Leaders and Teachers Instructional Effectiveness

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Abstract

This study examined the nexus between leadership hygiene practices of school leaders and teacher instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools in Polanco I and Polanco II Districts, Division of Zamboanga del Norte, during School Year 2025–2026. Anchored primarily on Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, and supported by Instructional Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, the Job Demands–Resources Model, and Leader–Member Exchange Theory, the study investigated how foundational leadership conditions influence teachers’ performance in key instructional domains. A quantitative-correlational, descriptive-survey design was employed. Data were gathered through an adopted and validated questionnaire based on Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory, using a five-point Likert scale. The respondents consisted of 176 participants, including principals, head teachers, and teachers from six public secondary schools. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation, Pearson’s correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis, were used in data analysis. Findings revealed that school leaders’ hygiene practices were rated at a very high extent across all dimensions, particularly in professional relationships, collegial respect, accountability, and consistency in administrative decisions. Teachers’ instructional effectiveness was likewise rated very high in instructional planning and organization, pedagogical competence, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment literacy, and professional reflection. Correlational findings showed that clarity and fairness of policies, transparent communication, supportive supervision, collegial respect, and accountability and consistency in decisions had significant moderate positive relationships with teacher instructional effectiveness, while equitable task distribution and workload management showed no significant relationship. The study concludes that leadership hygiene practices are essential organizational conditions that strengthen teacher effectiveness and instructional quality. It recommends that school leaders continuously institutionalize fair policies, transparent communication, supportive supervision, and accountable administrative practices. The study aligns most directly with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Its sustainability impact lies in supporting educational, institutional, and governance sustainability through leadership conditions that promote teacher engagement, stable school operations, and improved learning outcomes.

Keywords: Accountability, Instructional Effectiveness, Leadership Hygiene Practices, Pedagogical Competence, Professional Reflection, School Leaders, Teacher Performance, Transparent Communication

1. Introduction

Education remains a fundamental driver of national development, and teachers are central to the realization of educational quality. Their instructional effectiveness is shaped not only by personal competence but also by the organizational environment in which they work. The study argues that teacher satisfaction, engagement, and resilience are closely linked to leadership conditions in schools, particularly to leadership hygiene practices that prevent dissatisfaction and sustain a climate conducive to teaching. These include fair policies, transparent communication, supportive supervision, collegial respect, equitable workload distribution, and consistent administrative decision-making. Although the literature has extensively examined instructional and transformational leadership, fewer studies have focused on these foundational day-to-day administrative practices and their relationship with teacher instructional effectiveness, especially in the Philippine secondary school context. This study therefore examines the nexus between leadership hygiene practices of school leaders and teacher instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools in Polanco I and Polanco II Districts, Division of Zamboanga del Norte, during School Year 2025–2026.

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of national development, with teachers serving as primary agents of change. Teacher productivity and instructional effectiveness are strongly influenced by job satisfaction, which has emerged as a critical determinant of teaching quality and student outcomes. Satisfied teachers tend to demonstrate higher engagement, creativity, and resilience, resulting in better classroom management, learner engagement, and assessment practices. When teachers feel supported and valued, they are more likely to engage deeply in planning, delivering, and

assessing instruction (Stronge, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2025; Harrison, King, & Wang, 2023; Sinoy, 2024). In contrast, dissatisfaction associated with unclear policies, inequitable workloads, and inadequate support is linked to burnout, attrition, and reduced instructional quality (Reinke et al., 2025; EdChoice, 2024). Global evidence shows that teacher morale has declined, with fewer than one-third of educators reporting high job satisfaction and many expressing reluctance to recommend the profession (Pew Research Center, 2024). This is significant because dissatisfaction affects not only teachers' psychological well-being but also their capacity to deliver effective instruction, thereby influencing student achievement (Wartenberg et al., 2023). Dissatisfaction often emerges early through stress and disengagement, making preventive leadership measures essential before such concerns escalate into attrition and systemic instructional decline (Reinke et al., 2025; Education Revolution Association, 2025). Within school organizations, distractors such as administrative ambiguities, weak feedback systems, and strained professional relationships reduce teachers' ability to focus on core pedagogical tasks (Hallinger, 2019; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2021; He, 2024). In this regard, leadership hygiene practices function as preventive conditions that sustain morale and promote effective teaching. These practices include clarity and fairness of policies and procedures, transparent communication and feedback systems, supportive supervision and conflict management, maintenance of professional relationships and collegial respect, equitable workload distribution and management, and accountability and consistency in administrative decisions (Huong et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). When these conditions are present, teachers are better able to focus on instructional planning and organization, pedagogical competence, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment literacy, and professional reflection.

The reviewed literature consistently presents educational leadership as a major determinant of teacher performance and student outcomes. Recent studies emphasize that leadership affects instructional quality through organizational climate, resource allocation, and professional support. However, much of the literature focuses on leadership styles broadly, particularly transformational and instructional leadership, rather than on the basic leadership hygiene practices that shape teachers' day-to-day work conditions. The literature nonetheless indicates that these practices are essential because they reduce ambiguity, strengthen trust, support professional growth, and maintain a fair and stable work environment. Research indicates that clarity and fairness of school policies and procedures reduce ambiguity and foster trust among teachers (Hallinger, 2019; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2021). Transparent communication and feedback systems promote timely information flow and constructive feedback, minimizing misunderstandings and strengthening collaboration (He, 2024; Gudmalin & Apostol, 2024). Supportive supervision and conflict management enhance morale and professional development by guiding teachers and resolving disputes fairly (Huong et al., 2025). Similarly, the maintenance of professional relationships and collegial respect fosters mutual trust and teamwork, both of which are vital for sustained engagement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021). Equitable task distribution and workload management prevent burnout and allow teachers to focus on instruction (Stronge, 2018; Zhang et al., 2025), while accountability and consistency in administrative decisions reinforce integrity and predictability in school leadership. The literature also presents teacher instructional effectiveness as multidimensional. Instructional planning and organization enable coherent lesson design aligned with curricular expectations (Stronge, 2018). Pedagogical competence reflects mastery of subject matter and teaching strategies suited to diverse learners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021). Classroom management supports an orderly learning environment, learner engagement promotes active and meaningful participation, assessment literacy supports data-informed instruction, and professional reflection encourages ongoing improvement through evidence-based adjustments (Huong et al., 2025). These domains collectively define effective teaching and serve as the dependent focus of the present study.

At the global level, declining teacher morale and job satisfaction highlight the urgent need for leadership approaches that sustain teachers' well-being and instructional capacity (Pew Research Center, 2024; Wartenberg et al., 2023). Internationally, recent scholarship affirms that organizational support and foundational leadership conditions matter for instructional quality and school performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2025; Harrison et al., 2023). At the national level, the Philippine educational context recognizes the importance of instructional quality and teacher standards, as reflected in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers and DepEd policy frameworks (DepEd Order No. 20, s.2024). However, while such frameworks highlight instructional domains, they do not explicitly explain how day-to-day administrative routines such as fair workload distribution, consistent decision-making, and transparent communication shape instructional effectiveness. This suggests the need to connect organizational leadership conditions to teacher performance more directly within Philippine schools. At the local level, the gap is more pronounced in Polanco I and Polanco II Districts and more broadly in the Zamboanga Peninsula region, where no comprehensive study has examined how leadership hygiene practices influence teachers' planning, pedagogy, classroom management, and assessment literacy during School Year 2025–2026. This local context makes the inquiry timely and relevant, especially in settings where resource limitations, workload pressures, and administrative demands may directly affect teacher performance.

This study is primarily anchored in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory or Motivation–Hygiene Theory, which explains that job satisfaction and performance are influenced by motivators and hygiene factors (Alrawahi, 2020). In educational

settings, leadership hygiene practices such as fair policies, transparent communication, supportive supervision, collegial respect, equitable workload, and consistent administrative decisions function as hygiene factors. Their presence does not necessarily motivate teachers directly, but it prevents dissatisfaction and supports a stable environment in which teachers can focus on instruction (Stronge, 2018). The study is further supported by Instructional Leadership Theory, which emphasizes that school leaders influence teaching and learning by building systems and conditions that promote effective instruction (Hallinger, 2019; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2021; He, 2024). Transformational Leadership Theory likewise helps explain how leaders foster trust, empowerment, collaboration, and professional growth, which are strengthened when hygiene practices ensure fairness and stability (Gudmalin & Apostol, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). In addition, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model and Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) Theory explain how reducing hindering demands, increasing job resources, and fostering high-quality leader–teacher relationships contribute to teacher engagement and instructional effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2021; Huong et al., 2025). Conceptually, the study positions leadership hygiene practices as the independent variable and teacher instructional effectiveness as the dependent variable. Leadership hygiene practices are operationalized through clarity and fairness of school policies and procedures, transparent communication and feedback systems, supportive supervision and conflict management, maintenance of professional relationships and collegial respect, equitable task distribution and workload management, and accountability and consistency in administrative decisions. Teacher instructional effectiveness is examined through instructional planning and organization, pedagogical competence, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment literacy, and professional reflection.

Although literature consistently affirms that leadership practices shape teacher performance through organizational climate, existing studies largely emphasize leadership styles in general or transformational practices in particular. There is limited empirical attention to leadership hygiene practices as a distinct construct, particularly regarding their direct relationship with teacher instructional effectiveness. This limitation is evident in the Philippine context, where studies often address leadership broadly but overlook the administrative routines that prevent dissatisfaction and sustain teacher engagement. The gap is especially clear in secondary schools within Polanco I and Polanco II Districts, where no comprehensive study has examined how leadership hygiene practices relate to planning, pedagogy, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment literacy, and professional reflection. National frameworks highlight instructional standards but do not explicitly address how everyday administrative practices influence teacher effectiveness. This omission is important because these foundational practices reduce stressors and allow teachers to concentrate on instructional tasks. The study is therefore justified by the need to generate empirical evidence on how leadership hygiene practices influence teacher instructional effectiveness in the local setting and to provide insights that can inform leadership training, school management, and policy development.

Based on the content of the study, the most relevant Sustainable Development Goal is SDG 4 – Quality Education, because the research focuses on improving teacher instructional effectiveness and strengthening the organizational conditions that support quality teaching and learning. The study also aligns with SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth in relation to fair workload distribution, supportive supervision, and professional conditions that reduce dissatisfaction and burnout among teachers. In addition, the study has relevance to SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions because it examines accountability, consistency in administrative decisions, fairness in policies, and transparent communication within school institutions. These alignments arise directly from the study’s concern with instructional quality, supportive work environments, and sound school governance.

The study contributes most directly to educational sustainability by identifying leadership conditions that help sustain effective teaching, teacher engagement, and improved learning outcomes. It also contributes to institutional sustainability because strong and consistent leadership hygiene practices support trust, fairness, and stable school operations. In addition, the study has relevance to socio-economic sustainability, since improved instructional effectiveness contributes to better educational outcomes, which are foundational to long-term human development. The study also supports policy and governance sustainability by offering evidence that may guide leadership strategies, administrative training, and policy interventions in schools. These contributions are multidisciplinary because they connect educational leadership, organizational behavior, teacher development, and school governance within a single framework focused on sustainable improvement.

The study is significant to school leaders, teachers, students, policymakers, administrators, and future researchers. It offers evidence-based insights into how leadership hygiene practices influence teacher performance and instructional quality. For school leaders, the findings may guide strategies for building a positive organizational climate. For teachers, the study highlights the role of supportive leadership in improving planning, classroom management, and professional growth. Students may benefit indirectly through better engagement and academic achievement. Policymakers and administrators may use the findings to strengthen training and school governance frameworks, while future researchers may draw on the study as a basis for further inquiry into educational leadership and teacher effectiveness.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative-correlational research design, a non-experimental approach used to determine the degree of association between variables without manipulating them. This design was appropriate because the study sought to examine the relationship between leadership hygiene practices of school leaders as the independent variable and teacher instructional effectiveness as the dependent variable during School Year 2025–2026. The method specifically used was a descriptive-correlational survey, in which data were gathered through adopted standardized questionnaires. The study noted that correlational research has long been recognized in educational research and remains widely applied today (Cohen et al., 2018).

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in six public secondary schools within Polanco I and Polanco II Districts, Division of Zamboanga del Norte. These schools served learners from rural and semi-urban communities and operated under the K–12 curriculum. The identified schools were Polanco National High School–Main, Isis National High School, and Polanco National High School–Lingasad Extension in Polanco I, and Silawe National High School, Sianib National High School, and San Pedro National High School in Polanco II. The research environment was described as relevant to the investigation because the schools reflected actual administrative and instructional conditions in which leadership hygiene practices such as transparent communication, supportive supervision, fair task distribution, and collegial respect were observed to influence teacher work and instructional delivery.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of both school leaders and teachers who played central roles in the teaching-learning process. School leaders, particularly principals and head teachers, were included because they were responsible for leadership practices, school policies, and administrative routines that shaped the instructional environment. Teachers were also included because they were the frontline implementers of classroom instruction, and their instructional effectiveness was directly affected by the leadership practices and administrative support provided by their superiors. The study emphasized that involving both groups allowed a more comprehensive understanding of the correlation between leadership hygiene practices and instructional effectiveness within the same geographical and organizational context. Based on the respondent distribution presented in the study, the total number of respondents was 176, composed of 6 principals or school heads, 7 head teachers, and 163 teachers from the six participating schools.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study stated that the respondents were purposively selected and at the same time described the procedure as using a probability sampling technique. As written in the manuscript, the sample included school leaders and teachers from the six identified public secondary schools in Polanco I and II Districts. The sample distribution covered Polanco NHS, Isis NHS, Polanco NHS–Lingasad Extension, Silawe NHS, Sianib NHS, and San Pedro NHS, for a total of 176 respondents. The intention of the sampling procedure was to gather context-specific data from participants directly involved in school leadership and classroom instruction within the selected districts. Because the manuscript uses both “purposively selected” and “probability sampling technique,” this section reflects that wording as presented in the source.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data gathering was an adopted questionnaire based on Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Nickerson 2025). The instrument was designed to collect comprehensive and reliable information regarding the variables under investigation and was structured to measure leadership hygiene practices of school leaders as the independent variable and teacher instructional effectiveness as the dependent variable. Each part of the questionnaire contained indicators aligned with the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, with five items per indicator rated on a five-point Likert scale: 5 for Always, 4 for Often, 3 for Sometimes, 2 for Seldom, and 1 for Never. The section on leadership hygiene practices measured the extent to which school leaders demonstrated effective hygiene practices that contributed to a conducive and motivating school environment. It covered clarity and fairness of school policies and procedures, transparent communication and feedback systems, supportive supervision and conflict management, maintenance of professional relationships and collegial respect, equitable task distribution and workload management, and accountability and consistency in administrative decisions. The section on teacher instructional effectiveness assessed instructional planning and organization, pedagogical competence, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment literacy, and professional reflection. The manuscript further stated that the instrument underwent content validation through review by panel experts in educational management, research, and instructional leadership to check clarity, relevance, alignment with objectives, and appropriateness of the items.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first prepared an official request letter seeking permission to conduct the study in the selected schools. This request was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent and followed by endorsement from the District Supervisors and School Heads. Once approval was granted, the researcher explained the purpose, objectives, and significance of the study to the school leaders and teacher participants. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and that their responses would be handled with strict confidentiality. Written informed consent was secured from all participants before data collection began. The study used a structured survey questionnaire divided into two major sections corresponding to the independent and dependent variables of the research. These steps were undertaken to ensure orderly data collection and adherence to ethical research standards on privacy, consent, and non-coercion.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included the mean and standard deviation to determine the extent of school leaders' hygiene practices and the level of teacher instructional effectiveness. For interpreting the responses, the study used the following descriptive ranges: 4.21–5.00 as Very High or Always, 3.41–4.20 as High or Often, 2.61–3.40 as Moderate or Sometimes, 1.81–2.60 as Low or Seldom, and 1.00–1.80 as Very Low or Never. Inferential statistics included Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between leadership hygiene practices and teacher instructional effectiveness.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to ethical standards in conducting the research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured that refusal to participate or withdrawal at any stage would not affect their employment status, performance evaluation, professional standing, or relationship with the school or district. No reimbursement or compensation was provided, and this was clearly communicated. Each respondent received a copy of the signed informed consent form for personal reference. The study also complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), recognizing that workplace perceptions and professional evaluations might involve sensitive personal information. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning codes to responses and removing direct or indirect identifiers. All collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes, stored securely, and handled with honesty, transparency, and objectivity throughout analysis, interpretation, and dissemination.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 School Leaders' Hygiene Practices

3.1.1 Clarity and Fairness of School Policies and Procedures

The results showed that clarity and fairness of school policies and procedures were rated at a very high extent by both respondent groups. Principals and school heads obtained an average weighted mean of 4.53, while head teachers and teachers registered 4.42, both interpreted as strongly agree. The highest ratings were given to fair distribution of teaching assignments and ensuring a safe, orderly, and supportive environment, while the relatively lowest rating still remained within the strongly agree category. These findings indicate that school leaders consistently maintain fairness, transparency, and policy clarity in the school setting. The strong results suggest that clear implementation of rules, timely policy communication, and fair administrative guidance contribute to a well-managed environment in which teachers can function effectively. This supports the view that policy clarity and fairness are core organizational conditions that sustain teacher confidence and professional stability.

3.1.2 Transparent Communication and Feedback Systems

Transparent communication and feedback systems were also rated very highly. Principals and school heads recorded an average weighted mean of 4.53, while head teachers and teachers recorded 4.41. Teachers gave the highest ratings to constructive feedback and to the clear and prompt communication of school programs and decisions, while accessible channels for concerns and suggestions received the lowest, though still strongly positive, rating. The results suggest that school leaders generally maintain open and functional communication systems that keep teachers informed, heard, and guided. Constructive feedback, open dialogue, and timely dissemination of information appear to strengthen trust and collaboration between leaders and teachers. These findings are consistent with the argument that communication and feedback systems reduce misunderstanding and support a positive working climate.

3.1.3 Supportive Supervision and Conflict Management

Supportive supervision and conflict management likewise obtained very high ratings. Principals and school heads posted an average weighted mean of 4.50, while head teachers and teachers posted 4.42. Guidance for improving instructional practice, developmental supervisory visits, and leader approachability all received strong ratings, while conflict resolution obtained the lowest score but still remained within the strongly agree level. These findings show that supportive supervision is consistently practiced in the participating schools. Mentoring, approachable leadership, and fair handling of conflict

appear to create a supportive professional environment that encourages teacher growth and collaboration. This aligns with the idea that supervision and conflict management are essential hygiene practices that sustain morale and enable teachers to focus on instruction.

3.1.4 Maintenance of Professional Relationships and Collegial Respect

Maintenance of professional relationships and collegial respect emerged as one of the strongest leadership hygiene dimensions. Principals and school heads obtained an average weighted mean of 4.57, while head teachers and teachers obtained 4.49. The highest scores were associated with collaboration, dignity and respect, and comfort in communication among faculty and administrators. The findings imply that the school environment strongly supports collegial interaction, mutual respect, and professional recognition. Such conditions likely enhance cooperation, teamwork, and teacher morale. The consistently high scores reinforce the importance of collegial respect as a foundational leadership condition that supports sustained engagement and effective school functioning.

3.1.5 Equitable Task Distribution and Workload Management

Equitable task distribution and workload management was still rated at a very high extent, though it was not the strongest among the leadership hygiene dimensions. Principals and school heads obtained an average weighted mean of 4.47, while head teachers and teachers obtained 4.36. Fair work assignment, consideration of teacher qualifications, avoidance of overload, and support for additional duties were all rated strongly agree. These results indicate that school leaders are generally perceived as fair in assigning tasks and managing workload. The findings suggest that workload practices contribute to a more balanced and supportive working environment. However, later correlation results show that despite these strong descriptive ratings, workload management did not significantly predict any instructional effectiveness domain, indicating that fairness in task distribution may be valued but may not directly shape instructional performance as strongly as other relational and administrative factors do.

3.1.6 Accountability and Consistency in Administrative Decisions

Accountability and consistency in administrative decisions was among the highest-rated areas of leadership hygiene. Principals and school heads registered an average weighted mean of 4.57, while head teachers and teachers registered 4.44. Uniform policy implementation, clear decision criteria, responsibility for decisions, fair accountability, and modeled professionalism all received strongly agree ratings. These findings suggest that school leaders are widely perceived as consistent, responsible, and fair in carrying out administrative decisions. Such leadership behavior likely reinforces trust, organizational discipline, and professional integrity within the school. The strong results also explain why this dimension later showed some of the highest correlations with teacher instructional effectiveness across domains.

3.2 Teachers' Instructional Effectiveness

3.2.1 Instructional Planning and Organization

Instructional planning and organization were rated very highly by both respondent groups. Principals and school heads posted an average weighted mean of 4.60, while head teachers and teachers posted 4.56. Strongest ratings were associated with advance lesson preparation, alignment of plans with curriculum and student needs, the use of assessment, and effective time management. These results indicate that teachers consistently demonstrate careful preparation and organized delivery of instruction. Strong planning and organization support structured learning experiences and efficient classroom processes. The findings suggest that teachers are generally able to align instructional goals, assessments, and classroom procedures in ways that support quality teaching.

3.2.2 Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence received the highest rating from principals and school heads and remained very high from teachers' self and peer ratings. The average weighted mean was 4.73 for principals and school heads and 4.58 for head teachers and teachers. Highest-rated indicators involved the use of multiple instructional strategies and clear explanations and examples, both of which emphasized adaptive teaching and lesson clarity. These findings suggest that teachers demonstrate strong subject mastery and are able to use varied teaching strategies to address diverse learner needs. The consistently high ratings imply that pedagogical competence is a major strength of the respondents and contributes to meaningful classroom learning experiences. This also explains why pedagogical competence remained strongly linked with several leadership hygiene dimensions in the correlational results.

3.2.3 Classroom Management

Classroom management was also rated at a very high level. Principals and school heads recorded an average weighted mean of 4.43, while head teachers and teachers recorded 4.53. Strong ratings were given to clearly defined rules, proactive strategies to prevent disruptions, and classroom organization that supported smooth transitions. Student respect and cooperation received the lowest principal rating, though it remained positive overall. These findings show that teachers generally maintain structured, orderly, and positive classroom environments. The results imply that classroom management practices are systematically applied and help support lesson flow and productive interaction. Effective classroom

management appears to be an established strength among the teachers, though student cooperation may still present occasional challenges.

3.2.4 Learner Engagement

Learner engagement was rated strongly by both groups, with an average weighted mean of 4.40 from principals and school heads and 4.52 from head teachers and teachers. The highest-rated indicator was the design of activities that promote independent and collaborative learning, while active participation and meaningful lesson content also received strong ratings. These results suggest that teachers regularly use student-centered and interactive practices that encourage participation, questioning, collaboration, and sustained attention. The findings point to a classroom environment in which students are actively involved in learning rather than merely passive recipients of instruction. Such practices likely contribute to stronger motivation and more meaningful learning outcomes.

3.2.5 Assessment Literacy

Assessment literacy was also rated at a very high level. Principals and school heads registered an average weighted mean of 4.47, while head teachers and teachers registered 4.59, making it one of the strongest-rated instructional domains from the teachers' perspective. High ratings were associated with alignment of assessments to lesson objectives, use of varied assessment forms, adjustment of instruction based on results, timely feedback, and fair, valid, and reliable evaluation. These results indicate that teachers not only administer assessment effectively but also use it as a tool for improving instruction. The findings suggest a strong culture of data-informed teaching, feedback, and continuous adjustment to learner needs. Assessment literacy therefore appears to be a major instructional strength of the respondents.

3.2.6 Professional Reflection

Professional reflection likewise registered a very high level overall. Principals and school heads posted an average weighted mean of 4.37, while head teachers and teachers posted 4.56. The highest teacher rating was given to reflecting on student outcomes to improve planning and delivery, while the lowest principal rating concerned regular evaluation of teaching practices, though the overall results still remained positive. These findings suggest that reflective practice is generally integrated into teachers' instructional work through self-evaluation, use of feedback, engagement in professional development, and analysis of teaching challenges. The results imply that reflection supports ongoing improvement in planning, delivery, and assessment, reinforcing the teachers' overall instructional effectiveness.

3.2.7 Summary of Teachers' Instructional Effectiveness

Across all six domains, teachers demonstrated a very high level of instructional effectiveness. The grand mean was 4.50 from principals and school heads and 4.56 from head teachers and teachers. The highest-rated area from the principal perspective was pedagogical competence, while from the teacher perspective the highest was assessment literacy. All domains remained within the strongly agree range. This overall pattern indicates that teacher effectiveness in the selected schools is comprehensive rather than isolated to one area. The results suggest that teachers are strong not only in planning and delivery but also in engagement, assessment, classroom management, and reflection. The consistency of these high ratings supports the conclusion that instructional quality is broadly sustained in the participating schools.

3.3 Relationship Between Leadership Hygiene Practices and Teachers' Instructional Effectiveness

3.3.1 Relationship with Instructional Planning and Organization

The results showed that clarity and fairness of policies ($\rho = 0.522, p < 0.001$), transparent communication ($\rho = 0.523, p < 0.001$), supportive supervision ($\rho = 0.512, p < 0.001$), collegial respect ($\rho = 0.531, p < 0.001$), and accountability and consistency in decisions ($\rho = 0.593, p < 0.001$) all had highly significant moderate positive correlations with instructional planning and organization. Equitable task distribution and workload management, however, showed no significant relationship ($\rho = 0.023, p = 0.770$). These findings mean that teachers tend to plan and organize instruction more effectively when they work under leadership marked by fairness, communication, support, respect, and accountability. The strongest relationship in this domain came from accountability and consistency in administrative decisions. The absence of a significant relationship with workload distribution suggests that planning quality depends more on leadership climate and administrative reliability than on workload allocation alone.

3.3.2 Relationship with Pedagogical Competence

For pedagogical competence, clarity and fairness of policies ($\rho = 0.498, p < 0.001$), transparent communication ($\rho = 0.449, p < 0.001$), supportive supervision ($\rho = 0.418, p < 0.001$), collegial respect ($\rho = 0.443, p < 0.001$), and accountability and consistency in decisions ($\rho = 0.550, p < 0.001$) all showed highly significant moderate positive correlations. Equitable task distribution and workload management remained non-significant ($\rho = 0.084, p = 0.290$). These results suggest that pedagogical effectiveness is positively linked to leadership conditions that provide clear policies, communication, professional support, mutual respect, and dependable decision-making. Again, accountability and consistency emerged as the strongest correlate. The continued non-significance of workload management reinforces the pattern that instructional skill is influenced more by leadership quality than by task distribution alone.

3.3.3 Relationship with Classroom Management

Classroom management also showed significant associations with most leadership hygiene dimensions. Clarity and fairness of policies ($\rho = 0.449$, $p < 0.001$), transparent communication ($\rho = 0.477$, $p < 0.001$), supportive supervision ($\rho = 0.443$, $p < 0.001$), maintenance of professional relationships and collegial respect ($\rho = 0.543$, $p < 0.001$), and accountability and consistency in decisions ($\rho = 0.504$, $p < 0.001$) were all highly significant and moderately positive, while equitable task distribution again showed no significant relationship. These findings imply that teachers are more likely to manage classrooms effectively when leadership promotes respect, fairness, communication, and consistent administrative practice. In this domain, collegial respect showed the strongest link, suggesting that relational leadership may be especially important in supporting orderly and positive classroom environments.

3.3.4 Relationship with Learner Engagement and Assessment Literacy

The summary findings indicated that the same five leadership hygiene dimensions were significantly and moderately associated with learner engagement and assessment literacy, while equitable task distribution and workload management consistently showed no significant relationship with either domain. These results suggest that learner engagement and assessment practices improve in school environments where leaders communicate clearly, supervise supportively, maintain professional respect, uphold fairness, and act consistently. The repeated non-significance of workload distribution indicates that even when workload is perceived as fair, it may not directly shape how teachers engage learners or use assessment in instruction.

3.3.5 Relationship with Professional Reflection

Professional reflection followed the same overall pattern. Clarity and fairness of policies ($\rho = 0.444$, $p < 0.001$), transparent communication ($\rho = 0.526$, $p < 0.001$), supportive supervision ($\rho = 0.462$, $p < 0.001$), collegial respect ($\rho = 0.517$, $p < 0.001$), and accountability and consistency in decisions ($\rho = 0.586$, $p < 0.001$) all had highly significant moderate positive correlations with professional reflection. Equitable task distribution and workload management again showed no significant relationship ($\rho = 0.077$, $p = 0.331$). These findings indicate that reflective teaching is strengthened by leadership conditions that provide clarity, constructive communication, support, respect, and dependable decisions. Accountability and consistency again had the strongest relationship, suggesting that reflective practice flourishes more readily in schools where administrative systems are transparent and credible. The persistence of the non-significant workload finding confirms that reflection is more responsive to leadership climate than to task allocation.

3.3.6 Overall Pattern of Relationships

Taken together, the correlational results show a consistent pattern: five leadership hygiene dimensions had significant moderate positive relationships with all instructional effectiveness domains, while equitable task distribution and workload management showed no significant relationship across the board. Overall, the study findings support the conclusion that leadership hygiene practices strongly influence teachers' planning, pedagogy, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment literacy, and professional reflection. This overall pattern strengthens the study's central argument that instructional effectiveness is not shaped only by teacher competence but also by the quality of leadership conditions within the school. Leadership that is fair, communicative, supportive, respectful, and accountable appears to create the organizational stability needed for strong teaching performance. In contrast, workload fairness, although descriptively rated highly, does not appear to function as a direct predictor of instructional effectiveness in this dataset.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that leadership hygiene practices function as essential foundational conditions that significantly enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness. When school leaders uphold clear and fair policies, transparent communication, supportive supervision, professionalism, and collegial respect, teachers are better able to plan lessons, manage classrooms, engage learners, assess student performance, and reflect on their teaching practices. These leadership behaviors promote psychological safety, professional trust, and organizational stability that allow teachers to concentrate on quality instruction. The findings further show that although equitable workload distribution is valued, it did not significantly influence instructional performance as strongly as relational, communicative, and accountability-driven leadership practices. Overall, the study affirms that strengthening school leaders' hygiene practices is vital to improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

Based on the findings and conclusions, it is recommended that school leaders institutionalize and continuously strengthen leadership hygiene practices that significantly affect teaching effectiveness. This includes reinforcing clarity and fairness of school policies through consistent implementation and dissemination of directives, as well as sustaining transparent communication and timely feedback through open dialogues, regular meetings, and accessible communication channels. These actions are consistent with the study's conclusion that the most influential leadership practices are those that promote trust, support, fairness, and accountability in the school environment.

The study was limited to principals, head teachers, and teachers from selected public secondary schools in Polanco I and II Districts, Division of Zamboanga del Norte, during School Year 2025–2026. It did not include elementary schools, private institutions, or other districts in the division. External variables such as community involvement, socio-economic conditions, and student-related factors were beyond the scope of the research. In addition, the inquiry focused only on leadership hygiene practices and their influence on teacher instructional effectiveness, excluding other leadership dimensions such as motivational or transformational practices. As a result, the findings are context-specific and may not be generalized to all educational settings.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study adhered to institutional ethical standards and accepted research ethics. Permission was secured from the proper authorities before data collection, and participation was voluntary with written informed consent obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected through secure handling of data and removal of identifying information, consistent with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). The researcher ensured honesty, transparency, and objectivity in the conduct and reporting of the study, properly acknowledged all contributions and sources, respected copyright ownership of referenced materials, and declared no conflict of interest.

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