

Leadership realities: Navigating professional development, instructional hindrances, and job satisfaction of school heads

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the leadership realities regarding professional development, instructional barriers, and job satisfaction among school heads in the Danao City Division using the TALIS framework. Employing a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 50 school heads via an adapted TALIS questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed a profile of experienced leaders who are highly engaged in professional development but perceive a low need for further training. Critically, they face significant barriers, including high costs, poor accessibility of programs, and severe shortages of instructional resources particularly library materials, physical infrastructure, and time for instructional leadership. Despite these challenges, school heads reported moderate to high job satisfaction, primarily linked to personal performance. Statistical analysis established a significant positive relationship between professional development barriers and job satisfaction, indicating that satisfaction is more affected by systemic obstacles than by unmet training needs. The study concludes that enhancing leadership efficacy and well-being requires systemic interventions to reduce these contextual barriers rather than merely expanding professional development offerings. Consequently, a strategic action plan is proposed. This plan outlines targeted strategies to mitigate financial and logistical professional development barriers, augment critical instructional resources, and re-allocate time for instructional leadership, thereby providing a structured roadmap to support school heads and improve educational outcomes in the division.

Keywords: Administration and supervision, professional development, instructional hindrances, job satisfaction, quantitative, action plan

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, professional development of school heads has increasingly been recognized as a foundational element for enhancing educational quality and student success. Instructional leadership, particularly by school principals, plays a crucial role in fostering productive teaching and learning environments. Alanoglu (2022) demonstrated through meta-analysis that instructional leadership significantly boosts teacher self-efficacy, which correlates with

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improved student outcomes and instructional quality. Likewise, Hou, Cui, and Zhang (2019) found positive effects of instructional leadership on student academic performance, underscoring its pivotal role worldwide. Effective professional development for school leaders includes structured mentorship programs (Gumus, 2019), collaborative learning environments (Watts & Richardson, 2020), and support systems that enhance key leadership competencies such as strategic planning and problem-solving, which are essential for managing complex school demands.

School heads perform a wide range of activities that extend beyond administrative tasks to include instructional leadership, mentorship, and fostering a culture of continuous professional learning. Karacabey (2021) highlights how principals' support for teachers' professional growth through resource provision, feedback, and collaboration directly influences instructional quality and student achievement. Hamka (2023) emphasized that principals act as change agents by motivating teachers, managing resources effectively, and ensuring a supportive atmosphere that enhances teacher performance. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education (DepEd) prioritizes the development of instructional leadership competencies in school heads through programs aimed at raising teaching standards and student outcomes (Daing & Mustapha, 2023). This includes aligning leadership practices with national education reforms and addressing contextual challenges faced by educators.

Despite its importance, school heads face significant problems that hinder their professional development and effectiveness as instructional leaders. In the Philippines, Dorado et al. (2024) identified critical barriers such as heavy administrative workloads, limited access to relevant professional development programs, inadequate financial support, and a lack of aligned training with school needs. These challenges limit school heads' capacity to perform their roles effectively, particularly in improving instructional quality. Dellomas and Deri (2022) reported that successful school heads blend transformational and instructional leadership to enhance school culture, teacher morale, and student achievement, yet the complexities of applying diverse leadership approaches continue to pose difficulties. The integration of technology in leadership has become increasingly relevant, especially in the post-pandemic "new normal" (Nurabadi et al., 2022), adding another layer of demand on school leaders.

Job satisfaction among school heads is closely linked to their ability to perform instructional leadership and professional development activities effectively amid these challenges. Instructional leadership increases teacher motivation and work engagement (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019), which in turn reflects on the satisfaction and efficacy of school heads themselves. Bellibaş, et al. (2021) suggest that a holistic leadership approach combining transformational and instructional leadership enhances teacher learning and professional fulfillment, which presumably supports leaders' own job satisfaction. However, disparities in support and resources can impact leaders' morale and their commitment to their roles.

In the Philippine setting, numerous studies affirm the critical role of instructional leadership in educational improvement, yet call for context-specific solutions to address local challenges. Kilag et al. (2023; 2024) showed that principals' instructional leadership mediates school effectiveness under resource constraints and diverse learner needs. Miramon et al. (2024) further demonstrated how distributed teacher leadership complements principal-led instructional efforts in promoting reforms aligned with the Philippine K–12 system. At the local level, studies in provincial and rural areas such as Danao City reveal adaptive leadership practices that respond to socioeconomic and infrastructure issues (Aureada, 2021; Estacio & Estacio, 2022). These localized contexts demand tailored professional development and leadership strategies to sustain instructional quality and increase job satisfaction for school heads.

Thus, this study seeks to deepen understanding of professional development experiences, leadership activities, encountered barriers to quality instruction, and job satisfaction among school heads in Danao City Division. By building on global and national insights, this research aims to produce relevant knowledge that informs policy and practice in Philippine Basic Education, contributing to improved leadership capacities and educational outcomes in local schools.

Statement of the problem

This study assessed the professional development needs of school heads, the barriers to implementing instructional quality, and their job satisfaction as a basis for an action plan.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age and gender, school type, years of work experience, years in service as school head, years in service as teacher, and years in service with other management roles?
2. What is the status of professional development of school heads in terms of the extent of professional development needs, participation in professional development, and barriers to participation in professional development?
3. What is the perceived school's capacity to provide quality instruction?
4. What are the perceived hindrances to providing quality instruction?
5. What is the perceived level of job satisfaction among school heads?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the status of professional development of school heads and their job satisfaction?
7. Based on the findings, what action plan can be crafted?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to systematically examine the influence of instructional leadership on instructional quality in basic education schools. The descriptive aspect provided a detailed profile of school leaders and teachers, their leadership practices, work conditions, teaching methods, and perceptions related to instructional quality within the school context. The correlational component analyzed the relationships between various dimensions of instructional leadership exercised by school principals and the instructional quality perceived by teachers, determining the extent and direction of associations between these variables.

The respondents of this study were the school heads from both public and private schools in the Division of Danao City, with a total of fifty (50) participants. Among them, forty-three (43) are from public schools, representing (86.00%), while seven (7) are from private schools, representing forty percent (14.00%) of the total sample. This study employed purposive sampling, as it specifically targeted school heads who were in the best position to provide insights on professional development, barriers to instruction, and job satisfaction. The selection of both public and private school heads ensured a balanced representation, allowing the study to capture a comprehensive understanding of leadership realities across different types of schools within the division.

The research instrument for this study was adapted from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 cycle questionnaires, which were internationally validated tools designed by the OECD to capture data on instructional leadership, teaching practices, and

school environments. This study utilized specific aspects of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) Principal Questionnaire to gather data relevant to the leadership realities, professional development, instructional barriers, and job satisfaction of school heads. The questionnaire focused on several key domains. The Personal Background Information section captured demographic and professional details such as gender, age, educational attainment, years of work experience, employment status, and distribution of time spent on various school-related tasks. These data provided the profile of the respondents and served as important variables in analyzing their leadership roles and contexts. The Professional Development domain explored principals' participation in professional development activities, their level of need for further development in specific leadership areas (e.g., instructional leadership, curriculum design, teacher mentoring, financial management), and the barriers that prevented their participation. This aspect was critical to identifying gaps and challenges that influenced the continuous growth of school heads. The Barriers to Providing Quality Instruction domain assessed, through its questions, the extent to which schools faced limitations in delivering effective instruction, such as shortages of qualified teachers, instructional materials, digital technology, infrastructure, or time for instructional leadership. These data provided insight into systemic and institutional constraints that hindered educational quality. Finally, the Job Satisfaction domain examined principals' job satisfaction through indicators such as their desire to remain in the profession, sources of work-related stress, and their general feelings toward their role. This aspect was particularly important in linking leadership realities and professional development with principals' overall well-being and motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of the study, which examined the demographic profile, professional development status, instructional barriers, and job satisfaction of fifty (50) school heads in the Danao City Division, and further explored the significant relationship between their professional development status and their level of job satisfaction. The study employed a descriptive correlational research design, utilizing a survey questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument administered to the fifty respondents through a total enumeration or complete sampling approach appropriate to the population size. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics, specifically Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis, to determine the relationships and predictive influence among the study variables. The discussion that follows is grounded strictly in the data gathered from the respondents, and all results are interpreted in direct relation to the specific objectives of the study, namely to describe the demographic and professional profile of school heads, assess their professional development needs and barriers, examine barriers to providing quality instruction, determine their level of job satisfaction, and establish the significant relationship between professional development status and job satisfaction.

Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents, as presented in Table 1, revealed that the majority of school heads were female, comprising 82% ($f = 41$) of the total sample, while males accounted for only 18% ($f = 9$) of the fifty respondents. With respect to age distribution, the largest proportion of respondents belonged to the 50 to 59 age bracket at 40% ($f = 20$), followed by those aged 40 to 49 at 24% ($f = 12$), those aged 60 and above at 20% ($f = 10$), and the smallest group aged 30 to 39 at 16% ($f = 8$). This distribution indicates a generally mature

leadership population, suggesting that school leadership positions in the Danao City Division are predominantly occupied by experienced female educators in the later stages of their professional careers. This demographic pattern aligns with recent findings by Naguit (2024), who observed that school heads with over 20 years of experience constitute a significant portion of the leadership force in Philippine schools, and with Sia et al. (2021), who linked extended service tenure to moderate job satisfaction moderated by access to development opportunities. Choi and Mao (2021) further highlighted that demographic stability in public schools provides a useful basis for targeted, TALIS-aligned programs aimed at enhancing leadership efficacy. The concentration of respondents in older age brackets raises important considerations regarding succession planning, adaptability to emerging educational reforms, and sustained engagement in continuous professional development, implying that professional development programs should be differentiated and responsive to the needs of experienced leaders rather than designed solely for entry-level administrators.

Table 2 further detailed the respondents' profile in terms of school type, work experience, and years in service. The data showed that 86% ($f = 43$) of school heads served in public schools, while only 14% ($f = 7$) came from private institutions, indicating that the leadership realities and challenges captured in this study largely reflect conditions within the public education system. In terms of total work experience, the largest proportion of respondents, 42% ($f = 21$), had accumulated 21 to 30 years of experience, while 22% ($f = 11$) reported 31 years or more, 20% ($f = 10$) reported 11 to 20 years, and 16% ($f = 8$) reported 10 years or below. With regard to years in service as principal, 34% ($f = 17$) had served for 6 to 10 years, while a combined 48% had served for more than 10 years, comprising 18% ($f = 9$) with 11 to 15 years and 24% ($f = 12$) with 16 years and above; the remaining 24% ($f = 12$) had served 5 years or below. Regarding years in service as teacher prior to assuming leadership roles, 40% ($f = 20$) reported 21 to 30 years, 26% ($f = 13$) reported 31 years and above, 22% ($f = 11$) reported 11 to 20 years, and 12% ($f = 6$) reported 10 years or below, indicating that 66% of respondents possessed more than 21 years of teaching experience. In terms of years in service with other school management roles, 62% ($f = 31$) reported 11 years or more, 24% ($f = 12$) reported 6 to 10 years, and 14% ($f = 7$) reported 5 years or below. These findings are consistent with Naguit (2024), who found that school heads with over 20 years of experience reported higher needs for ongoing professional development in instructional supervision, and with Sia et al. (2021), who linked extended management tenure to moderate job satisfaction moderated by development access. Choi and Mao (2021) similarly emphasized demographic stability in public schools as a foundation for targeted, TALIS-aligned leadership development programs. Taken together, these results imply that respondents possess substantial institutional knowledge and leadership competence accumulated over years of teaching and administrative service; however, the predominance of public school heads and the concentration of respondents in older age brackets and extended tenure underscore the need for system-wide support mechanisms, deliberate succession planning, and sustained professional learning opportunities to preserve motivation and effectiveness among veteran school leaders.

Status of professional development of school heads

The professional development participation of school heads, as shown in Table 3, indicated uniformly high engagement across nearly all forms of professional learning. All fifty respondents (100%, $f = 50$) reported participating in courses or seminars on subject matter, teaching methods, or pedagogical topics; courses or seminars on leadership; in-person seminars; and networks of principals formed specifically for professional development. High

participation was likewise observed in reading professional literature at 98% ($f = 49$; 2%, $f = 1$ reporting no participation), online courses or seminars and formal qualification programs each at 96% ($f = 48$; 4%, $f = 2$ reporting no participation for each), and education conferences as well as peer or self-observation and coaching activities each at 94% ($f = 47$; 6%, $f = 3$ reporting no participation for each). Only the "other" category showed a lower participation rate, with 46% ($f = 23$) indicating engagement and 54% ($f = 27$) indicating none. These results demonstrate that school heads were highly engaged in formal and structured professional development programs, reflecting a strong commitment to continuous learning and leadership enhancement. The near-universal participation in both leadership-specific and pedagogical courses reflects an acute awareness among respondents of the importance of maintaining instructional and managerial competencies. This finding is supported by Avalos Faizuddin et al. (2022), who emphasized that structured learning opportunities, including leadership programs, are essential for sustaining school head competencies, and by Patrick (2022), who noted that engagement in professional networks and peer collaboration strengthens school leaders' problem-solving abilities. Gallegos et al. (2021) further indicated that diverse formats of professional development, whether delivered online or in person, enhance accessibility and skill acquisition among school leaders. The comparatively lower participation in online programs and education conferences, though still high in absolute terms, may reflect access or scheduling limitations, suggesting that efforts should be directed toward flexible online options, incentives, and context-specific workshops addressing practical leadership challenges to further strengthen school heads' professional growth and its impact on instructional quality.

Despite this high level of engagement, Table 4 revealed that school heads perceived a generally low level of need for further professional development, with an aggregate mean of 2.19 interpreted as a low level of need across all eleven leadership and administrative domains assessed. Among the specific indicators, providing effective feedback recorded the highest mean at 2.40 ($SD = 0.728$), followed by designing the school curriculum and developing collaboration among teachers, both at 2.34 ($SD = 0.917$ and $SD = 0.745$, respectively), and designing professional development for or with teachers and promoting equity and diversity, both at 2.30 ($SD = 0.863$ and $SD = 0.909$, respectively). Using data for improving the quality of the school recorded a mean of 2.26 ($SD = 0.944$), human resource management recorded 2.16 ($SD = 0.842$), financial management recorded 2.12 ($SD = 0.849$), observing classroom instruction recorded 2.08 ($SD = 0.853$), knowledge and understanding of current national and local policies on education recorded 2.00 ($SD = 0.808$), and knowledge and understanding of new developments in leadership research and theory recorded the lowest mean at 1.80 ($SD = 0.782$), all interpreted as reflecting a low level of need. The relatively narrow range of standard deviations across indicators suggests relative consensus among respondents regarding their perceived competency levels. These findings imply that school heads generally regarded themselves as adequately competent across most leadership and administrative domains, reflecting confidence in their existing skills and knowledge, and suggest that professional development programs should be tailored toward refining and updating advanced leadership skills, instructional oversight, and curriculum management rather than delivering broad-based foundational training. This is consistent with Boeskens et al. (2020), who observed that experienced school leaders often report low perceived professional development needs even though continuous, targeted learning continues to improve school outcomes, and with Afful (2025), who emphasized the importance of refining advanced leadership competencies to sustain effectiveness among veteran principals. Similarly, He et al. (2024) argued that targeted professional learning, particularly in curriculum design and instructional leadership, significantly strengthens school performance and teacher collaboration. These results suggest that focused workshops or coaching in specific competency areas could maximize professional

growth, reinforce instructional quality, and address evolving educational challenges among school heads in the Danao City Division.

In contrast to their low perceived developmental needs, school heads reported substantial barriers to accessing professional development, as presented in Table 5, with an aggregate mean of 2.78 interpreted as "Agree," indicating that respondents generally acknowledged the presence of multiple obstacles to their participation in professional learning. The most strongly endorsed barriers were the cost of professional development and its limited accessibility, both recording a mean of 2.92 (SD = 0.853 and SD = 0.829, respectively), followed by insufficient time due to family responsibilities at 2.84 (SD = 0.912), and lack of employer support and absence of relevant professional development offerings, both at 2.82 (SD = 0.800 and SD = 0.873, respectively). Conflict with work schedules recorded a mean of 2.78 (SD = 0.764), absence of incentives for participation recorded 2.72 (SD = 0.809), lack of prerequisites such as qualifications, experience, or seniority recorded 2.64 (SD = 0.827), and poor quality of professional development offered recorded the lowest mean at 2.60 (SD = 0.833), all interpreted as "Agree." These results suggest that although school heads were highly engaged in professional development, significant obstacles nonetheless affected their participation, particularly those related to financial cost, scheduling demands, and organizational support, indicating that the barriers experienced were multifaceted and required both individual level adjustments and systemic solutions. This finding aligns with Kim (2025), who highlighted that systemic support and resources are critical in mitigating professional development constraints, and with Admiraal et al. (2021), who noted that organizational and structural barriers often restrict the effective implementation of professional learning. Miller (2024) further argued that removing such barriers enhances leaders' engagement in targeted professional growth and strengthens school outcomes. These findings suggest that addressing the identified barriers requires targeted interventions, including flexible scheduling, financial support or subsidies, employer encouragement, and accessible high-quality programs, in order to enhance participation, strengthen leadership competencies, and ultimately improve instructional quality and job satisfaction among school heads.

Barriers to providing quality instruction

Table 6 presented the barriers to providing quality instruction as perceived by school heads, yielding an aggregate mean of 2.85, interpreted as "Quite a bit," indicating that respondents regarded these challenges as considerably significant. Among the fifteen indicators, shortage or inadequacy of library materials recorded the highest mean at 3.06 (SD = 0.843), followed by shortage or inadequacy of instructional space and shortage or inadequacy of physical infrastructure, both at 3.00 (SD = 0.808 and SD = 0.756, respectively), and shortage or inadequacy of time for instructional leadership at 2.98 (SD = 0.892). Insufficient internet access recorded a mean of 2.94 (SD = 0.935), shortage of qualified teachers recorded 2.92 (SD = 0.900), shortage or inadequacy of digital technology for instruction recorded 2.90 (SD = 0.886), shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials recorded 2.88 (SD = 0.872), and shortage of vocational teachers recorded 2.86 (SD = 0.833). Shortage or inadequacy of necessary materials to train vocational skills recorded 2.80 (SD = 0.857), shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes recorded 2.78 (SD = 0.764), shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs recorded 2.74 (SD = 0.944), shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students in a multicultural or multilingual setting recorded 2.68 (SD = 0.794), shortage of support personnel recorded 2.60 (SD = 0.833), and shortage or inadequacy of time with students

recorded the lowest mean at 2.58 ($SD = 0.859$), with all indicators interpreted as "Quite a bit." These findings suggest that school heads faced multiple interrelated challenges spanning both human resource concerns, such as teacher competencies and availability, and material or infrastructure deficiencies, including instructional resources, technology, and facilities, with time constraints for instructional leadership and engagement with students further compounding operational difficulties. This pattern is consistent with Zickafoose et al. (2024), who found that insufficient teaching staff and inadequate learning resources significantly hinder the delivery of effective instruction, and with Ullah and Usman (2023), who emphasized that technology, library access, and classroom facilities are essential for fostering quality teaching and learning. Cherutoi and Okutu (2024) similarly noted that school leaders' capacity to provide instructional leadership is constrained by operational and infrastructural limitations, ultimately affecting overall school performance. These results imply a need for comprehensive support addressing instructional barriers, including the recruitment and professional development of qualified teachers, the upgrading of instructional materials, enhanced technological access, improved school facilities, and the implementation of time management strategies that would allow school heads to focus more directly on instructional leadership, likely leading to improved teaching effectiveness, better learning outcomes, and higher satisfaction among school heads

Level of job satisfaction among school heads

Table 7 presented the level of job satisfaction among school heads, with an aggregate mean of 2.90 interpreted as "Agree," indicating that respondents generally expressed satisfaction with their jobs. Among the ten indicators, satisfaction with personal performance in the school recorded the highest mean at 3.18 ($SD = 0.661$), followed by overall job satisfaction at 3.12 ($SD = 0.480$) and willingness to recommend the school as a good place to work at 3.00 ($SD = 0.728$). Enjoyment of working at the school recorded a mean of 2.96 ($SD = 0.880$), the perception that the advantages of the profession clearly outweigh its disadvantages recorded 2.94 ($SD = 0.793$), and the belief that the teaching profession is valued in society recorded 2.86 ($SD = 0.700$). The item pertaining to the desire to change schools if possible recorded 2.88 ($SD = 0.940$), while willingness to choose the same job or position again and regret over having become a principal both recorded 2.72 ($SD = 0.784$ and $SD = 0.904$, respectively), and questioning whether it would have been better to choose another profession recorded the lowest mean at 2.60 ($SD = 0.833$), all interpreted as "Agree." Standard deviations across the indicators ranged from 0.480 to 0.940, reflecting moderate variability in individual responses, with most school heads agreeing with statements reflecting positive aspects of their work. These findings suggest that school heads experienced moderate to high levels of job satisfaction, indicating that they generally valued their roles despite the challenges they faced, with satisfaction appearing to be influenced by their sense of accomplishment, enjoyment of work, and willingness to recommend their school as a workplace; however, the responses also reflected occasional doubts about professional choices and the societal value of teaching, pointing to underlying factors that could affect long-term motivation. These results are consistent with Siswanto et al. (2023), who found that school leaders with supportive work environments demonstrate higher motivation and job satisfaction, and with Faizuddin et al. (2022), who noted that ongoing professional development and opportunities to influence school outcomes enhance satisfaction and retention among principals. Owhor (2025) further highlighted that recognition of the societal value of teaching contributes to school leaders' overall professional contentment and commitment. These findings imply that school administrators should continue to foster supportive work environments, recognition systems, and professional growth opportunities to maintain and enhance job satisfaction, while

addressing concerns about professional value and societal recognition could further improve morale and reduce potential turnover among school leaders.

Significant relationship between the status of professional development of school heads and their job satisfaction

Table 8 presented the Pearson correlation matrix examining the relationships among professional development needs, professional development barriers, and job satisfaction. The results revealed a negative and non-significant correlation between professional development needs and job satisfaction ($r = -0.225$), indicating that unmet training needs did not directly predict satisfaction levels among the respondents. In contrast, professional development barriers demonstrated a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.398$, $p < 0.01$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between these two variables at the 0.01 level of significance, and suggesting that when barriers such as cost, time constraints, or lack of support were minimized, school leaders were more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction in their roles. Additionally, a significant negative correlation was found between professional development needs and professional development barriers ($r = -0.417$, $p < 0.01$), likewise leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 0.01 level of significance, implying that school heads who perceived fewer barriers tended to report lower professional development needs. These findings indicate that barriers to professional development, rather than the presence of developmental needs, played a more substantial role in shaping school heads' job satisfaction, as respondents generally perceived themselves as competent in their roles despite unmet training needs not translating into reduced satisfaction. This is consistent with Akdere and Egan (2020), who noted that organizational support and accessible professional learning opportunities are critical for leader satisfaction, and with Nalini (2024), who emphasized that obstacles to professional growth negatively influence engagement and morale. Lee et al. (2020) similarly highlighted that reducing systemic barriers enhances school leaders' motivation, retention, and overall job satisfaction, implying that efforts to enhance job satisfaction among school heads should prioritize the reduction of professional development barriers rather than the mere provision of additional training opportunities.

The predictive relationship between professional development variables and job satisfaction was further examined through multiple regression analysis, as presented in Table 9. The results revealed that professional development barriers significantly predicted job satisfaction ($B = 0.197$, standardized coefficient $B = 0.368$, $t = 2.507$, $p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance, whereas professional development needs did not significantly predict job satisfaction ($B = -0.32$, standardized coefficient $B = -0.71$, $t = -0.485$, $p = 0.630$), leading to the failure to reject the null hypothesis for this predictor. The model constant was 2.42 (Std Error = 0.311, $t = 7.792$, $p < 0.001$). Collinearity statistics, with a tolerance value of 0.826 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) of 1.211 for both predictors, indicated the absence of multicollinearity concerns, confirming the reliability of the regression model. These regression findings reinforced the correlational results, demonstrating that job satisfaction among school heads was affected more substantially by the presence of professional development barriers than by their developmental needs, underscoring the importance of establishing an environment in which school leaders can participate in professional learning without significant obstacles. This is supported by Narayan (2025), who demonstrated that school heads' job satisfaction is inversely related to unmitigated barriers such as time demands and limited support, and by McEvoy (2024), who emphasized

barrier reduction strategies, such as incentives, to elevate the fulfillment of secondary school heads in resource constrained settings. McColl (2020) further linked intensified work barriers stemming from limited professional development access to diminished principal satisfaction, advocating for systemic interventions aimed at retention and efficacy. These findings imply that school administrators and policymakers should focus on mitigating barriers such as financial costs, scheduling conflicts, and lack of support for professional development, as reducing such barriers may constitute a more effective strategy for enhancing satisfaction than simply providing additional professional development opportunities, thereby improving retention and indirectly strengthening instructional quality through policies and programs that emphasize accessibility, support, and incentives for professional growth.

The overall explanatory power of the regression model was summarized in Table 10, which showed that professional development needs and barriers collectively explained 16.3% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R = 0.403$, $R^2 = 0.163$), with an adjusted R^2 of 0.127 indicating a moderate predictive capability of the model. The F value of 4.562, with 2 degrees of freedom and a significance level of $p < 0.05$, confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant in predicting job satisfaction among school heads, thereby leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant predictive relationship at the 0.05 level of significance. These results indicate that professional development variables, particularly barriers, significantly influenced school heads' job satisfaction; however, given that the model accounted for only 16.3% of the variance, the remaining 83.7% of job satisfaction was attributable to additional variables beyond professional development, such as school environment, administrative support, and personal factors. This suggests that while reducing professional development barriers is critical, schools should also consider holistic approaches to enhancing job satisfaction, including workplace culture, recognition, workload management, and career advancement opportunities. Bennett (2025) highlighted how holistic interventions beyond professional development barriers boosted model adjusted variance by addressing workload and recognition, implying that comprehensive strategies targeting both professional development and broader working conditions are necessary for sustained leader satisfaction, and that policymakers should adopt multifaceted approaches that address systemic barriers while simultaneously fostering supportive organizational climates to maximize school head well-being and effectiveness.

Taken together, the findings of this study reveal a distinct leadership profile among school heads in the Danao City Division, characterized by a predominantly female, experienced, and veteran cohort with extensive backgrounds in both teaching and administrative roles. These leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to professional growth, as evidenced by their high participation rates across nearly all forms of professional development activities examined; yet they simultaneously reported a low perceived need for further training, even as they identified significant financial, logistical, and systemic barriers that constrained their access to such opportunities. A central challenge emerging from the data lies in the substantial barriers to quality instruction that these school heads face, encompassing critical shortages of physical resources, technological infrastructure, and qualified personnel, as well as insufficient time dedicated to instructional leadership. Despite these considerable obstacles, school heads expressed a moderate to high level of job satisfaction, derived primarily from a sense of personal accomplishment and enjoyment of their work. Crucially, the statistical analyses demonstrated that this satisfaction was significantly and positively associated with, and predicted by, the presence of professional development barriers rather than by unmet developmental needs, a relationship substantiated through Pearson correlation ($r = 0.398$, $p < 0.01$) and multiple regression analysis ($B = 0.197$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.163$, $F = 4.562$, $p < 0.05$). Collectively, these findings directly address the objectives of the study by establishing not only the demographic and professional profile of school heads and the extent of their developmental

needs, barriers, and satisfaction, but also by empirically confirming that barriers, rather than needs, are the more consequential determinant of job satisfaction in this population. This contributes to the growing body of literature on educational leadership by underscoring that the pathway to enhancing leadership efficacy and well-being among veteran school administrators is contingent upon systematically alleviating the contextual and systemic constraints that impede their work, rather than solely expanding professional development offerings. These findings provide the empirical foundation for the recommendations and proposed interventions to be discussed in the succeeding chapter, which will translate these results into actionable strategies aimed at reducing professional and instructional barriers and sustaining job satisfaction among school heads in the Danao City Division.

CONCLUSION

Based on the comprehensive analysis, this study concludes that school heads in Danao City Division are experienced and actively engaged in professional development but face significant systemic and resource-based barriers that impede both their participation in further learning and their capacity to ensure quality instruction. Notably, their job satisfaction is more strongly influenced by the presence of these barriers than by their perceived development needs. Therefore, the central leadership reality is that enhancing job satisfaction and instructional leadership effectiveness is less about providing additional training and more about strategically reducing the obstacles such as financial constraints, time limitations, inadequate resources, and insufficient support that school heads encounter in their professional environment.

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