

Extent of Technical Assistance from School Leaders to Improve Teachers' Performance: Case of Agusan Del Sur Division

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Abstract

The primary goal of this study is to assess the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders to teachers regarding the teaching and learning process. A vital aspect of this study will be to understand the impact of enhancing teacher performance, alongside the increase in academic performance of students, through the assistance provided by school leaders. The study was conducted in the selected large schools of the Division of Agusan del Sur and delved into the profiles of teachers, considering variables such as age, sex, educational attainment, years of service, and related training to provide a thorough understanding of the diverse characteristics within the teaching cohort for the School Year 2023-2024. This study used a quantitative research design using a descriptive-correlational approach to examine the extent of technical assistance by the school heads to improve teachers' teaching performance, targeting teaching delivery and learning outcomes with in-depth analysis of the context of leadership dynamics in the following areas: Technical Support; School-Based Review and Learning Standards; Teaching Standards and Pedagogies; Teacher Performance Feedback; Learning Assessment; and Learning Environment. It specifically focused on the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders to teachers in the 10 selected large schools within the Agusan del Sur division. The respondents were selected using a sampling technique. Additionally, this study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire anchored and based on the PPSSH, focusing on Domain 3, which emphasizes "focusing on teaching and learning." It is found that the prominent schools in Agusan del Sur are dominated by highly performing teachers. Furthermore, the School head's very high technical assistance to teachers is remarkable, indicating the positive contribution of DepEd's investment in school leadership training and seminars. Generally, teachers performed beyond the expectations of DepEd and CSC. However, the pursuit of advanced studies, access to workshops and training, constant school head support, and intervention programs are significant inputs to sustain the exemplary performance of teachers in the teaching profession.

Keywords: Technical Assistance, Teaching Performance, Academic Performance, Technical Support, Leadership Dynamics

1. INTRODUCTION

Enhancing educational systems in today's academic landscape has been a primary goal of the Department of Education, aiming to cultivate skilled educators whose competencies align with standard strategic goals. The primary goal of this study is to assess the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders to teachers regarding the teaching and learning process. A vital aspect of this study is to understand the impact of enhancing teacher performance, alongside the increase in student academic performance, through the assistance provided by school leaders.

Various studies have emphasized the importance of the roles of school leaders in the teaching and learning process, with significant attention on changes in curriculum policy and innovative pedagogy (OECD, 2019; Manlapaz, 2022; Amoroso et al., 2022). Cepeda et al. (2018) indicated that teachers are central to the learning process, where students actively engage in class. However, the study revealed that students' low performance is often attributed to the quality of teaching provided by teachers. Saro et al. (2022) emphasized that one of the main factors contributing to students' low academic achievement is their lack of interest and motivation in class, resulting in less interaction due to teachers' performance, which is significantly correlated with the low technical assistance school administrators provide. Magnaye (2022) suggested that teachers' progress in the field is contingent upon adherence to training programs that promote quality professional growth and support their teaching processes.

In alignment with the Department of Education's (DepEd) commitment to supporting school leaders in fulfilling their roles, which includes enhancing teachers' quality and students' achievement, DepEd has issued an order aimed at assisting school leaders in their duties and responsibilities. This order pertains to the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). Furthermore, this directive emphasized the accountability of

school leaders to self-reflect and evaluate their practices as they strive for professional development (DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2020).

Additionally, DepEd's support extended through DepEd Memorandum No. 008, series of 2023, which outlines the multi-year guidelines for the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) based on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). This memorandum is closely intertwined with the PPSSH, as it empowers school leaders or instructional supervisors to conduct classroom observations to assess teachers' performance against set indicators and provide targeted assistance aimed at enhancing teaching and learning (DepEd Memorandum No. 008, s., 2023).

Previous studies have identified several gaps, including low academic performance resulting from poor-quality teaching, inadequate technical assistance provided by instructional supervisors leading to a lack of guidance in developing competent teaching processes, and teachers' insufficient professional development, particularly in training related to teaching standards and pedagogies. In the Agusan del Sur division, the low performance of learners reflects the quality of teachers' performance. Notably, classroom observations in several large schools revealed that 90% of teachers, ranging from Teacher I to Teacher III, received outstanding rankings of 6 to 7 on all observable indicators, indicating adherence to proper teaching processes. However, these results contradicted the students' performance outcomes, as evidenced by the Mean Percentage Scores (MPS) from the first quarter of 2023-2024. The MPS for significant subjects such as English (62.5%), Mathematics (65.00%), and Science (63.5%), along with minor subjects averaging between 59.00% and 65.00%, indicated subpar performance. This trend is consistent with the PISA 2022 results, where Science scored 24.00%, English (Reading) scored 23.00%, and Mathematics scored 16.00%, suggesting that students have only achieved basic proficiency in these subjects. These findings indicated that while teachers may receive outstanding ratings based on observable indicators, there needed to be more technical assistance focused on teaching and learning, particularly in teaching delivery. Addressing these gaps required school leaders to prioritize providing proper technical advice and support to teachers' instructional delivery.

The significance of this study lies in its examination of the technical support provided by school leaders to teachers and its subsequent impact on teacher performance and student academic achievement. In the ever-changing system of education, characterized by a new set of standards and objectives set forth by the Department of Education (DepEd), understanding and enhancing the support mechanisms for educators becomes crucial. By addressing this aspect, the study filled a critical gap identified in prior research, highlighting a discrepancy between favorable teacher evaluations and unsatisfactory student performance. Aligned with DepEd's guidelines, such as the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), specifically within the rating period of School Year 2022-2023, the study emphasized the necessity for targeted technical assistance to bridge the gap between teacher proficiency and student outcomes. Nonetheless, the study contributed to the general objective of improving teachers' teaching performance and fostering student success by ensuring that teachers receive the necessary support and technical assistance to facilitate student learning and teaching delivery.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

This study utilized a schematic diagram to investigate the extent of technical assistance from school leaders and its impact on the performance of teachers in large schools of Agusan del Sur. This framework integrates the principles of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory and Social Cognitive Theory to examine the relationship between teachers' demographic profile, their teaching performance, and the extent of technical assistance they received from school leaders. This framework explores the demographic factors; age, sex, length of service, educational background, and related training which relate to the effectiveness of the school leaders' provision of technical assistance. These demographic profiles are crucial variables to understanding the teachers' differences that may affect how they perceive and utilize the technical assistance provided.

School Leaders' technical assistance covers various areas, including school-based review and learning standards, teaching standards and pedagogies, teacher performance feedback, learning assessment, and learning environment. This is aligned with and supports the missions and directives of the Department of Education, particularly in providing extensive assistance to teachers. It focuses on Domain 3 of the 'Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads,' which emphasizes teaching and learning. Domain 3 concentrates on the role of school heads in promoting quality teaching and learning, emphasizing their commitment to providing instructional leadership to improve teacher competence and student outcomes. In this domain, school heads are expected to provide technical assistance on curriculum, practice, performance, and teaching delivery. They should also create a learner-centered environment that ensures access to inclusive, excellent, relevant, and liberating education (DepEd Order No. 024, series 2020).

The core business of school leaders is to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Teaching is the centerpiece of instruction, and learners are the focus of practice in the classroom. Additionally, school heads have various tasks and responsibilities, including managing the school through instructional management and overseeing teaching practices. Teachers also receive supervision and advice from school heads, and they participate in various staff development programs (Khalid, 2007). This study investigated the extent to which school leaders provide technical assistance to improve teachers' performance. Technical assistance is correlated with teachers' teaching performance, as measured in the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). It sought to understand how effective technical assistance supplements teaching performance. Finally, it sought to develop a targeted intervention program based on this study's findings. The program intended to enhance the quality and extent of school leaders' provision of technical assistance and further propose an intervention aimed at improving teaching performance and, eventually, educational outcomes for the Division of Agusan del Sur.

1.2 Research Questions

The study's objective was to investigate the extent to which school leaders extended technical assistance to improve the teaching performance of teachers in Agusan del Sur. Specifically, it explored the relationship between teachers' demographic factors, the scope and nature of the technical assistance they received, and its impact on their teaching performance. This study also identified and proposed specific interventions for teachers and school heads based on the findings to improve the effectiveness of technical assistance and teaching performance, thereby fostering better educational outcomes. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents, in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 sex;
 - 1.3 educational attainment;
 - 1.4 length of teaching service; and
 - 1.5 related training?
2. What is the extent of technical assistance from school leaders to teachers, in terms of:
 - 2.1 school-based review and learning standards;
 - 2.2 teaching standards and pedagogies;
 - 2.3 teacher performance feedback;
 - 2.4 learning assessment, and
 - 2.5 learning environment?
3. What is the level of teaching performance of the teachers from the IPCRF (Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form)?
4. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' profiles, the extent of technical assistance from school leaders, and teaching performance?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design. It aimed to provide static pictures of situations as well as establish the relationship between different variables (McBurney & White, 2009). This approach is appropriate for the study as it explored the relationship between the extent of technical assistance from school leaders to improve teachers' teaching performance and their profile.

2.2 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were teachers from 10 prominent schools in the Agusan del Sur division. The population of teacher respondents in these ten schools encompassed a range of teaching positions across all subject areas, with 459 teachers assigned to the junior high department and 161 teachers assigned to the senior high department. In alignment with the PPST, these teachers are categorized into career stages: Beginning Teachers (newly hired or teachers five years and below in service), Proficient Teachers (Teachers I-III), Highly Proficient Teachers (Master Teachers I-IV), and Distinguished Teachers. Within these ten large schools, the distribution of these teachers includes 126 beginning teachers, 399 proficient teachers, and 96 highly proficient teachers, summing up a total of 620 population of teacher respondents. This considerable and diverse sample of teacher respondents provides a comprehensive representation of technical

assistance experiences and teaching practices within these selected large schools in the Division of Agusan del Sur, thereby offering a rich source of insights for this study. Respondents were selected using stratified random sampling. The Slovin Formula was also utilized to determine the sample size.

2.3 Research Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire. This instrument has been anchored and based on the PPSSH, specifically within the rating period of School Year 2022-2023, focusing on Domain 3, which emphasizes "focusing on teaching and learning." The researcher-made instrument was developed to assess the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders in improving teachers' performance. The instrument comprises several phases. In Part 1, the questionnaire focused on the respondents' demographic profiles, including age, sex, educational attainment, length of teaching service, and related training. Part 2 of the instrument concentrated on assessing the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders to improve teachers' performance, covering areas such as school-based review and learning standards, teaching standards and pedagogies, teaching performance feedback, learning assessment, and learning objectives. Although the researcher crafted the instrument, the set of item indicators derived from technical assistance by the school heads are grounded in PPSSH Domain 3, focusing on career stages 1 and 2 with no DepEd adjustments, and there were no changes of indicators as of the School Year 2022-2023. Lastly, Part 3 allowed respondents to provide their performance ratings as measured by the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) for the School Year 2022-2023. This data served as the basis for correlating the extent of technical assistance from school leaders with teachers' performance. After crafting the instrument, the research instrument underwent a series of validations. The instrument was submitted to the researcher's adviser and the Dean of Graduate Studies for review and refinement of the concepts. It was then submitted for expert review on constructs and content. The instrument validator was the Division Research Coordinator of the Division Agusan del Sur in her capacity as validator and reviewer of the Basic Education Research Fund's basic and action research; the second validator was the Public Schools District Supervisor of Prosperidad District in her capacity as Instructional Supervisor; and the third validator is the School Research Coordinator of Prosperidad National High School in his capacity as a peer reviewer of different research publications. The pre-testing and pilot testing were conducted at Prosperidad National High School with 20 teacher respondents, and the items were tested, including item analysis, reliability testing, and validity testing. It underwent an analysis of variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.97614 or 97.60% with a descriptive rating of excellent.

2.4 Statistical Treatment

The data was tabulated, treated, and coded accordingly based on the problems presented in this study. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, sex, educational attainment, length of teaching service, and related training. The mean was utilized to assess the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders to teachers, which encompassed school-based review and learning standards, teaching standards and pedagogies, teaching performance feedback, learning assessment, and the learning environment, as well as the teachers' teaching performance ratings as measured by the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine the statistical significance of the relationships between teachers' profiles, the extent of technical assistance from school leaders, and teaching performance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study based on the analyzed and gathered data. Relevant findings are presented according to the sequence of the problem statements.

3.1 Profile Data

In terms of age, the largest percentage share of 46% (93) is composed of teachers who are 25 to 34 years of age. This is followed by 34% (69) of the teachers whose ages fall within 35 to 44 years. The remaining 14% (29) and 5% (10) correspond to the respondents who are within the age range of 45-54 years and 55-64 years, respectively. As shown in the same table, the majority, or 82% (164) of the respondents, are female. When it comes to educational qualifications, it can be observed that only 22% (44) are Bachelor's degree holders without any units in master's degree. On the other note, 25% (50) of the teachers have already started to earn units in master's, and 39% (78) have completed the academic requirements. In addition, the table shows 9% or 19 teachers who are full-fledged master's degree holders, and some of them have pursued doctorate degrees. Moreover, as to the length of service in the teaching profession, 41% (83) spent 6-11 years, 20% (41) 5 years and below, and 13% (26) have already been teaching by around 11 to 15 years. Other respondents have devoted 16-20 years, and some have even served in the Department of Education (DepEd) beyond 20 years.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents Across Profiles

Profile Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Age</i>		
25-34 years	93	46
35-44 years	69	34
45-54 years	29	14
55-64 years	10	5
Total	201	100
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	37	18
Female	164	82
Total	201	100
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Bachelor's Degree Graduate	44	22
Master's Degree Units	50	25
Master's Degree - CAR	78	39
Master's Degree Graduate	19	9
Doctorate Degree Units	4	2
Doctorate Degree - CAR	5	2
Doctorate Degree Graduate	1	.5
Total	201	100
<i>Length of Service</i>		
Five years – below	41	20
6 – 10 years	83	41
11 – 15 years	26	13
16 – 20 years	19	9
21 – 25 years	10	5
25 – 29 years	11	5
30 years – Above	11	5
Total	201	100

The data shown in Table 1 reflects the reality of the teaching workforce in Agusan del Sur Division, particularly in ten (10) large schools considered in this study. The majority of the teachers are in their prime working ages. This is a result of the significant number of retirees, while plantilla positions are rising, especially with the implied vacancies since the implementation of the K to 12 curriculums. Consequently, most of the young teachers have served in DepEd for around 5 to 10 years. Relative to sex, the teaching personnel in the Philippines is dominated by females, either in elementary or high school (Jay-cen, 2020). Because the majority of the teachers are young, most have spent around 6 to 11 years in the teaching profession, while others have spent less than five years. Remarkably, the educational qualifications of teachers are improving, as evidenced by the significant percentage of respondents who already pursued graduate studies. Cornillez et al. (2021) reported a similar trend of results in some groups of teachers who are taking graduate studies that are primarily linked to reasons such as work promotion and professional growth. In another study by Pentang et al. (2022), it was emphasized that the increasing number of teachers who enrolled in graduate schools is explained by the new standards of work promotion that merit more prominent points for advanced degrees. The teaching workforce in the Division of Agusan del Sur is dominated by young and competitive teachers who are seeking better opportunities for growth and development. The majority of them have already considered plans for development as manifested in their intent to complete graduate degrees.

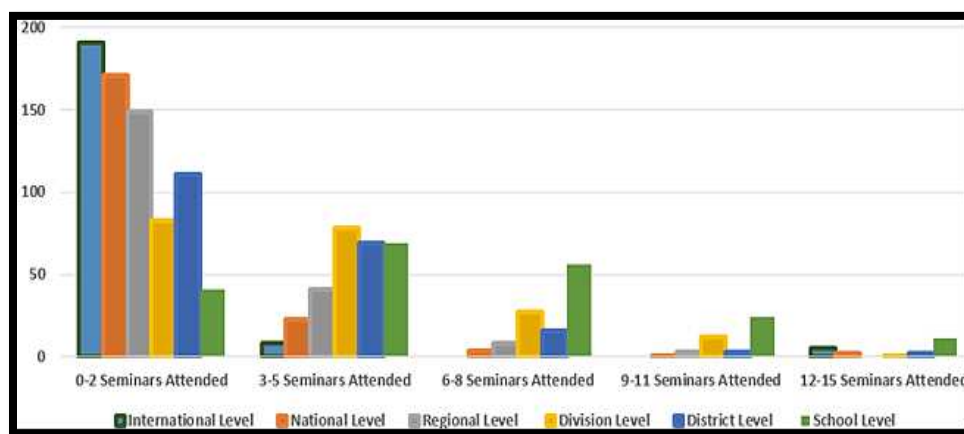


Figure 1. Seminars Attended by Teachers at Different Levels

Figure 1 displays a bar graph of the number of seminars attended by the teachers at different levels. It can be gleaned that the majority of the respondents are clustered within the category that describes 0-2 workshops attended. This indicates that either at school or international levels, most of the teachers have been exposed to at most two seminars only. Further, it is also shown that opportunities for the majority of the teachers are only at the division down to school-level seminars. The statistical findings shown in Figure 3 depict the actual situation of teachers when dealing with opportunities for training and seminars. Accordingly, most of the national and international level seminars that the school heads or focal persons usually attend DepEd sponsors due to budget constraints. Despite such limitations in finances, DepEd consistently practiced the training of trainers (TOT) down to the training of teachers at the division, district, and school levels. The said strategy was implemented many years back, considering the implied costs when the population of DepEd teachers is sent to national and international seminars.

3.2 Extent of Technical Assistance from School Leaders to Teachers

In terms of age, the largest percentage share of 46% (93) is composed of teachers who are 25 to 34 years of age. This is followed by 34% (69) of the teachers whose ages fall within 35 to 44 years. The remaining 14% (29) and 5% (10) correspond to the respondents who are within the age range of 45-54 years and 55-64 years, respectively. As shown in the same table, the majority, or 82% (164) of the respondents, are female. When it comes to educational qualifications, it can be observed that only 22% (44) are Bachelor's degree holders without any units in master's degree. On the other note, 25% (50) of the teachers have already started to earn units in master's, and 39% (78) have completed the academic requirements. In addition, the table shows 9% or 19 teachers who are full-fledged master's degree holders, and some of them have pursued doctorate degrees. Moreover, as to the length of service in the teaching profession, 41% (83) spent 6-11 years, 20% (41) 5 years and below, and 13% (26) have already been teaching by around 11 to 15 years. Other respondents have devoted 16-20 years, and some have even served in the Department of Education (DepEd) beyond 20 years.

Table 2. Extent of Technical Assistance from School Leaders to Teachers

Parameters	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
School-Based Review and Learning Standards	4.27	0.68	Very High
Teaching Standard and Pedagogies	4.31	0.68	Very High
Teacher Performance Feedback	4.31	0.67	Very High
Learning Assessment	4.28	0.70	Very High
Learning Environment	4.32	0.69	Very High

Table 2 illustrates the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders to teachers across various parameters. The results reveal consistently high mean scores, all falling within the "Very High" interpretation range, indicating strong support in these areas. Specifically, "Learning Environment" scored the highest mean of 4.32 (SD = 0.69), reflecting school leaders' significant efforts to create and maintain an optimal environment for teaching and learning. Both "Teaching Standards and Pedagogies" and "Teacher Performance Feedback" shared a mean score of 4.31 (SD = 0.68 and 0.67,

respectively), emphasizing the focus on equipping teachers with effective instructional methods and providing constructive feedback to enhance their performance. "Learning Assessment" had a mean score of 4.28 (SD = 0.70), highlighting the prioritization of evaluating and improving assessment practices. Finally, "School-Based Review and Learning Standards" scored 4.27 (SD = 0.68), underlining the consistent alignment of teaching practices with established standards. These findings collectively demonstrate a comprehensive and impactful approach to supporting teachers in their professional roles.

Effective technical assistance from school leaders plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' performance and overall instructional quality. According to Robinson et al. (2020), school leaders who actively engage in providing guidance and feedback contribute significantly to teachers' professional growth and student achievement. A study by Hallinger and Wang (2021) highlighted that leadership support, particularly in creating a conducive learning environment and offering regular feedback, positively impacts teachers' effectiveness. Furthermore, Kang and Kim (2022) emphasized that aligning teaching practices with standardized benchmarks ensures consistency and quality in education delivery. These findings align with the observations in this study, reinforcing the importance of targeted technical assistance in fostering high teaching standards and improving educational outcomes.

3.3 Level of Teaching Performance of the Teachers

Table 3 clearly shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the teachers concerning their performance as measured in the IPCR ratings. It can be gleaned from the same table that the majority, or 52% (105) of the respondents, have demonstrated an outstanding level of performance while garnering an average rating of 4.50 to 5.00. A percentage share of 47% (94) is accounted for by the teachers who have performed their duties satisfactorily while obtaining an average rating of 3.50 to 4.49. Furthermore, it is essential to note that 1% or 2 out of 201 teachers have displayed a satisfactory level of performance. Relative to the data from the past, it is rare for teachers to demonstrate an adequate rating only. The statistical findings that are shown reveal that the majority of the teachers have performed their duties and responsibilities beyond the standards of the DepEd and Civil Service Commission (CSC). Though there are minimal cases of teachers who need further interventions, it can still be generalized that those teachers continue to posit better performance, which could be linked to the remarkable support and technical assistance from their school heads. As part of the quality control in the division of Agusan del Sur, supervisors are strictly mandated to ensure that competent school heads properly manage schools. Relative to the School-Based Management System, teaching performance is placed as the centerpiece of priorities because of its essential implications for learning outcomes.

Table 3. Level of Teaching Performance of the Teachers Based on the IPCR Ratings

Descriptive Ratings	Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Outstanding	4.500 – 5.000	105	52
Very Satisfactory	3.500 – 4.499	94	47
Satisfactory	2.500 – 3.499	2	1
Unsatisfactory	1.500 – 2.499	0	0
Poor	Below – 1.499	0	0
Overall		201	100

Moreover, the empirical pieces of evidence contained show similarities to the study of Sarabia and Collantes (2020), which spotted the remarkable performance of many DepEd teachers despite the difficulties and challenges. Baraquia (2020) asserted that the job of the teachers in DepEd does not only cover the pure teaching function because of the additional loads and ancillary functions. In addition, Padillo et al. (2021) even noted that the quality of teaching is sometimes compromised because of the bulk of added loads that are administrative and clerical. Despite the inevitable hurdles in the teaching profession, teachers continue to strive for their commitment while believing that highly performing teachers are essential for creating a positive, inclusive, and effective learning environment that supports the success of all students (Sarabia & Collantes, 2020).

3.4 Correlational Analysis between teachers' profiles, extent of technical assistance, and teaching performance

Table 4 exposes the correlation analysis results using the Spearman rho coefficient after knowing that the data collected are non-normal. It can be observed that among the independent variables considered, only the following variables are found to significantly correlate to the performance of the teachers: length of teaching, educational qualification, seminars in division, national, and international venues, and the extent of technical assistance provided by the school heads to the teachers in terms of school-based review and standards. These significant correlates are supported by the p-values that are less than the 0.05 level of significance. On the other hand, age, sex, and the extent to which school leaders provide technical assistance to teachers regarding teaching standards and pedagogies, teacher performance feedback, learning assessment, and learning environment are not statistically correlated to teacher performance.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis Result Using the Spearman Rho Coefficient

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Spearman's rho	p-value	Remarks
Age	IPCR Rating	0.10	0.15	Not Significant
Sex		0.00	0.97	Not Significant
Length of teaching		0.15	0.03	Significant
Education		0.26	< .001	Significant
Seminar in International		0.27	< .001	Significant
Seminar in National		0.16	0.02	Significant
Seminar in Regional		0.09	0.20	Not Significant
Seminar in Division		0.14	0.04	Significant
Seminar District		0.05	0.52	Not Significant
Seminar in School		0.04	0.61	Not Significant
School-based review and learning standards		0.13	0.04	Significant
Teaching standards and pedagogies		0.11	0.11	Not Significant
Teacher performance feedback		0.11	0.14	Not Significant
Learning assessment		0.07	0.29	Not Significant
Learning environment		0.03	0.70	Not Significant

Length of teaching experience shows a significant and positive correlation to teacher performance, as supported by the coefficient of 0.15 and a p-value of 0.03 (less than 0.05 level of significance). It means that as the length of teaching experience increases, the teacher's performance also increases. This finding is supported by many studies in the literature which argued that years of experience make teachers more familiar and competent in the teaching job considering the challenges (Asaloei et al., 2020; Toropova et al., 2021; Murkatik et al., 2020). Further, research indicates that teachers tend to improve significantly in their first few years of teaching. This period of rapid growth usually spans the first 3 to 5 years, during which teachers develop classroom management skills, instructional techniques, and a deeper understanding of student needs (Toropova et al., 2021; Murkatik et al., 2020). Another significant correlation to teacher performance is the

educational qualification of the teachers. Table 4 shows the coefficient of 0.26 and a very small p-value of 0.001 imply that those teachers with higher academic qualifications mostly demonstrate higher levels of performance. According to Tjabolo (2020), teachers with advanced degrees, particularly in the subjects they teach, often have more profound content knowledge. This can enhance their ability to explain complex concepts, answer student questions effectively, and inspire student interest in the subject. As a result, teachers performed better. Kartini et al. (2020) also noted that advanced education can provide teachers with better pedagogical techniques, including classroom management, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. Teachers with higher qualifications may be more adept at applying educational theories to practice.

Seminars attended by the teachers are also shown to be significantly correlated to performance. In particular, the positive correlation coefficients imply that teachers who are exposed to either division, national, or international seminars have mainly demonstrated higher performance. Further, the small p-values (less than 0.05 level of significance), as shown in the same table, statistically implied that the correlation between seminars attended and the performance of teachers is significant. Exposure to workshops and training is an effective avenue to improve the knowledge and capabilities of teachers considering the new trends (Bowman et al., 2022). In another paper by Smith and Gillespie (2023), it was argued that exposure to training and seminars can significantly improve teacher performance in classroom management and teaching. Professional development opportunities, such as training sessions, workshops, and meetings, provide teachers with the latest pedagogical strategies, enhance their content knowledge, and foster continual professional development and growth. Further, Kartini et al. (2020) also asserted that training programs often introduce teachers to new and innovative teaching methods, which can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Lastly, the positive correlation between the extent of technical assistance given by the school principals in terms of school-based review and learning materials is established by the Spearman rho coefficient of 0.13 and a p-value of 0.04 (less than the 0.05 level of significance). Generally, there are ample studies that show evidence of the positive role of technical assistance by school principals in the increase in teachers' performance (Kaso, 2021; Dong et al., 2020; Sunarsi et al., 2020). In the paper of Liu et al. (2021), it was highlighted that the technical assistance provided by school principals can significantly improve teacher performance in several ways, which may include better well-being, motivation, and happiness. Principals play a crucial role in shaping the instructional environment and providing support that enables teachers to enhance their skills and effectiveness (Kilag & Sasan, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

Considering the findings presented, the following conclusions are drawn. The majority of teachers in the big schools of Agusan del Sur are highly performing, demonstrating a consistent commitment to delivering quality education. This level of performance is significantly influenced by the school head's exceptional technical assistance, reflecting the positive outcomes of DepEd's investment in school leadership training and seminars. Furthermore, cases of teachers who performed satisfactorily highlight the importance of appropriate intervention strategies, ensuring that all educators meet the necessary standards. Teachers have consistently exceeded the expectations set by DepEd and the Civil Service Commission (CSC). This exemplary performance is generally linked to factors such as the length of teaching experience, higher educational qualifications, participation in seminars at various levels (division, national, and international), and the robust technical assistance provided by school heads, particularly in the areas of school-based reviews and adherence to standards. However, school leaders require further enhancements in conducting regular reviews and revisions of the curriculum to ensure alignment with current educational standards. Additionally, implementing technology-based training for teachers is essential to improve teaching and learning processes through technological advancements. The pursuit of advanced studies, access to seminars and training opportunities, and consistent support from school heads have proven to be significant contributors to the increase in teacher performance. Nonetheless, to sustain this exemplary performance in the teaching profession, an intervention program is necessary. This program should focus on maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching practices, ensuring the continuous professional growth of educators, and adapting to evolving educational demands.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions drawn, the study recommends the following.

1. The findings and output of this paper may be used by DepEd management as additional benchmark information to strengthen its efforts to improve teacher performance continuously. Through the salient points of this study, DepEd may consider support programs that will increase access to professional growth and development, such as scholarship opportunities and other forms of assistance.
2. Relevant findings presented above may also be utilized by the school heads as considerations in the school

improvement planning, especially when dealing with teacher performance and better learning outcomes for all learners. The essential implications of the findings, including those that are heavily recognized in the literature, will guide school heads in providing appropriate technical assistance for teachers along with an effort to foster better classroom and school performance.

3. By understanding the extent of technical assistance provided by school leaders, teachers can utilize this study's findings to identify areas where they can receive support to enhance their teaching performance. This can lead to improved teaching practices, professional growth, and, ultimately, better educational outcomes.
4. The primary beneficiaries of improved teacher performance are the students. Effective teaching practices result in better learning outcomes, increased student engagement, and a more conducive learning environment.
5. Moreover, the study recommends that future researchers explore the collection of qualitative evidence or data through interviews to capture a more comprehensive analysis for a better understanding of the phenomena.

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