

Empowering instructional leadership: A study on the productivity of Master Teachers

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Abstract

Aim: This study evaluated the productivity of master teachers at Kalibo Pilot Elementary School by examining their socio-demographic characteristics and performance across key instructional leadership roles. It further explored how master teachers perceive their responsibilities and identified factors influencing their productivity, with implications for instructional leadership, teacher development, and school improvement.

Methodology: A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through a structured survey based on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews to explain and enrich the quantitative findings. The study involved 15 purposively selected master teachers. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were examined through Colaizzi's (1978) Seven-Step Phenomenological Method.

Results: Findings revealed that master teachers demonstrated an overall very high level of productivity, particularly in classroom management and learner engagement, mentoring and coaching, professional development, technology integration, and leadership in school improvement. However, action research under instructional leadership obtained only a moderate level of productivity. Qualitative findings indicated that productivity is sustained by intrinsic motivation, professional commitment, and passion for teaching, but is constrained by role overload, excessive ancillary responsibilities, time limitations, work-life imbalance, and interpersonal challenges within the school environment.

Conclusion: Master teachers serve as highly capable instructional leaders who maintain strong professional performance despite significant organizational pressures. Their effectiveness in mentoring, instructional support, and school improvement highlights their vital role in enhancing teaching quality and educational outcomes. The findings suggest the need for institutional policies that reduce administrative burdens, strengthen research engagement, support teacher well-being, and promote sustainable instructional leadership practices in schools.

Keywords: *master teachers, productivity, instructional leadership, teacher development, school improvement, role strain*

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global educational landscape, the role of the teacher has evolved from traditional classroom instruction to a multifaceted commitment involving instructional leadership, mentorship, and school-wide improvement (Galdames-Calderón, 2023). International trends increasingly emphasize "distributed leadership," where formal leaders and frontline educators collaborate to drive school-wide quality and innovation (Douglass et al., 2022). Despite this, educators worldwide face a "balancing act" as they navigate mounting pressures from technology integration, diverse student needs, and elevated accountability requirements (Christopoulou et al., 2026).

Global challenges in teacher leadership are often exacerbated by heavy administrative loads and insufficient support structures for continuous professional development (CPD), which can lead to professional burnout and reduced personal accomplishment (Dyosini, 2024). Furthermore, as school systems undergo digital transformation, teacher leaders are expected to model sophisticated pedagogical practices and digital leadership (Avdiu-Kryeziu, 2025). However, research consistently indicates that while teachers demonstrate high competence in classroom-based



strategies, they often report a critical need for advanced training in coaching and assessment leadership to mentor their colleagues effectively (Galdames-Calderón, 2023).

Within the Philippine context, the Department of Education's Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) sets a high bar for master teachers, envisioning them as experts who transcend classroom boundaries to serve as instructional leaders and innovators (Department of Education, 2022). At Kalibo Pilot Elementary School, master teachers are central to maintaining academic excellence; yet, they face similar complexities to their international counterparts. While they are recognized for instructional competence, the transition to leadership roles is often hampered by logistical constraints and the struggle to balance administrative tasks with substantive instructional coaching (Toñacao & Oliva, 2023).

Despite the recognized importance of the master teacher role, there remains a critical knowledge gap. While existing literature confirms that master teachers face "moderately challenging" barriers in mentoring functions (Arombo, 2023), it is currently unclear how specific administrative constraints and a lack of formal coaching systems directly impact their capacity to lead instructional innovation. Furthermore, there is insufficient empirical evidence linking the productivity of master teachers to specific instructional evaluation practices in the Aklan Division. This study addresses this gap by assessing the performance of master teachers across these core roles and identifying the factors that impede or facilitate their effectiveness. By doing so, this research seeks to inform the development of improved mentoring models and professional development structures, providing a roadmap for empowering teacher leaders to meet the evolving demands of the 21st-century classroom.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Instructional, Distributed, and Teacher Leadership

The modern conception of the master teacher transcends classroom walls, positioning them as essential architects of school-wide quality. Instructional leadership serves as the foundation for this role, with Akomolafe (2025) emphasizing that school leaders' commitment to pedagogical guidance is the primary driver of institutional effectiveness. Complementing this is the concept of distributed leadership, where responsibility is shared across the faculty rather than concentrated solely in the principal's office. According to Galdames-Calderón (2023), distributed leadership frameworks are essential for scaling professional development and ensuring that teacher leaders—like master teachers—can effectively influence school improvement initiatives. Furthermore, teacher leadership is now recognized as a critical mechanism for sustaining high standards; when master teachers operate as change agents, they facilitate a collaborative culture that elevates the collective efficacy of the teaching force (Douglass et al., 2022).

Mentoring, Coaching, and Professional Development

Mentoring and coaching are the primary levers through which master teachers exert their influence. Cadacio and Albite (2025) demonstrate that professional learning communities (PLCs) led by Master Teachers are instrumental in institutionalizing continuous improvement. These structures allow for the translation of abstract pedagogical goals into actionable classroom strategies. Recent research highlights that effective instructional coaching is not merely administrative; it is a personalized process of feedback and modeling that bridges the gap between policy mandates and classroom reality (Dyosini, 2024). These systems are vital for teacher retention and professional growth, yet their success is contingent upon the time and formal support allocated to the mentors themselves.

Technology Integration and Digital Leadership

As educational systems undergo rapid digital transformation, master teachers are increasingly expected to perform as digital pioneers. Gardoque and Israel (2025) assert that productivity in the current era is defined by the capacity to bridge the divide between traditional pedagogical approaches and modern, technology-enhanced learning environments. This requires a shift from basic technology use to "digital leadership," where master teachers model the integration of tools that enhance assessment and student engagement. As noted by Avdiu-Kryeziu (2025), teachers who receive targeted support in digital pedagogy are significantly more effective at implementing innovative curriculum designs, highlighting that teacher productivity is now inextricably linked to digital competence.

Teacher Productivity and the Challenge of Role Strain

Despite these high expectations, the literature identifies a recurring "balancing act" that hinders peak productivity. Toñacao and Oliva (2023) note that the burden of multiple roles—often referred to as "role strain"—leads to significant professional tension. When master teachers are inundated with ancillary administrative tasks, their focus on core instructional functions is fragmented, leading to role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion (Sarabia & Collantes,



2020). The literature suggests that without clear institutional structures to prioritize instructional coaching over administrative reporting, even the most competent master teachers experience a decline in their capacity to innovate (Embang et al., 2022; Gonzales et al., 2022).

Synthesis

Prior studies have established a clear link between distributed leadership, effective mentoring, and school-wide instructional improvement. It is widely acknowledged that master teachers are the engine of these processes and that they face significant challenges, particularly regarding role strain and the pressure of technology integration.

What remains unexplored is the intersection of these factors within the context of high-performing pilot schools. While global and national literature provides a broad understanding of the "what" and "why" of master teacher challenges, there is a lack of localized, integrated data that explains the "how." Existing studies often treat productivity as a monolithic concept, failing to dissect how the specific school culture of an elite institution—such as Kalibo Pilot Elementary School—mediates the execution of the seven core roles.

This study contributes new knowledge by moving beyond isolated variables. By linking the socio-demographic profile of an expert faculty directly to a multi-dimensional productivity scale, this research provides a granular analysis of how institutional support, personal resilience, and administrative load interact to influence performance. The findings will be instrumental in developing evidence-based frameworks for instructional coaching and school improvement, specifically tailored to the realities of Philippine public school pilot institutions.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the complementary frameworks of Role Strain Theory and Distributed Leadership Theory, which together provide a multidimensional lens for evaluating the productivity of master teachers at Kalibo Pilot Elementary School. Role Strain Theory, as posited by Goode (1960), assumes that individuals possessing multiple, competing roles face a finite allocation of time and cognitive resources, which inevitably leads to role conflict and ambiguity. Within this study, role strain serves as a critical predictor of performance, allowing for an examination of how heavy ancillary workloads and administrative demands act as barriers that potentially fragment the professional focus of master teachers, thereby impeding their core instructional efficacy. Conversely, Distributed Leadership Theory, developed by Spillane et al. (2001), shifts the analytical focus from the individual leader to the collective practice of leadership as it is stretched across the school's social and situational network. This theory assumes that leadership influence is not the monopoly of a formal principal but is instead manifested through interactions between leaders and peers; it identifies master teachers as vital "nodes" who facilitate school improvement, mentoring, and professional collaboration. By synthesizing these two theories, this study establishes a robust framework that evaluates productivity as an interplay between the obstacles posed by role tension and the transformative potential of distributed practice. This approach allows the research to move beyond a surface-level assessment of task completion, instead systematically identifying how socio-demographic factors and institutional support structures influence the ability of expert educators to navigate the tension between their multifaceted responsibilities and their leadership potential in a premier educational setting.

Conceptual Framework

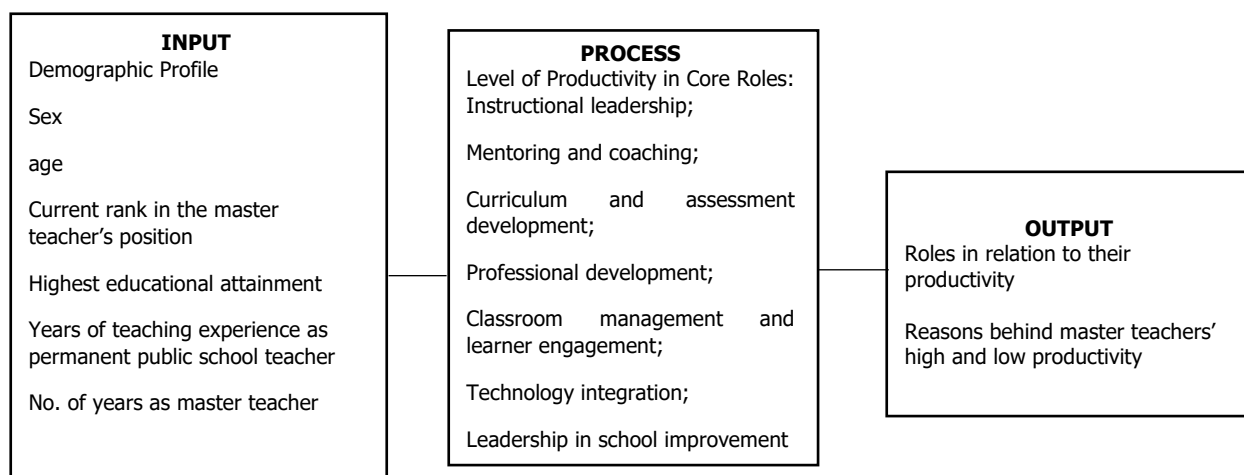


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the dynamic interplay between the socio-demographic profiles of master teachers and their multifaceted roles within the educational ecosystem of Kalibo Pilot Elementary School. By utilizing an Input-Process-Output (IPO), the framework posits that personal and professional variables such as age, educational attainment, and years of service that serve as the foundational context for instructional efficacy. It systematically maps the process through the evaluation of core competencies, including instructional leadership, mentoring, curriculum development, and technology integration. By bridging quantitative profiles with qualitative insights into the motivators behind high and low performance, the framework provides a holistic lens through which productivity is not merely measured as a static outcome but understood because of professional engagement and institutional support.

Statement of the Problem

Master teachers play a crucial role in promoting instructional excellence, mentoring teachers, supporting curriculum implementation, integrating educational technologies, and leading school improvement initiatives. Within the framework of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), they are expected to function as instructional leaders who contribute significantly to teaching quality, professional development, and improved learner outcomes. However, increasing administrative responsibilities, ancillary assignments, and expanding leadership expectations have created challenges that may affect their ability to perform these roles effectively.

Despite their recognized competence and leadership responsibilities, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the factors that influence the productivity of master teachers in high-performing schools. Existing studies often focus separately on leadership competencies or workplace challenges, with limited attention given to how socio-demographic characteristics, organizational conditions, and role perceptions interact to influence productivity across multiple instructional leadership domains. Consequently, there remains a need to generate localized evidence that can inform school leadership practices, teacher development programs, and policy decisions related to the effective utilization of master teachers.

This study therefore investigates the productivity of master teachers at Kalibo Pilot Elementary School by examining their socio-demographic characteristics, productivity across core instructional leadership roles, perceptions of their professional responsibilities, and the factors that contribute to high and low productivity.

General Objective

To evaluate the productivity of master teachers at Kalibo Pilot Elementary School by examining their socio-demographic characteristics, instructional leadership roles, role perceptions, and factors influencing their productivity.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the socio-demographic characteristics of master teachers in terms of sex, age, current rank, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience as a permanent public school teacher, and years of service as a master teacher.
2. To assess the level of productivity of Master Teachers across the following instructional leadership domains:
 - a. Instructional leadership;
 - b. Mentoring and coaching;
 - c. Curriculum and assessment development;
 - d. Professional development;
 - e. Classroom management and learner engagement;
 - f. Technology integration; and
 - g. Leadership in school improvement.
3. To explore how master teachers perceive and describe their roles and responsibilities in relation to their productivity.
4. To identify the internal and external factors that contribute to high and low productivity among master teachers.
5. To explain how the school context and professional experiences of master teachers influence their productivity across instructional leadership domains.

Research Questions

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the Master Teachers in terms of:
 - a. Sex;
 - b. Age;
 - c. Current rank;
 - d. Highest educational attainment;
 - e. Years of teaching experience as a permanent public school teacher; and
 - f. Years of service as a master teacher?
2. What is the level of productivity of master teachers in the following instructional leadership domains:
 - a. Instructional leadership;
 - b. Mentoring and coaching;
 - c. Curriculum and assessment development;
 - d. Professional development;
 - e. Classroom management and learner engagement;
 - f. Technology integration; and
 - g. Leadership in school improvement?
3. How do master teachers describe their roles and responsibilities in relation to their productivity?
4. What factors contribute to high and low productivity among master teachers?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This design was strategically chosen to address the research objectives by first establishing a baseline assessment of master teacher productivity and subsequently providing a deeper, contextualized explanation of these findings through the participants' experiences.

In the initial quantitative phase, structured surveys were administered to quantify the socio-demographic profiles of the participants and assess their productivity levels across the seven core roles identified by the Department of Education. This phase served to identify patterns and variations in performance metrics across the cohort. Following the initial analysis, a qualitative phase was conducted to further examine the results. Through semi-structured interviews, participants provided insights into their role perceptions, the impact of administrative workloads, and the lived experiences that underlie the observed performance data.

The sequential explanatory approach is particularly appropriate for this study because the integration of these two phases allows for the triangulation of findings, which enhances the validity and reliability of the data (Ivankova et al., 2006). By sequencing the qualitative inquiry to follow the quantitative results, the study can specifically target and



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explain the complexities of the master teacher role that numerical data alone cannot capture. This methodological framework provides an empirical basis for assessing productivity while concurrently elucidating the mechanisms of role strain and distributed leadership that influence performance within the context of Kalibo Pilot Elementary School.

Population and Sampling

The study participants consisted of 15 master teachers currently assigned to Kalibo Pilot Elementary School. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify and select this cohort, ensuring that participants possessed the specific professional expertise and lived experiences necessary to address the research objectives regarding instructional leadership and productivity (Patton, 2002). Given the school-based scope of the investigation, this sample represents the total population of master teachers available at the institution, thereby providing a comprehensive census rather than a subset of the target group.

To maintain methodological rigor, participants were selected based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

- Inclusion Criteria: Participants were required to (1) currently hold a permanent Master Teacher I, II or III position at Kalibo Pilot Elementary School; (2) be actively performing instructional leadership functions and mentoring duties; and (3) provide informed, voluntary consent to participate in both the quantitative survey and qualitative interview phases of the study.
- Exclusion Criteria: Individuals were excluded from the study if they were not formally designated as master teachers (e.g., Head Teachers or regular classroom teachers) or if they were on official leave for the duration of the data collection period.

This total population sampling approach ensures that the data reflects the school's operational standards in their entirety. By including every available master teacher, the study captures a holistic view of how role expectations, administrative tasks, and distributed leadership practices manifest within the faculty. This targeted selection aligns the data directly with the theoretical frameworks of Role Strain and Distributed Leadership, allowing for a robust analysis of the factors influencing productivity among all expert educators currently serving in this high-performing institutional context.

Research Instruments

Data collection was facilitated through two researcher-developed instruments, both aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the seven core roles of master teachers. The quantitative phase utilized a structured questionnaire, which was adapted from established PPST indicators to suit the specific context of this study. The instrument's content validity was established through a panel of three experts in educational leadership and management, quantitative and qualitative research who evaluated items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives, resulting in a validated tool. Following expert refinement, a pilot test was conducted with a separate cohort of educators, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .91, indicating high internal consistency and reliability. To capture the depth of participant experiences, the qualitative phase employed a semi-structured interview guide, which was similarly validated by the same panel of experts to ensure that the open-ended prompts effectively elicited comprehensive narratives regarding role perceptions, administrative constraints, and distributed leadership practices.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted with strict adherence to ethical protocols and academic standards throughout January 2026. Initially, formal authorization was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Department of Education (DepEd) Schools Division Office (SDO) of Aklan and the relevant school leadership. Upon institutional approval, a comprehensive briefing was held for the 15 participants to explain the study's objectives, ensure voluntary participation, and confirm their right to withdraw at any stage.

The quantitative phase commenced with the distribution of the validated research questionnaire, with participants provided approximately one hour to complete the survey to ensure accuracy. Following the survey administration, the qualitative phase was conducted through 15 individual, semi-structured interviews. Each session, which lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, was held in a secure, private setting within the school premises to maintain confidentiality. Audio-recording of these sessions occurred only after obtaining explicit informed consent. All gathered data were subsequently de-identified to ensure participant anonymity, coded, and organized into a secure database for systematic analysis, thereby protecting participant identity while maintaining the rigor of the mixed-methods design.

Treatment of Data

To ensure a rigorous and systematic interpretation of the gathered information, the data were subjected to both statistical and inductive treatments. For research question 1, which sought to determine the socio-demographic profile of the master teachers, frequency and percentage distributions were utilized. For research question 2, concerning the level of productivity across the seven core roles, the weighted mean and standard deviation were employed to identify central tendencies and the degree of consistency in participant performance. The productivity ratings were interpreted using the following scale:

Table 1

Scale of Interpretation for Level of Productivity of Master Teachers Across Core Roles

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.50–5.00	Very High
3.50–4.49	High
2.50–3.49	Moderate
1.50–2.49	Low
1.00–1.49	Very Low

For research questions 3 and 4, which explored the qualitative descriptions of roles and the factors influencing productivity, the study employed Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method cited by Praveena & Sasikumar (2022). This process involved familiarization, identification of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering of themes, development of an exhaustive description, and identification of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon (Praveena & Sasikumar, 2022).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, the study incorporated two key validation procedures: member checking and peer debriefing. Member checking was conducted by returning the transcribed interview summaries to the participants, allowing them to verify the accuracy of their responses and ensure that the researcher's interpretations aligned with their lived experiences. Additionally, peer debriefing was utilized by engaging an independent researcher—a colleague experienced in qualitative inquiry—to review the thematic analysis. This process provided an external check on the researcher's bias and ensured that the interpretation of themes remained grounded in the participants' original narratives, thereby fortifying the credibility and confirmability of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted with strict adherence to the ethical standards of the Department of Education and the principles of research integrity. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from each of the 15 master teachers following a comprehensive briefing on the study's objectives and their right to voluntary withdrawal. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all personal identifiers were removed and replaced with codes, with all raw data and audio recordings stored in a secure, password-protected environment. The study upheld the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence by conducting interviews in private settings to avoid professional discomfort and by ensuring the findings are utilized solely for institutional and professional development. Furthermore, the study commenced only after securing formal institutional approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of SDO Aklan, ensuring transparency and objectivity in the treatment of participants' lived experiences.



RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study and provides an analysis of the results in relation to the research questions.

Table 2

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

Profile	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	4	27.00
Female	11	73.00
Total	15	100.0
Age		
31 – 40 years old	1	7.00
41 – 50 years old	8	53.00
51 – 60 years old	6	40.00
Total	15	100.0
Position		
Master Teacher I	7	47.00
Master Teacher II	6	40.00
Master Teacher III	2	13.00
Total	15	100.0
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	1	7.00
Bachelor's Degree with Master's Units	6	40.00
Master's Degree	3	20.00
Master's Degree with Doctoral Units	4	26.00
Doctoral Graduate	1	7.00
Total	15	100.0
Teaching Experience as Permanent Public School Teacher		
10 – 15 years	2	13.00
16 – 20 years	3	20.00
21 – 25 years	4	27.00
26 – 30 years	2	13.00
More than 30 years	4	27.00
Total	15	100.0
Years as Master Teachers		
5 years and below	2	13.00
6 – 10 years	5	33.00
11 – 15 years	4	27.00
16 – 20 years	2	13.00
21 years and above	2	13.00
Total	15	100.00

The socio-demographic profile of the participants, as detailed in Table 2, illustrates a cadre of highly seasoned and academically refined educators at Kalibo Pilot Elementary School. The faculty is predominantly female (73%) and consists of mature professionals, with 93% aged 41 and above—a demographic composition that positions them as the repository of the institution's collective wisdom and institutional memory. With a combined 53% holding the ranks of Master Teacher II and III and 93% possessing post-baccalaureate education, this group embodies the professional expertise required to navigate the complex standards of the Philippine Professional

Standards for Teachers (PPST). Furthermore, the substantial longevity—67% with over two decades of service and 53% serving as master teachers for over a decade—establishes this group as a cornerstone of stability.

This profile of high-level experience and academic attainment provides the foundational capacity for these master teachers to serve as pillars of the school's pedagogical health. Their extensive tenure, with over two-thirds of participants serving for more than 20 years, allows them to act as essential mentors to novice teachers, providing the nuanced, theory-grounded guidance necessary to bridge the gap between abstract pedagogical concepts and the realities of classroom management. Simultaneously, the high concentration of master teachers at ranks II and III serves as a structural safeguard for instructional quality; these leaders anchor the curriculum in time-tested practices while applying their advanced academic training to refine and innovate instructional strategies. Finally, the collective maturity and longevity of this group make them the natural driving force behind the school's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). By facilitating peer-to-peer coaching and leading critical dialogues, they transform these communities from mere administrative requirements into authentic hubs of collaborative inquiry. Ultimately, while their profound expertise makes them the primary catalysts for instructional excellence, it also underscores the vital need for administrators to safeguard these leaders from excessive administrative "ancillary encroachment," ensuring their capacity for high-level leadership and mentorship remains sustainable.

Table 3*Level of Productivity of Master Teachers Across Core Roles*

Master Teacher Core Roles	Mean	SD	Description
A. Instructional Leadership			
1. I model effective and innovative teaching strategies in my classroom.	4.73	0.46	Very High
2. I lead initiatives to improve teaching and learning in my school.	4.33	0.62	High
3. I conduct or participate in action research to address instructional challenges.	3.33	1.40	Moderate
B. Mentoring and Coaching			
4. I regularly mentor and coach fellow teachers to improve their teaching practices.	4.53	0.52	Very High
5. I provide technical assistance in lesson planning and classroom management.	4.67	0.49	Very High
6. I facilitate Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions effectively.	4.40	0.74	High
C. Curriculum and Assessment Development			
7. I contribute to the development and enhancement of the school curriculum.	4.53	0.52	Very High
8. I develop instructional materials aligned with curriculum standards.	4.53	0.64	Very High
9. I design assessment tools that effectively measure student learning.	4.47	0.74	High
D. Professional Development			
10. I actively participate in and lead professional development activities.	4.53	0.52	Very High
11. I promote a culture of continuous learning among teachers.	4.67	0.49	Very High
12. I stay updated with current trends and research in education.	4.47	0.52	High
E. Classroom Management and Learner Engagement			
13. I implement effective classroom management strategies.	4.80	0.41	Very High
14. I use differentiated instructions to meet diverse learner needs.	4.80	0.41	Very High
15. I create a positive and inclusive learning environment.	4.93	0.26	Very High
F. Technology Integration			
16. I integrate ICT tools effectively in teaching and learning.	4.60	0.63	Very High

17. I assist other teachers in using technology for instruction.	4.40	0.91	High
18. I promote digital literacy among learners and colleagues.	4.53	0.64	Very High

G. Leadership in School Improvement

19. I actively participate in school planning and decision-making.	4.53	0.52	Very High
20. I lead or support school improvement projects and initiatives.	4.73	0.46	Very High
21. I serve as a resource person in school, district or division-level activities.	4.47	0.83	High

Overall	4.52	0.21	Very High
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The analysis of productivity levels among master teachers at Kalibo Pilot Elementary School, as presented in Table 3, yields an overall mean of 4.52 (SD = 0.21), indicating a "very high" level of productivity and exceptional capacity in fulfilling the mandates of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). While recent studies by Cadacio and Albite (2025) confirm that MTs consistently demonstrate high proficiency in instructional leadership and inclusive environments, the data provides a nuanced portrait of both strengths and systemic gaps. The high productivity in Classroom Management and Learner Engagement ($M = 4.93$) and Leadership in School Improvement ($M = 4.73$) reinforces the theory of Distributed Leadership, where MTs serve as vital nodes in the school's organizational success (Fernandez, 2026). However, the "moderate" productivity in action research ($M = 3.33$)—characterized by a high standard deviation—suggests a significant functional gap. As noted by Saro and Taray (2024), this likely stems from a lack of research autonomy, where the time-intensive demands of systematic inquiry are sacrificed for immediate administrative and pedagogical duties.

These findings carry significant implications for the educational ecosystem. For teachers, the high productivity in classroom-based domains confirms that MTs are effective models for daily practice; classroom results can be improved by adopting the "shared leadership model" observed in their proficient facilitation of focused group discussions, encouraging the standardization of high-quality learning experiences. For school leaders, the findings highlight that MTs excel in interpersonal leadership but are stifled by role overload; administrators should therefore streamline administrative tasks to create "protected time" for intellectual inquiry, formalizing the MT role as a research-mentor rather than a compliance officer. Curriculum developers can leverage the MTs' high proficiency in technology integration and instructional design by involving them in the co-design of localized learning materials, ensuring national mandates are effectively translated into classroom contexts. Furthermore, for teacher education programs, the identified "research gap" highlights a critical need to pivot pre-service and in-service training toward practical research autonomy—specifically in constructing conceptual frameworks—to ensure future leaders can balance practice with evidence-based reflection. Finally, for policymakers, the discrepancy between high pedagogical performance and moderate research engagement suggests that current policies may inadvertently prioritize immediate output over long-term evidence-based development; thus, revising the MT job description to balance administrative accountability with protected research incentives is essential. Ultimately, while the Master Teachers are remarkably productive in active leadership and pedagogical execution, targeted institutional support that shifts the focus from compliance to research-driven inquiry is necessary to achieve a truly holistic expert profile.

Master teachers' descriptions on their roles in relation to their productivity**The multi-faceted mentor and instructional catalyst**

Master teachers (MTs) view their productivity not just through personal output, but through their ability to influence school-wide performance. They describe their role as a bridge between departmental goals and classroom execution, serving as the primary source of pedagogical support for their peers.

Participant 6: "Very important as mentor and contributor towards school performance."

Participant 10: "Mentoring and coaching colleagues to improve teaching practices."

Participant 14: "My role is to mentor teachers as we implement the policies and programs of the Department of Education."

Productivity for an MT is social and collaborative. Their high self-assessment in mentoring and coaching suggests that they derive their professional identity from being instructional leaders. However, this means their productivity is often dependent on the receptivity of their mentees. Akomolafe (2025) highlights that instructional

leadership is the most significant predictor of school-wide efficacy, noting that when MTs shift from administrative compliance to active coaching, student learning outcomes improve significantly. This is further supported by Cadacio and Albite (2025), who suggest that MTs who lead Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) create "social capital," which compensates for the lack of formal authority in certain school settings.

The tension of role overload and ancillary encroachment

A dominant description of the MT role is one of multi-role responsibility. Participants describe their productivity as being under constant siege by non-teaching tasks (ancillaries) that fragment their time and energy, shifting their focus away from their core expertise.

Participant 2: "The biggest challenge is performing a multi-role responsibility it is very hard particularly in time management."

Participant 10: "Balancing teaching responsibilities with admin tasks like encoding for the BMI, LIS reports..."

Participant 12: "Heavy workload, submission of paper works with a word ASAP that stressed me!"

There is a disconnect between the MTs intended role (instructional leadership) and their actual daily tasks. The moderate productivity in administrative tasks vs. very high in classroom management indicates that while they are compliant, these tasks are perceived as productivity drains rather than productivity gains. Recent literature identifies a clear disconnect between the intended pedagogical role of teachers and their actual daily workload. Administrative mandates, such as documentation for school information systems, reporting, and non-instructional coordination, are frequently perceived as "hindrance stressors" (Wang, 2024).

The sacrifice of personal equilibrium (the work-life paradox)

MTs describe their role as an all-consuming commitment that frequently spills over into their personal lives. Productivity is often achieved at the cost of work-life balance, which they view as a major hurdle to sustained professional efficacy.

Participant 1: "The biggest challenge is having a work-time-life balance. MTs tend to work overtime or bring the work/task at home causing pressure and anxiety."

Participant 8: "Productivity is the result of commitment and passion."

Participant 12: "Promoting work-life balance and stress management would help."

The low quantitative score for work-life balance validates the qualitative cries for help. MTs feel that to remain productive by department standards, they must sacrifice personal well-being. This suggests that the current level of very high productivity may be unsustainable in the long term. According to studies, teachers who feel a moral obligation to prioritize work over personal time often experience a rapid decline in their ability to recover from work-related stress, a phenomenon known as "insufficient psychological detachment" (Greenier et al., 2021).

Relational productivity and professional respect

Productivity is described through the lens of interpersonal dynamics. MTs feel more productive when there is a culture of professionalism and when their authority (regardless of age) is respected by their colleagues.

Participant 15: "The biggest challenge is my age. I am younger than my mentees. Due to age, they hesitate to listen. This affects my productivity."

Participant 14: "Need orientation about Professionalism to all teachers old and new."

Participant 7: "Need to feel supported by the school administrator and peers to be able to excel."

This highlights that instructional leadership is not just about technical skill but about social capital. Productivity is hindered when the organizational culture does not reinforce the hierarchy or the value of the master teacher's mentorship. Recent literature emphasizes that instructional leadership is fundamentally a "social process". When an organizational culture fails to reinforce the legitimacy of a master teacher—especially one who is younger or perceived as a "junior" by veteran peers—it creates an "influence gap" (Sariakin et al., 2025).

Reasons behind master teachers' high and low productivity

Intrinsic drive and professional passion

The most significant reason for high productivity is the internal commitment to the vocation. Master teachers describe an inner engine where the love for the craft translates into tangible output, even when external conditions are challenging.

Participant 1: "If you love your work then most probably a MT will be productive because you work without expecting anything in return."

Participant 8: "Productivity is the result of commitment and passion."

High productivity in KPES is largely personality driven. While this ensures the school continues to function, it suggests a reliance on individual resilience rather than just institutional efficiency. This emphasizes the role of internal drivers in educator performance, noting that high productivity is often fueled by a "passion for the craft" and a sense of vocational commitment rather than just external incentives (Kim et al., 2019).

The role of systemic support and clear expectations

Productivity is not an isolated act but a result of the environment. Master teachers feel most productive when they have clear boundaries for their roles and feel, seen by the school leadership.

Participant 1: Factors include "supportive school leadership, clear role expectations, recognition and incentives."

Participant 7: "Need to feel supported by the school administrator and peers to be able to excel."

Instructional leadership is maximized when administrators provide technical assistance rather than just supervision. When expectations are clear, MTs can focus their energy on mentoring rather than second-guessing their duties. Research consistently demonstrates that when educators receive specific guidance—often referred to as instructional leadership—rather than purely evaluative oversight, they exhibit higher levels of professional engagement and role clarity (Grissom et al., 2021).

The ancillary drain and task fragmentation (low productivity)

The primary reason for low productivity is the overwhelming volume of non-instructional tasks. MTs describe a dilution of their expertise as they are forced to shift from being pedagogical experts to data encoders.

Participant 10: "Balancing teaching responsibilities with admin tasks like encoding for the BMI, LIS reports."

Participant 6: "Too much workload specifically ancillaries."

Participant 12: "Heavy workload, submission of paper works with a word ASAP that stressed me!"

This creates a productivity paradox. While MTs are officially productive (high mean scores), their perceived productivity is low because they are performing tasks below their skill grade. This leads to burnout and "low-value" work. Research indicates that when highly skilled educators are diverted toward clerical duties—such as data encoding and report generation—the resulting role ambiguity and "task fragmentation" significantly undermine their primary pedagogical functions (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Time inadequacy and the erosion of personal space

Productivity is hindered when the 8-hour workday is structurally insufficient. The lack of continuous time for deep work means tasks are either rushed or brought home, leading to emotional and mental fatigue.

Participant 1: "The 2 hours for ancillary tasks are not continuous. MTs tend to work overtime or bring the work/task at home. This may cause pressure and anxiety."

Participant 13: "Limited resources, time constraints."

Low productivity is not a result of lack of skill, but a lack of temporal resources. The "ASAP" culture mentioned by participants creates a reactive rather than proactive work environment, stifling long-term instructional planning. This



erosion of "personal space," where work encroaches upon the home environment, is a primary driver of teacher stress and burnout, as it diminishes the boundary between professional obligations and personal recovery time (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Relational and demographic friction

A unique reason for low productivity involves the social dynamics between the MT and their mentees. Age-gap issues and attitude problems among staff can create friction that stalls the implementation of school programs.

Participant 15: "The biggest challenge is my age. I am younger than my mentees. They hesitate to listen to some of my suggestions."

Participant 14: "Plans cannot be achieved because of the attitude of teachers towards work."

Leadership productivity is contingent upon followership. If the school culture does not respect the MTs designation regardless of age, the MTs ability to empower others the core of their role is neutralized. Research indicates that when traditional hierarchies—such as age or seniority—clash with formal leadership designations, the resulting "status inconsistency" can create significant resistance, thereby hindering the implementation of organizational change (Yildirim, 2017).

Conclusions

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. The master teachers of Kalibo Pilot Elementary School represent a mature, highly experienced, and academically distinguished faculty. With over 93% holding graduate-level qualifications and the vast majority possessing two decades of service, they constitute a vital repository of institutional memory. This professional profile positions them as the primary drivers of pedagogical innovation and curriculum development within the school; however, their extended tenure also renders them uniquely susceptible to the cumulative role strain that accompanies decades of navigating evolving educational landscapes.
2. Master teachers demonstrate "very high" proficiency across most core domains, specifically in classroom management, mentoring, and technology integration. These findings indicate that these educators are not merely compliant practitioners but are active agents of educational leadership who utilize their expertise to sustain high-quality learning environments. The only notable deficit—"moderate" engagement in action research—highlights a strategic misalignment where the rigorous, evidence-based inquiry required for teacher professional development is frequently sidelined by administrative demands, suggesting that current structures prioritize immediate execution over long-term research-driven improvement.
3. The study reveals that master teachers perceive productivity through the lens of school-wide social capital and mentorship rather than isolated output. While they function as effective instructional catalysts, their efficacy is hindered by the phenomenon of "productive strain"—a state of high performance maintained through personal sacrifice and the encroachment of ancillary tasks. This environment compromises their ability to engage deeply in sustained curriculum development and scholarly reflection, as their time is fragmented by non-instructional administrative burdens.
4. The productivity of master teachers is intrinsically linked to their commitment to professional mentorship and the support of school administrators. When leadership provides clear role expectations and protects the MT's time, these educators effectively leverage their expertise to enhance teaching and learning improvement. Conversely, productivity is eroded by systemic factors, including excessive ancillary duties and age-related relational challenges, which weaken the social influence necessary for effective peer coaching. To achieve a truly holistic expert profile, the institution must transition from a model of individual sacrifice to one of protected instructional time, ensuring that the master teacher's capacity for innovation—particularly in action research and curricular implementation—is fully supported and sustainable.
5. The findings contribute to educational leadership and teacher professional development by demonstrating how experienced master teachers serve as catalysts for instructional improvement, mentoring, technology integration, and school-wide learning enhancement. The study further highlights the importance of creating organizational conditions that sustain instructional leadership while reducing role strain, thereby supporting continuous improvement in teaching and learning outcomes.



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Recommendations

To sustain the high-level instructional leadership of Master Teachers (MTs) and mitigate the identified "productive strain," the following strategic recommendations are proposed for key stakeholders:

1. School heads may prioritize the decoupling of instructional leadership from administrative compliance by reallocating clerical duties—such as data encoding, routine reporting, and documentation—to designated support staff. By formalizing a distributed leadership model that recognizes MTs as primary instructional decision-makers rather than auxiliary administrators, schools can ensure that MTs are integrated into strategic planning processes, thereby maximizing their influence while protecting them from "ancillary encroachment."
2. To address the fragmentation of MTs' time, schools may institutionalize "protected time blocks" within the workday. These dedicated, uninterrupted periods should be mandated for high-impact activities such as peer mentoring, coaching, action research, and school improvement planning. This structural shift is essential to transition MTs from a state of "productive strain" toward sustainable instructional leadership.
3. TEIs may refine their leadership preparation programs by integrating intensive training in instructional coaching, mentorship, and evidence-based practice directly into the curriculum. By embedding competencies in action research and school improvement planning during pre-service and in-service training, TEIs can produce graduates who are not only master pedagogues but are also prepared to lead organizational change and conduct rigorous instructional inquiry from the onset of their careers.
4. Curriculum developers may engage highly productive MTs as primary partners in the design, review, and pilot-testing of instructional materials. Leveraging the MTs' expertise in technology integration and differentiated instruction ensures that national curricula are responsive to classroom realities, localized learner needs, and the practical challenges of implementation at the school level.
5. Policymakers may conduct a comprehensive review of current workload allocation policies to ensure that the MT job description is realistically aligned with the time required for instructional leadership. Policies should mandate protected research hours and provide incentives for action research, transforming the MT role from a compliance-heavy position into a career path that rewards long-term, evidence-based pedagogical contribution.
6. To bridge the gap in research engagement, school divisions may implement customized capacity-building programs focused on the mechanics of action research—specifically proposal development, conceptual framework construction, and data analysis. Establishing "research coaching teams" or fostering partnerships with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will provide the technical confidence needed for MTs to transform their pedagogical observations into actionable scholarly outputs.
7. Recognizing that productivity is currently sustained at the expense of personal equilibrium, schools may implement institutional wellness initiatives. This includes regular workload audits to prevent burnout, stress management support, and the creation of flexible task timelines. Sustaining high productivity requires the protection of the MTs' long-term physical and emotional health, shifting the culture from individual sacrifice to institutional support.
8. The high productivity in classroom management, mentoring, and technology integration may be systematized. Schools should institutionalize the modeling of these best practices through Learning Action Cells (LACs), peer demonstrations, and mentorship showcases. By documenting and scaling these successes, the school ensures that the expertise of senior Master Teachers is transferred to both novice and experienced faculty, fostering a continuous cycle of instructional excellence.

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