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Instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, conflict management strategies, and socio-emotional skills of teachers in public schools

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Abstract

Aim. This study examined the relationships among instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, conflict management strategies, and teachers' socio-emotional skills in public elementary schools. The research aimed to determine how these factors influence teachers' socio-emotional competencies and contribute to supportive educational environments.

Methodology. A predictive correlational research design was employed involving randomly selected public elementary school teachers in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City during the 2025–2026 school year. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Canonical Correlation Analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to identify significant relationships and predictors of teachers' socio-emotional skills.

Results. Findings revealed that instructional leadership practices of school heads were frequently implemented, particularly in monitoring student progress. Psychological safety among teachers was rated high, especially in open communication, trust, recognition, and validation. Teachers also demonstrated high levels of conflict management strategies, with collaboration identified as the most dominant approach. Teachers exhibited high socio-emotional skills, particularly in self-awareness and responsible decision-making. Canonical correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships among instructional leadership, psychological safety, conflict management strategies, and socio-emotional skills. Regression and SEM analyses further revealed that conflict management strategies and psychological safety significantly predicted teachers' socio-emotional skills, while instructional leadership exerted an indirect influence mediated through psychological safety.

Conclusion. The findings emphasize the importance of supportive leadership practices, psychologically safe school environments, and effective conflict management in strengthening teachers' socio-emotional competencies. These factors contribute to positive school climates and improved teacher effectiveness, highlighting the need for educational leadership initiatives and professional development programs that promote socio-emotional learning among teachers.

Keywords: *instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, conflict management strategies, socio-emotional skills, public school teachers*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, socio-emotional skills have been recognized as essential competencies for teachers, shaping classroom environments and student outcomes. Teachers are increasingly expected to demonstrate resilience, empathy, adaptability, and emotional regulation in navigating 21st-century education. Research links these skills to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and retention, particularly amid rising academic pressures and mental health challenges (Guo et al., 2021). Conversely, their absence can lead to weak instructional leadership and poor stress management, ultimately affecting both teacher performance and student learning (Lani & Pauzi, 2024).

In the Philippines, attention to socio-emotional skills has intensified due to educational reforms and the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tan and Urdan (2025) note that Filipino teachers, often working in resource-limited settings, must balance academic demands, student emotional support, and their own well-being. Although the Department of Education has introduced well-being programs, gaps remain in integrating socio-emotional skills with instructional leadership. Cultural values of resilience and community further position these skills as both professional and personal necessities.

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Existing literature highlights links among socio-emotional skills, conflict management, and instructional leadership, yet key gaps remain. Dreer (2023) emphasizes teacher well-being and socio-emotional competence, though mainly in Western contexts. In the Philippines, studies often focus on stress and workload (Waga et al., 2024) or leadership (Buquiz & Bautista, 2025), with limited research on how instructional leadership intersects with psychological safety, conflict management, and socio-emotional skills.

This study supports SDG 4 by promoting inclusive, quality education through strengthening teachers' well-being and socio-emotional competencies. By examining instructional leadership, psychological safety, and conflict management, the findings inform teacher professional development programs that enhance emotional resilience and collaboration. They also guide school leadership initiatives in creating supportive and trusting environments, while offering evidence for policymakers in the Philippine public-school system to develop strategies that prioritize teacher well-being and effective leadership. Overall, the study addresses key research gaps and contributes to improving educational quality in public schools in Cagayan de Oro City.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of related literature and studies, offering critical insights and substantial evidence to support the current research problem.

Instructional Leadership Practices

Instructional leadership refers to the actions of school leaders to improve teaching quality and student outcomes, including setting a clear vision, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, and supporting teacher development (Aureada, 2021).

It is a multifaceted concept involving not only planning and resource management but also active engagement in teaching and learning. In the Philippines, it is characterized by strategic leadership, focus on instruction, and professional community development (Amanzio, 2024).

Research shows that instructional leadership improves student achievement, as leaders who motivate teachers and set high expectations enhance outcomes (Parveen et al., 2023). While Filipino leaders are strong in planning and resource management, they face challenges in monitoring performance, and global studies highlight the role of national policies in shaping leadership practices (Kaisara, 2024).

Both local and international literature emphasize the importance of instructional leadership but also reveal a gap in research on its connection with socio-emotional skills, psychological safety, and conflict management, particularly in the Philippine context. This highlights the need for more studies focusing on how instructional leadership influences teachers' well-being.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety refers to a shared belief that individuals can take interpersonal risks—such as expressing ideas, asking questions, admitting mistakes, and challenging norms—without fear of punishment or embarrassment (Dong et al., 2025). It is essential for learning, innovation, and well-being across organizations and is increasingly important in education, healthcare, and other sectors.

Edmondson and Bransby (2023) highlight leadership as central to fostering psychological safety. Instructional leadership that emphasizes inclusivity, open communication, and constructive feedback is strongly linked to higher psychological safety. Leaders who model vulnerability and encourage dialogue create environments where individuals feel safe to contribute and grow (Hunt et al., 2021).

Edmondson and Bransby (2023) reveal that psychological safety is positively associated with team learning, performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Leadership support and inclusive practices are identified as key contributing factors. Research shows that strategies like team training, debriefings, and open feedback improve psychological safety and outcomes in healthcare and education (Dong et al., 2025). New professionals also feel safer when they are supported, trusted, and able to build team connections (Sarofim, 2024).

Despite strong evidence linking psychological safety to leadership, performance, and well-being, most studies focus on healthcare and organizational settings, with limited research in education, especially in the Philippines. There is also a lack of integrative studies on its interaction with instructional leadership, socio-emotional skills, and conflict management, highlighting the need for context-specific research on teachers' experiences and effectiveness.

Conflict management strategies

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Conflict management strategies are the competencies and tactics public school teachers use to address, resolve, and positively impact classroom disputes. The abilities encompass effective communication, emotional regulation, problem-solving, negotiation, and the application of specialized conflict resolution tactics, including collaboration, compromise, accommodation, avoidance, and competition.

Agyabeng (2025) emphasized that conflict resolution skills are essential for creating positive classroom environments, supporting student learning, and maintaining healthy relationships among teachers, students, and parents, making them a key focus of teacher development.

Similarly, Nadya, Ameer, and Zaamil (2022) found that Filipino teachers commonly use accommodating, compromising, and collaborative strategies, with results showing a strong link between leadership skills, conflict management, and school performance, highlighting the need for ongoing training in conflict resolution.

Research on conflict management is still limited, focusing mostly on strategies and outcomes rather than its links with instructional leadership, psychological safety, and socio-emotional skills.

Socio-Emotional Skills of Teachers

Teachers' socio-emotional skills involve recognizing, understanding, and managing emotions while responding effectively to others. These include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, all essential for effective teaching and positive classroom environments (Lozano-Peña et al., 2021). This helps teachers handle challenges, build relationships, and improve well-being and student outcomes (Collie & Perry, 2019).

Philippine studies show a strong link between instructional leadership and teachers' socio-emotional skills. Research in Santa Rosa and Biñan found that strong instructional leaders also show high socio-emotional competence, improving teacher self-efficacy and performance (Jimenez & Galicia, 2023). Other studies report moderate levels of these skills but strong links to instructional readiness (Dominico, 2025), while leaders' emotional intelligence influences teachers' work values (Grande et al., 2024)

International research confirms that socio-emotional skills are essential for classroom management, engagement, and achievement (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Studies across countries show that emotionally skilled teachers create better classroom environments, experience less burnout, and better support student development. Supportive work environments and professional development further strengthen these skills (Patil et al., 2023).

Existing studies show that instructional leadership improves teaching and outcomes, while psychological safety, conflict management, and socio-emotional skills support teacher well-being and effectiveness. However, these factors are often studied separately, with limited research integrating them, especially in the Philippine public-school context. This study addresses this gap by examining how instructional leadership influences these interconnected variables to better understand and enhance teacher well-being and school performance.

Theoretical Framework

This study assumed that instructional leadership, psychological safety, and conflict management are interconnected factors influencing teachers' socio-emotional skills, grounded in Hallinger's Instructional Leadership, Edmondson's Psychological Safety, Conflict Management, and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence theories. These frameworks emphasize socio-emotional competencies in creating supportive learning environments, where leadership guides instruction, psychological safety promotes open communication and collaboration, and emotional intelligence supports effective regulation of emotions. Conflict management further explains how teachers use strategies like collaboration and compromise to improve relationships and reduce stress (Nadya, Ameer, & Zaamil, 2022; Odame & Pandey, 2025). Overall, these theories show how the factors shape socio-emotional skills, though limited Philippine-based research highlights the need for more localized studies.

Conceptual Framework

The study's framework illustrates how instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, and conflict management strategies jointly influence teachers' socio-emotional skills, as shown in Figure 1. These interrelated factors are expected to create a supportive environment that enhances key competencies and responsible decision-making—core elements of emotional intelligence that enable teachers to manage emotions, build positive relationships, and function effectively in educational settings.

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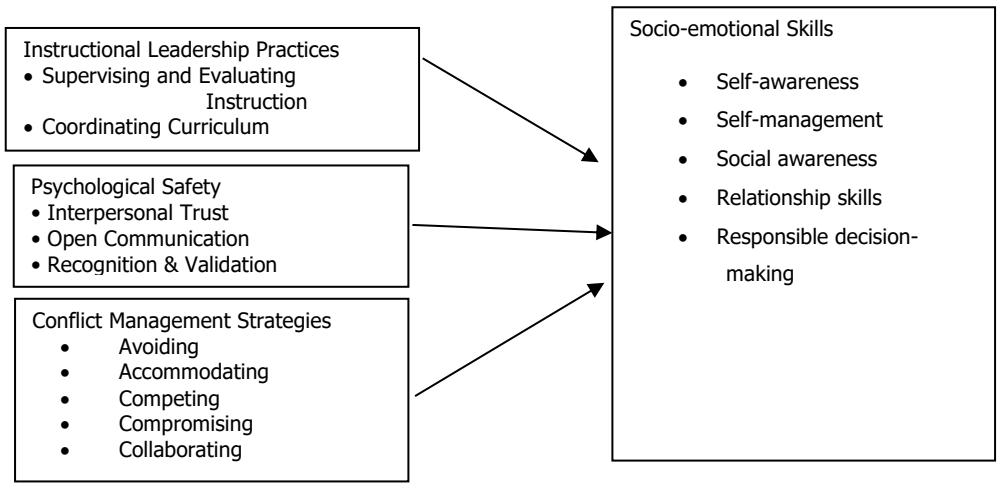


Figure 1. Schematic presentation showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study

Statement of the Problem

Teachers in contemporary educational environments face increasing emotional, social, and professional demands. These demands require not only instructional competence but also strong socio-emotional skills that enable teachers to manage stress, build positive relationships, and create supportive learning environments. In schools, leadership practices, workplace climate, and interpersonal interactions play a significant role in shaping teachers' emotional well-being and professional effectiveness.

Instructional leadership practices of school heads influence the overall school climate by guiding teaching practices, promoting collaboration, and supporting teacher development. At the same time, psychological safety within the school environment allows teachers to express ideas, raise concerns, and engage in professional dialogue without fear of criticism or negative consequences. Conflict management strategies are also essential competencies that enable teachers to handle disagreements constructively and maintain positive relationships with colleagues, students, and stakeholders.

Although previous studies have examined instructional leadership, psychological safety, and socio-emotional skills independently, limited research has explored how these factors interact to influence teachers' socio-emotional competencies within the context of Philippine public schools. Understanding these relationships is important because teachers' socio-emotional skills contribute to effective classroom management, professional collaboration, and improved educational outcomes.

Thus, this study sought to examine the relationships among instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, conflict management strategies, and the socio-emotional skills of public elementary school teachers in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City during the School Year 2025–2026.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To examine the relationships among instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, conflict management strategies, and the socio-emotional skills of public elementary school teachers in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City during the School Year 2025–2026.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the school heads' level of instructional leadership practices as perceived by the participants in terms of:
    - supervising and evaluating instruction
    - coordinating curriculum
    - monitoring student progress.
2. To determine the level of participants' psychological safety in terms of:

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- interpersonal trust
- open communication
- recognition and validation.

3. To determine the level of participants' conflict management strategies in terms of:
   - avoiding
   - accommodating
   - competing
   - compromising
   - collaborating.
4. To assess the level of participants' socio-emotional skills in terms of:
   - self-awareness
   - self-management
   - social awareness
   - relationship skills
   - responsible decision-making.
5. To determine the significant relationship between participants' socio-emotional skills and their:
   - instructional leadership practices
   - psychological safety
   - conflict management strategies.
6. To identify which variables significantly predict teachers' socio-emotional skills.
7. To determine the structural model that best fits teachers' socio-emotional skills.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of instructional leadership practices of school heads as perceived by the participants in terms of:
   - supervising and evaluating instruction
   - coordinating curriculum
   - monitoring student progress?
2. What is the level of participants' psychological safety in terms of:
   - interpersonal trust
   - open communication
   - recognition and validation?
3. What is the level of participants' conflict management strategies in terms of:
   - avoiding
   - accommodating
   - competing
   - compromising
   - collaborating?
4. What is the level of participants' socio-emotional skills in terms of:
   - self-awareness
   - self-management
   - social awareness
   - relationship skills
   - responsible decision-making?
5. Is there a significant relationship between participants' socio-emotional skills and their:
   - instructional leadership practices
   - psychological safety
   - conflict management strategies?
6. Which of the variables, singly or in combination, significantly predict teachers' socio-emotional skills?
7. What structural model best fits teachers' socio-emotional skills?

Hypotheses

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' socio-emotional skills and instructional leadership practices.
H_{o2}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' socio-emotional skills and psychological safety.

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H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' socio-emotional skills and conflict management strategies.
H_{04}: Instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, and conflict management strategies do not significantly predict teachers' socio-emotional skills.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a predictive correlational research design using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships among instructional leadership, psychological safety, conflict management, and teachers' socio-emotional competencies. This design is appropriate because the research aims to determine the extent to which the predictor variables explain and predict variations in the outcome variable without manipulating any conditions. It also allows the analysis of both direct and indirect relationships among variables, making it suitable for testing complex, theory-based models and identifying the relative contribution of each predictor to socio-emotional competencies.

Population and Sampling

The participants consisted of 323 full-time public elementary school teachers from a population of 2,033 in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City. The sample size was determined using the Cochran formula with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. The study included teachers from all 9 districts in the division, selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. Participants were required to be full-time or permanent teachers with at least two years of service in public elementary schools.

Instruments

Data were collected using a self-administered modified questionnaire covering instructional leadership, psychological safety, conflict management strategies, and socio-emotional skills. The instrument was adapted from established studies, underwent expert validation in the areas of leadership and management, and was evaluated using a Content Validity Index (CVI), yielding item-level CVI values ranging from 0.80 to 1.00 and an average scale-level CVI of 0.92. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability testing showed strong internal consistency across all subscales: monitoring student progress (α = 0.954), coordinating curriculum (α = 0.945), supervising and evaluating instruction (α = 0.947), interpersonal trust (α = 0.937), open communication (α = 0.965), recognition and validation (α = 0.838), avoiding (α = 0.905), accommodating (α = 0.950), competing (α = 0.985), compromising (α = 0.951), and collaborating (α = 0.966). Overall, the instrument demonstrated very high reliability and was deemed suitable for the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Institutional approval was obtained through formal correspondence with university officials, with the adviser and dean reviewing and approving the manuscript before distribution. Following authorization from the university ethics board, data were collected over four weeks using Likert-scale questionnaires administered online via Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and responses were kept confidential. The collected data were then analyzed and interpreted in line with the study's objectives.

Treatment of Data

For data analysis, the study used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to summarize respondents' answers. Canonical Correlation Analysis was used to examine the relationships between sets of variables. Multiple Regression Analysis identified the significant predictors of teachers' socio-emotional skills. Finally, Structural Equation Modeling was employed to test and determine the best-fitting structural model that explains the relationships among instructional leadership, psychological safety, conflict management, and socio-emotional competencies.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent forms were provided to participants, who were briefed on the study's objectives, protocols, confidentiality measures, and their right to ask questions. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the surveys and could seek clarification as needed. The research protocol underwent multiple reviews and approvals to ensure ethical compliance, data confidentiality, and the integrity of the research process.

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RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, examines, and interprets the study's findings, as well as offers a discussion. The findings are presented in the order specified in the study's statement of the problem presented in Chapter 1, and they are analyzed and processed using the appropriate statistical tools and techniques.

1. School heads' level of instructional leadership practices perceived by the participants

Table 1 presents a summary of elementary teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership practices, including supervision, curriculum coordination, and student progress monitoring. The overall mean of 4.49 and standard deviation of 0.54, categorized as Frequently Practiced, reflect strong instructional leadership among public elementary school heads.

Table 1
Summary Table for School Heads' Instructional Leadership Practices

Instructional Leadership Practices	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Supervising and Evaluating Instruction	4.47	0.60	Frequently Practiced
Coordinating Curriculum	4.48	0.61	Frequently Practiced
Monitoring Student Progress	4.52	0.59	Fully Practiced
Overall	**4.49**	**0.54**	**Frequently Practiced**

4.51 - 5.00 - Fully Practiced
3.51 - 4.50-= Frequently Practiced
2.51 - 3.50= Moderately Practiced
1. 51 - 2.50 -Rarely Practiced
1.00 - 1.50- Not Practiced

The overall mean indicates that most elementary teachers in Cagayan de Oro City view their principals as actively engaged in instructional leadership. The low standard deviation suggests these practices are consistently implemented across schools.

Among the three areas, Monitoring Student Progress had the highest mean score (M = 4.52, SD = 0.59), indicating it was Fully Practiced. This indicates that principals prioritize tracking student achievement, utilizing assessment data, supporting interventions, and communicating progress to stakeholders. Assessment-driven leadership is a notable strength.

Supervising and Evaluating Instruction received the lowest mean score (M = 4.47, SD = 0.60), yet remains categorized as Frequently Practiced. While supervision and evaluation are effective, they are less emphasized than monitoring student progress. Enhancing classroom supervision and feedback may further improve teaching quality.

This suggests that school systems should further institutionalize data-driven practices by providing continuous training in data analysis, strengthening assessment systems, and supporting principals in using student performance data to inform instructional decisions, ultimately improving teaching quality and learner outcomes. Public elementary school principals in Cagayan de Oro City are widely regarded as strong and consistent instructional leaders, particularly in monitoring student progress. Research supports this view, emphasizing that effective leaders prioritize tracking student achievement and using assessment data to guide instruction (Ulit, 2025).

2. Level of Participants' Psychological Safety

Table 2 shows how elementary teachers view psychological safety in terms of trust, open communication, and recognition. The overall mean of 4.46 and a standard deviation of 0.45, labeled as High Psychological Safety, suggest that public elementary schools usually provide a supportive and safe setting for professional interactions.

Table 2
Level of Participants' Psychological Safety

Psychological Safety	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Interpersonal Trust	4.48	0.50	High Psychological Safety
Open Communication	4.53	0.51	Very High Psychological Safety
Recognition and Validation	4.38	0.50	High Psychological Safety
Overall	**4.46**	**0.45**	**High Psychological Safety**

Legend: 4.51 - 5.00- Very High Psychological Safety
3.51 - 4.50-= High Psychological Safety
2.51 - 3.50= Moderate Psychological Safety
1. 51 - 2.50 -Low Psychological Safety
1.00 - 1.50- Very Low Psychological Safety

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The overall mean suggests that elementary teachers in Cagayan de Oro City usually feel secure, respected, and supported at school. The low standard deviation indicates that this feeling of psychological safety is common across most public elementary schools, not just among certain groups.

Open Communication had the highest mean (M = 4.53, SD = 0.51), indicating very high psychological safety and showing that teachers feel comfortable sharing ideas, concerns, and feedback within a culture of clear and respectful communication that supports collaboration with school leaders. Recognition and Validation had the lowest mean (M = 4.38, SD = 0.50), though still rated high, suggesting that while teachers generally feel valued, recognition is less consistent compared to open communication and trust.

This finding implies that school leaders should continue to cultivate and sustain supportive organizational climates by strengthening trust-building practices, promoting transparent communication, and recognizing teachers' contributions, as these factors can enhance teacher engagement, professional growth, and overall instructional effectiveness. The high level of psychological safety among public elementary school teachers in Cagayan de Oro City aligns with research emphasizing the role of trust, communication, and recognition. Psychologically safe environments encourage open dialogue, collaboration, and continuous learning without fear of negative consequences (Patil et al., 2023).

Similarly, studies highlight that relational trust and open communication strengthen school climate and improve teacher commitment, collaboration, and effectiveness (Ağalday, 2025). Overall, strong trust and communication contribute to a supportive and productive work environment for teachers.

3. Level of participants' conflict management strategies

Table 3 shows that public elementary school teachers in Cagayan de Oro City demonstrate strong conflict management strategies, with an overall mean of 3.82 (SD = 0.58). This indicates effective handling of conflicts through relationship-focused, cooperative, and constructive approaches, although preferences for specific strategies vary.

The findings suggest that teachers consistently use strategies that promote cooperation and positive relationships, with a preference for teamwork, active listening, and inclusive decision-making. Limited use of competitive approaches reflects a focus on harmony, contributing to a collaborative work culture and a supportive learning environment.

Table 3

Level of Participants' Conflict Management Strategies

Conflict management strategies	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Avoiding	3.98	0.76	High Conflict Management Strategies
Accommodating	3.89	0.77	High Conflict Management Strategies
Competing	2.95	1.12	Average Conflict Management Strategies
Compromising	3.73	0.75	High Conflict Management Strategies
Collaborating	4.54	0.53	Very High Conflict Management Strategies
Overall	3.82	0.58	High Conflict Management Strategies

Legend: 4.51 - 5.00- Very High Conflict Management Strategies
3.51 - 4.50-= High Conflict Management Strategies
2.51 - 3.50= Moderate Conflict Management Strategies
1. 51 - 2.50 -Low Conflict Management Strategies
1.00 - 1.50- Very Low Conflict Management Strategies

Collaborating had the highest mean (4.54, SD = 0.53), indicating that teachers strongly prefer teamwork, active listening, and integrative problem-solving in resolving conflicts. This reflects a professional culture that values mutual understanding, shared decision-making, and constructive engagement, contributing to a positive and productive school environment.

Competing had the lowest mean (2.95, SD = 1.12), showing that assertive, win-oriented strategies are less commonly used. Teachers tend to avoid confrontation and prioritize harmony, helping maintain collegial relationships and prevent conflict escalation in school settings.

This suggests that school leaders should promote and institutionalize collaborative conflict management approaches through professional development, team-building activities, and clear conflict resolution policies to sustain a harmonious and productive school environment. Overall, teachers favor cooperative strategies such as collaborating, compromising, and accommodating, while tending to avoid overly competitive approaches. This aligns with Ventista and Brown's (2023) findings that such strategies strengthen trust, enhance communication, and foster a positive school climate, ultimately supporting both teacher collaboration and student learning.

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4. Level of participants' socio-emotional skills

Table 4 presents the levels of Socio-Emotional Skills among public elementary school teachers in Cagayan de Oro City across five areas. The overall mean is 4.41 with a standard deviation of 0.44, classified as High Socio-Emotional Skills. These results suggest that teachers possess strong socio-emotional abilities that support effective teaching and positive interactions.

Table 4
Level of Participants' Socio-Emotional Skills

Socio-Emotional Skills	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-Awareness	4.62	0.50	Very High Socio-Emotional Skills
Self-Management	4.35	0.58	High Socio-Emotional Skills
Social Awareness	4.23	0.62	High Socio-Emotional Skills
Relationship Skills	4.28	0.59	High Socio-Emotional Skills
Responsible Decision-Making	4.54	0.51	Very High Socio-Emotional Skills
Overall	**4.41**	**0.44**	**High Socio-Emotional Skills**

Legend: 4.51 - 5.00- Very High Socio-Emotional Skills
3.51 - 4.50-= High Socio-Emotional Skills
2.51 - 3.50= Moderate Socio-Emotional Skills
1. 51 - 2.50 -Low Socio-Emotional Skills
1.00 - 1.50- Very Low Socio-Emotional Skills

The overall mean and low variability show that elementary teachers in Cagayan de Oro City regularly use socio-emotional skills in their daily work. These skills help teachers manage their emotions, understand others, build relationships, and make responsible choices. These abilities are important for handling classroom challenges and keeping a positive school environment.

Self-awareness had the highest mean (4.62, SD = 0.50), followed by responsible decision-making (4.54, SD = 0.51), both rated very high. This indicates that teachers are reflective, emotionally aware, and capable of making ethical decisions that positively influence their behavior and interactions.

Social awareness had the lowest mean (4.23, SD = 0.62), though still rated high. This suggests that while teachers generally show empathy, there is some variability in understanding others' emotions, highlighting a need to strengthen skills like active listening and emotional literacy.

This implies that schools should prioritize the development of teachers' socio-emotional competencies through targeted professional development programs, mentoring, and wellness initiatives, as strengthening these skills can foster a more supportive learning environment and enhance both teacher effectiveness and student success. These findings align with research showing that strong socio-emotional skills enhance classroom management, collaboration, and student engagement. High levels of these competencies are linked to a positive school climate, improved teacher well-being, and better student outcomes (Dichoso, 2024; Cavioni et al., 2024).

5. Significant relationship between participants' socio-emotional skills and independent variables

Table 5
Relationship Between Socio-Emotional Skills and Instructional Leadership Practices

Variable	Cross loading	R_c	R_c^2	F(15, 533)	p
Instructional Leadership Practices					
Supervising and Evaluating Instruction	-0.46				
Coordinating Curriculum	-0.49				
Monitoring Student Progress	-0.47				
Socio-Emotional Skills		0.53	0.28	5.649*	<.001
Self-Awareness	-0.38				
Self-Management	-0.30				
Social Awareness	-0.28				
Relationship Skills	-0.36				
Responsible Decision-Making	-0.50				

**Significant at 0.05 two-tailed alpha level.*

Table 5 shows that about 28% of the variability in socio-emotional skills is explained by instructional leadership practices, indicating a significant relationship and leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that higher instructional leadership is associated with stronger socio-emotional skills.

Coordinating curriculum (-0.49) and monitoring student progress (-0.47) are the strongest contributors to instructional leadership, while responsible decision-making (-0.50) and self-awareness (-0.38) are the most affected socio-emotional dimensions. Overall, the findings indicate that effective instructional leadership supports the development of teachers' socio-emotional skills.

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In conclusion, these findings emphasize the need to combine good instructional leadership with techniques that support teachers' socio-emotional development. In practice, public primary schools in Cagayan de Oro City can improve teachers' effectiveness and well-being by combining curricular guidance, instructional monitoring, and supportive leadership with chances for reflection and professional development.

Table 6 shows the canonical correlation analysis between Socio-Emotional Skills and Psychological Safety. The result revealed a significant, moderate, positive canonical correlation between Socio-Emotional Skills and Psychological Safety, $F(15, 533) = 6.563$, $p < .001$, $Rc = 0.57$, $Rc^2 = 0.32$. This indicates that approximately 32% of the variability in Socio-Emotional Skills is explained by Psychological Safety. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between socio-emotional skills and psychological safety.

Table 6
Relationship Between Socio-Emotional Skills and Psychological Safety

Variable	Cross loading	R_c	R_c^2	F(15, 533)	p
Psychological Safety					
Interpersonal Trust	-0.46				
Open Communication	-0.46				
Recognition and Validation	-0.56				
Socio-Emotional Skills					
Self-Awareness	-0.37	0.57	0.32	6.563*	<.001
Self-Management	-0.38				
Social Awareness	-0.41				
Relationship Skills	-0.39				
Responsible Decision-Making	-0.54				

Significant at 0.05 two-tailed alpha level.

This means that higher levels of Psychological Safety are linked with higher Socio-Emotional Skills. Recognition and Validation (loading = -0.56) and Interpersonal Trust (loading = -0.46) are the strongest contributors to the Psychological Safety construct. Responsible Decision-Making (loading = -0.54) and Social Awareness (loading = -0.41) are the most influenced dimensions of Socio-Emotional Skills. The result suggests that a supportive and trusting school environment promotes the development of teachers' socio-emotional skills.

Overall, promoting Psychological Safety in schools not only boosts teacher morale and collaboration but also fosters environments that support socio-emotional development. Public primary schools in Cagayan de Oro City can equip teachers to overcome professional problems effectively by emphasizing trust-building, recognition, and a friendly environment.

Table 7
Relationship between Socio-Emotional Skills and Conflict Management Strategies

Variable	Cross loading	R_c	R_c^2	F(25, 711)	p
Conflict management strategies					
Avoiding	-0.34				
Accommodating	-0.36				
Competing	-0.26				
Compromising	-0.35				
Collaborating	-0.72				
Socio-Emotional Skills		0.75	0.56	10.374*	<.001
Self-Awareness	-0.55				
Self-Management	-0.50				
Social Awareness	-0.59				
Relationship Skills	-0.56				
Responsible Decision-Making	-0.65				

Significant at 0.05 two-tailed alpha level.

Table 7 shows a significant, strong positive relationship between socio-emotional skills and conflict management strategies ($Rc = 0.75$, $Rc^2 = 0.56$, $p < .001$), explaining about 56% of the variance in socio-emotional skills. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming a significant relationship between the two variables.

This means that higher levels of Conflict management strategies are linked with higher Socio-Emotional Skills. Collaborating (loading = -0.72) and Accommodating (loading = -0.36) are the strongest contributors to the Conflict management strategies construct. Responsible Decision-Making (loading = -0.65) and Social Awareness (loading = -0.59)

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are the most influenced dimensions of Socio-Emotional Skills. The results suggest that collaborative, constructive conflict-management practices support the development of teachers' socio-emotional skills.

These findings are supported by research showing a strong link between emotional intelligence and effective conflict resolution. Studies highlight that traits like impulse control and problem-solving improve conflict management (Soutter, 2023), while individuals with higher emotional intelligence handle conflicts more effectively across contexts (Nadya et al., 2022). Similarly, teachers with strong emotional intelligence tend to use collaborative and compromising strategies, reinforcing its key role in constructive conflict resolution (Xuan, 2025).

Table 8 shows the multiple regression analysis predicting Socio-Emotional Skills from Instructional Leadership Practices, Psychological Safety, and Conflict Management Strategies. The model was statistically significant, $F(3, 197) = 42.80$, $p < .001$, $R = 0.628$, $R^2 = 0.395$. This indicates that 39.5 percent of the variability of Socio-Emotional Skills were explained by the predictors.

6. Predictors of participants' socio-emotional skills

Table 8

Predictors of Participants' Socio-Emotional Skills

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		B	95% CI		t	p
	B	SE		Lower	Upper		
Constant	1.72	0.25		1.22	2.21	6.78*	<.001
Instructional Leadership Practices	0.11	0.06	0.133	-0.02	0.24	1.66	0.099
Psychological Safety	0.25	0.08	0.255	0.09	0.40	3.16*	0.002
Conflict management strategies	0.29	0.05	0.381	0.20	0.38	6.20*	<.001

Model Summary

$R = 0.628$ $R^2 = 0.395$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.386$ $F(3,197) = 42.80^*$ $p<.001$

Note. B = unstandardized beta coefficient, SE = standard error, β = standardized beta coefficient, 95% CI = 95% confidence interval, t = t statistic, p = probability value. *Significant at 0.05 two-tailed alpha level.

Model Equation: S = 0.25P + 0.29C + 1.72

Legend: S = Socio-Emotional Skills, P = Psychological Safety, C = Conflict management strategies

Psychological Safety ($\beta = 0.255$, $p = 0.002$) and Conflict Management Strategies ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted Socio-Emotional Skills, while Instructional Leadership Practices was not significant ($p = 0.099$). The model ($S = 0.25P + 0.29C + 1.72$) shows that both predictors positively influence socio-emotional skills, with conflict management having the strongest effect.

Overall, socio-emotional skills are mainly shaped by psychological safety and conflict management, highlighting the importance of feeling safe and effectively resolving conflicts. These findings are supported by studies linking emotional intelligence to better conflict management and stronger socio-emotional competencies (Alanazy & Alzamil, 2026; Odame & Pandey, 2025; Revira & Hinacay, 2025).

7. Structural Model Best Fits Participants' Socio-Emotional Skills

Figure 2 presents the structural relationships among Instructional Leadership Practices (ILP), Psychological Safety (PS), Conflict Management Strategies (CMS), and Socio-Emotional Skills (SES). ILP is strongly represented by Monitoring Student Progress (0.93) and Coordinating Curriculum (0.89), and it has a strong positive effect on PS (0.75), indicating that stronger leadership is associated with higher psychological safety.

PS is well defined by Open Communication (0.87) and Interpersonal Trust (0.95), but its effect on SES is weak (0.20) and not significant. CMS shows strong loadings for Compromising (0.84) and Accommodating (0.89) and has a moderate positive effect on SES (0.47), while ILP has a weaker direct effect (0.33). SES is measured by Relationship Skills (0.66) and Self-Management (0.37), indicating moderate representation.

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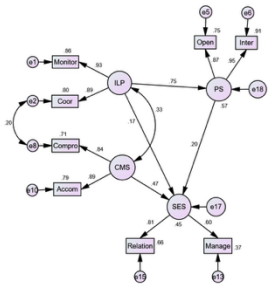


Figure 2. Path Diagram of the Relationship among Instructional Leadership Practices, Psychological Safety, Conflict Management Strategies, and Socio-Emotional Skills

Legend: ILP = Instructional Leadership Practices; Coor = Coordinating Curriculum; Monitor = Monitoring Student Progress; PS = Psychological Safety; Inter = Interpersonal Trust; Open = Open Communication; CMS = Conflict Management Skill; Accom = Accommodating; Compro = Compromising; SES = Socio-Emotional Skills; Manage = Self-Management; Relation = Relationship Skills

Overall, the model indicates that Instructional Leadership Practices strongly influence Psychological Safety, Conflict management strategies strongly predict Socio-Emotional Skills, and Psychological Safety has minimal direct effect on SES. The results highlight the importance of leadership practices and conflict management in supporting socio-emotional development in this model.

Table 9
Model 2 Regression Weights

		Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Psychological Safety	<---	Instructional Leadership Practices	.651	.054	12.082*	<.001
Socio-Emotional Skills	<---	Psychological Safety	.204	.126	1.628*	.103
Socio-Emotional Skills	<---	Conflict management strategies	.328	.062	5.285*	<.001
Socio-Emotional Skills	<---	Instructional Leadership Practices	.153	.112	1.364	.172

**Significant at 0.05 alpha level.*

Table 9 shows the regression estimates for the structural paths in Model 2. Instructional Leadership Practices has a strong and significant direct effect on Psychological Safety (estimate = 0.651, $p < .001$). Psychological Safety does not have a significant direct effect on Socio-Emotional Skills (estimate = 0.204, $p = 0.103$).

Conflict management strategies have a significant direct effect on socio-emotional skills ($\beta = 0.328$, $p < .001$), while instructional leadership practices do not show a significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.153$, $p = 0.172$). Instructional leadership mainly influences psychological safety, but neither it nor psychological safety directly predicts socio-emotional skills in this model, suggesting possible mediating factors.

Among public elementary school teachers in Cagayan de Oro City, conflict management is the strongest predictor of socio-emotional skills. Teachers who handle conflicts effectively demonstrate higher self-control, empathy, and social skills, which are key components of socio-emotional competence.

Overall, the findings suggest that while instructional leadership fosters a safe environment, socio-emotional skills are better developed through strong conflict management abilities. The most effective approach combines supportive leadership with targeted training in conflict resolution to enhance teacher development and school climate.

Conclusions

The findings of the study indicate that instructional leadership practices, psychological safety, and conflict management strategies are interconnected factors that influence teachers' socio-emotional skills in public elementary schools. While instructional leadership practices do not directly predict socio-emotional skills, they contribute significantly to creating a psychologically safe school environment that supports teachers' professional growth.

The results demonstrate that teachers who experience psychological safety and possess strong conflict management strategies are more likely to exhibit higher levels of socio-emotional competence, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, and relationship management. These competencies are essential for fostering positive classroom environments, strengthening teacher collaboration, and supporting effective teaching and learning processes.

The structural model further highlights that conflict management strategies play the strongest predictive

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role in enhancing socio-emotional skills among teachers. This finding emphasizes the importance of developing interpersonal and emotional competencies in educational settings.

Overall, the study contributes to educational leadership and teacher development by demonstrating that supportive leadership practices, psychologically safe work environments, and effective conflict management skills collectively enhance teachers' socio-emotional competencies. Strengthening these factors may contribute to improved teacher well-being, stronger professional collaboration, and more effective learning environments in public elementary schools.

Recommendations

1. **School Administrators.** School administrators may strengthen instructional leadership practices by providing consistent instructional supervision, facilitating collaborative curriculum planning, and encouraging open communication among teachers. Leadership development programs and mentoring systems may also be implemented to promote psychologically safe school environments.
2. **Department of Education (DepEd).** The Department of Education may design professional development programs focusing on socio-emotional learning, conflict management strategies, and leadership capacity building for teachers and school leaders. Policies supporting teacher well-being and collaborative school cultures may also be strengthened.
3. **Teachers.** Teachers may participate in professional development activities that enhance socio-emotional competencies and conflict resolution skills. Engaging in collaborative learning communities and reflective teaching practices may help teachers strengthen interpersonal relationships and improve classroom management.
4. **Students.** Schools may integrate socio-emotional learning activities into classroom instruction and school programs. When teachers model effective emotional regulation and conflict resolution, students may develop stronger interpersonal skills and more positive learning behaviors.
5. **Future Researchers.** Future researchers may explore additional factors influencing teachers' socio-emotional skills, such as teacher resilience, organizational support, and professional learning communities. Longitudinal studies may also be conducted to examine how leadership practices and conflict management training influence teacher development over time.

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