

## Collaborative Leadership and Teachers' Professional Competence: A Predictive Model

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### Abstract

This study examined the relationship between collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence among public secondary school teachers in the Division of Dinagat Islands, Philippines. Anchored on Distributed Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Human Capital Theory, the study used a quantitative predictive-correlational design involving 246 teachers from 36 public secondary schools. Collaborative leadership was measured in terms of shared decision-making, open communication and feedback, collaborative goal-setting and planning, professional support and mentorship, and teamwork and collective problem-solving. Teachers' professional competence was assessed using IPCRF-based domains: content knowledge and pedagogy; learning environment and diversity of learners; curriculum and planning, assessment, and reporting; community linkages and professional engagement; and personal growth and professional development. The instrument demonstrated excellent reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .948 to .973 across collaborative leadership dimensions. Results showed that collaborative leadership practices were highly practiced overall ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ), with teamwork and collective problem-solving receiving the highest mean ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ). Teachers' professional competence was rated excellent overall ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ), with content knowledge and pedagogy receiving the highest mean ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ). Correlation results showed no significant relationship between the collaborative leadership dimensions and overall teacher competence. However, domain-specific analysis revealed significant but weak relationships between professional support and mentorship and curriculum planning, assessment, and reporting ( $r = .126$ ,  $p = .049$ ), and between shared decision-making and personal growth and professional development ( $r = .153$ ,  $p = .017$ ). Regression analysis showed that collaborative leadership did not significantly predict overall competence, although collaborative goal-setting and planning and professional support and mentorship significantly predicted curriculum-related competence, while collaborative goal-setting and planning significantly predicted community linkages and professional engagement. The findings suggest that collaborative leadership has selective, domain-specific, and context-dependent effects rather than a broad direct influence on overall professional competence.

**Keywords:** Collaborative Leadership, Teachers' Professional Competence, Predictive Model, IPCRF, Distributed Leadership, Secondary Schools, Dinagat Islands

### 1. Introduction

Leadership remains a major condition for instructional quality, teacher development, and school effectiveness. In contemporary basic education, collaborative leadership emphasizes shared responsibility, professional dialogue, joint planning, mentoring, and collective problem-solving. These practices are increasingly relevant in schools that must improve instruction while operating under geographic, logistical, and resource constraints.

In the Philippine basic education system, teachers' professional competence is evaluated through the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF), which is aligned with performance management standards and professional expectations for teachers. The IPCRF covers professional domains such as content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, curriculum planning, assessment, community linkages, and personal growth. Policy frameworks such as Republic Act No. 9155 and DepEd Order No. 26, s. 2022 support participatory governance and shared decision-making in schools, while DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 institutionalizes Learning Action Cells as a school-based professional learning strategy.

The rationale of the study lies in the need to move beyond general claims that collaborative leadership improves teacher performance. While school leaders commonly use consultation, mentoring, communication, and teamwork, the extent to which these dimensions predict measurable teacher competence remains unclear. This is particularly important in geographically isolated and disaster-prone divisions such as Dinagat Islands, where teachers may experience limited access to professional development, instructional resources, and sustained technical support.

The gap addressed by this study concerns the limited empirical evidence on the dimension-specific relationship between collaborative leadership practices and IPCRF-based teacher competence in isolated public secondary schools. Existing studies often report positive associations between leadership and teacher outcomes, but fewer studies test which collaborative leadership dimensions are statistically related to specific professional competence domains. This study therefore examined collaborative leadership not as a single general leadership construct but as a set of specific practices with possible selective effects on teachers' professional competence.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Distributed Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Human Capital Theory. Distributed Leadership Theory explains how leadership responsibility is shared among school heads and teachers through participation, consultation, and collective problem-solving (Spillane, 2006). Transformational Leadership Theory explains how school leaders influence teachers through motivation, trust, open communication, feedback, and professional encouragement (Bass, 2015). Human Capital Theory explains professional competence as the result of intentional investment in knowledge, training, mentoring, and professional development (Becker, 1975). Together, these theories suggest that collaborative leadership may support teacher competence by creating shared structures, relational support, and capacity-building opportunities.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework treats collaborative leadership practices as the predictive variables and teachers' professional competence as the criterion variable. Collaborative leadership is represented by five dimensions: shared decision-making, open communication and feedback, collaborative goal-setting and planning, professional support and mentorship, and teamwork and collective problem-solving. Teachers' professional competence is represented by five IPCRF domains: content knowledge and pedagogy; learning environment and diversity of learners; curriculum planning, assessment, and reporting; community linkages and professional engagement; and personal growth and professional development.

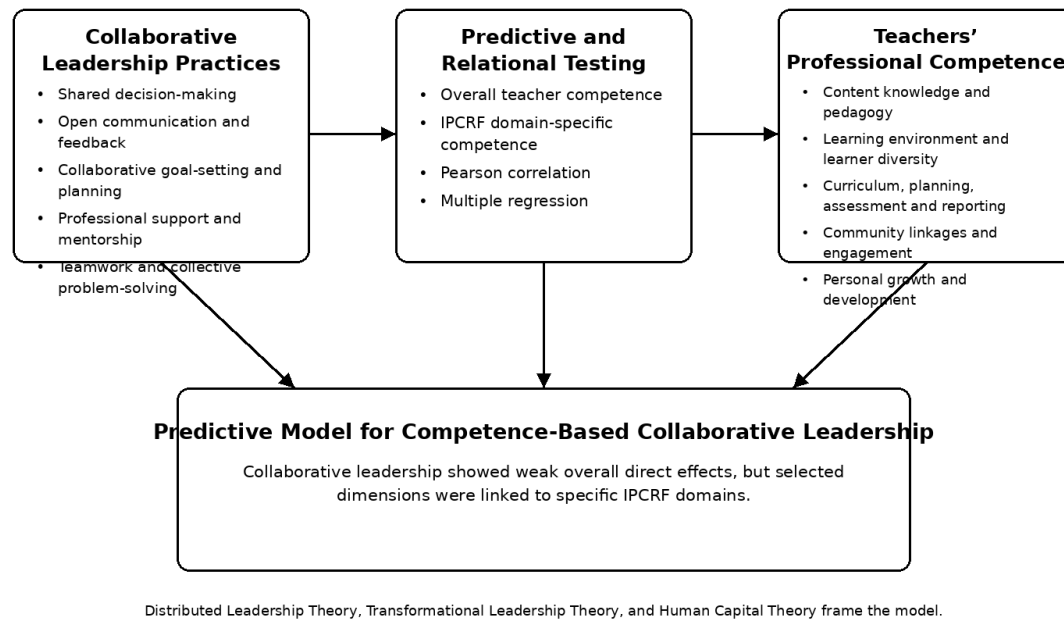


**Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the predictive relationship between collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence.**

Figure 1 shows that collaborative leadership practices were examined as possible predictors of teachers' professional competence. The framework assumes that leadership practices may influence teacher competence either directly or selectively across specific IPCRF domains. The model also recognizes that leadership effects may be context-dependent, particularly in geographically isolated school divisions where professional learning conditions, resource access, and organizational support may shape teacher performance.

### Aim of the Study

This study aimed to determine the relationship between collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence among public secondary school teachers in the Division of Dinagat Islands and to develop a predictive model based on the findings.

### Statement of the Problem

1. What is the level of collaborative leadership practices exhibited by school leaders in terms of shared decision-making, open communication and feedback, collaborative goal-setting and planning, professional support and mentorship, and teamwork and collective problem-solving?
2. What is the level of teachers' professional competence based on IPCRF in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages and professional engagement, and personal growth and professional development?
3. Is there a significant relationship between collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence?
4. Does collaborative leadership significantly predict teachers' professional competence?
5. What predictive model may be proposed based on the findings?

## Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence.

H02: There is no significant predictive relationship between collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence.

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## 2. Literature Review

Collaborative leadership in education is generally understood as a leadership orientation that distributes responsibility, strengthens teacher participation, and supports collective instructional improvement. Recent studies have associated collaborative leadership with teacher engagement, shared ownership, school culture, and instructional coordination (Abidin & Alias, 2022; Nadeem, 2024; Rachmad, 2022). However, the literature also suggests that the influence of collaborative leadership is not uniform. Some studies emphasize affective and organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction and teamwork, while others focus on instructional planning, mentoring, and professional competence (Aryani & Haryadi, 2023; Egitim, 2025). This distinction is important for the present study because it examines whether collaborative leadership predicts formal competence indicators rather than general perceptions of school climate.

Shared decision-making is a core dimension of collaborative leadership because it enables teachers to participate in planning, policy formulation, and school improvement processes. Philippine policy supports this dimension through participatory governance mechanisms such as School Governance Councils and consultative decision-making (Department of Education, 2022; Republic Act No. 9155, 2001). Empirical studies have shown that teacher participation in decision-making can strengthen collective efficacy, professional community, and instructional alignment (Cheng et al., 2020; Çoban & Atasoy, 2020; Meyer et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the literature does not consistently establish whether shared decision-making directly predicts measurable teacher competence, especially in remote school contexts. The present study addresses this gap by testing its relationship with IPCRF-based domains.

Open communication and feedback support teacher development by making leadership guidance more transparent, timely, and professionally useful. Constructive feedback may help teachers refine lesson delivery, assessment practices, classroom management, and instructional decision-making (Handoko, 2024; Kfukfu et al., 2024; Niwagaba, 2025). However, communication and feedback may produce indirect rather than immediate competence outcomes. In resource-constrained schools, feedback practices may be affected by workload, limited supervision time, and logistical constraints. This literature is linked to the present study because open communication and feedback were tested as one of the predictive dimensions of collaborative leadership.

Collaborative goal-setting and planning connect school-level priorities with classroom instruction. When teachers participate in School Improvement Plan and Annual Implementation Plan development, they gain clearer alignment between school goals, curriculum demands, and instructional responsibilities (Department of Education, 2022). Studies suggest that collaborative planning can strengthen teachers' instructional coherence, lesson design, and shared accountability (Meyer et al., 2020; Patrick, 2022; Robinson et al., 2024). These findings support the expectation that collaborative goal-setting may influence competence domains involving curriculum, planning, assessment, reporting, and professional engagement.

Professional support and mentorship constitute a more direct leadership practice because they provide teachers with guidance, coaching, feedback, and opportunities for school-based professional learning. The Learning Action Cell policy institutionalizes collaborative professional development in Philippine schools (Department of Education, 2016). Recent studies indicate that mentoring, professional support, and capacity-building can strengthen



teachers' instructional confidence, reflective practice, and classroom effectiveness (Gading, 2024; Jacobson et al., 2020; Putra et al., 2024). This literature directly supports the present study's analysis of whether professional support and mentorship are associated with specific IPCRF domains.

Teacher professional competence includes content mastery, pedagogy, learner-centered classroom practices, assessment literacy, community engagement, and continuous professional growth (Antera, 2021; Blömeke et al., 2022). The IPCRF provides an institutional basis for measuring this competence in Philippine basic education. However, competence is complex and may be shaped by multiple factors beyond leadership, including professional development, teacher motivation, teaching experience, school resources, and organizational culture (Lin et al., 2022; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021; Yayuk & Haqqi, 2024). Therefore, leadership may not directly predict overall competence but may show selective relationships with particular domains.

Taken together, the literature suggests that collaborative leadership may contribute to professional competence through participation, communication, planning, mentorship, and teamwork. However, existing studies rarely compare the predictive strength of these dimensions against formal teacher competence indicators in geographically isolated and disaster-prone school contexts. The present study contributes to this gap by using correlation and regression analysis to determine whether collaborative leadership practices are related to and predictive of teachers' professional competence in the Division of Dinagat Islands.

### 3. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative predictive-correlational research design. The design was appropriate because the study examined the strength and direction of relationships between collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence, and tested whether collaborative leadership dimensions significantly predicted IPCRF-based competence outcomes. Because the design was correlational and predictive, the findings were interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects.

The study was conducted in the public secondary schools of the Division of Dinagat Islands, Philippines, a geographically isolated and disaster-prone schools division characterized by logistical and communication constraints. The participants were 246 full-time public secondary school teachers from 36 secondary schools. The sample was determined from a population of 677 teachers using stratified proportional sampling with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. Each school served as a stratum to ensure fair representation of both small and large schools.

The main research instrument was the Collaborative Leadership Practices Questionnaire, which measured teachers' perceptions of school leaders' collaborative leadership practices across five dimensions: shared decision-making, open communication and feedback, collaborative goal-setting and planning, professional support and mentorship, and teamwork and collective problem-solving. The instrument contained 40 items, with eight items per subscale. Reliability analysis showed excellent internal consistency: shared decision-making ( $\alpha = .948$ ), open communication and feedback ( $\alpha = .959$ ), collaborative goal-setting and planning ( $\alpha = .969$ ), professional support and mentorship ( $\alpha = .973$ ), and teamwork and collective problem-solving ( $\alpha = .973$ ). Teachers' professional competence was measured using IPCRF-based ratings across five competence domains.

Data were gathered after securing permission from the relevant education authorities and school heads. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Completed questionnaires were checked, encoded, and analyzed with appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics.

Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe the level of collaborative leadership practices and teachers' professional competence. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine significant relationships between collaborative leadership practices and teacher competence. Multiple regression analysis

was used to determine the predictive relationship between the five collaborative leadership dimensions and overall and domain-specific competence outcomes. All inferential tests were interpreted at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical safeguards included voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and use of data strictly for academic and research purposes. No personally identifying information was reported in the study, and all findings were presented in aggregate form.

#### 4. Results/Findings

**Table 1. Level of Collaborative Leadership Practices Exhibited by School Leaders**

| Dimension                               | Mean | SD   | Verbal Interpretation | Qualitative Description |
|-----------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Shared decision-making                  | 3.59 | 0.50 | Strongly Agree        | Highly Practiced        |
| Open communication and feedback         | 3.57 | 0.54 | Strongly Agree        | Highly Practiced        |
| Collaborative goal-setting and planning | 3.62 | 0.50 | Strongly Agree        | Highly Practiced        |
| Professional support and mentorship     | 3.60 | 0.52 | Strongly Agree        | Highly Practiced        |
| Teamwork and collective problem-solving | 3.66 | 0.48 | Strongly Agree        | Highly Practiced        |
| Overall                                 | 3.61 | 0.51 | Strongly Agree        | Highly Practiced        |

Table 1 shows that collaborative leadership practices were highly practiced overall. Teamwork and collective problem-solving received the highest mean, indicating that school leaders were perceived to support joint problem-solving and shared responsibility. Open communication and feedback obtained the lowest mean, although it remained highly practiced. These results suggest that collaborative leadership was visible in the participating schools, but its influence required further testing against IPCRF-based competence outcomes.

**Table 2. Level of Teachers' Professional Competence Based on IPCRF**

| IPCRF Domain                                      | Mean | SD   | Adjectival Rating | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------------------|-------------|
| Content knowledge and pedagogy                    | 4.37 | 0.46 | Very Satisfactory | Excellent   |
| Learning environment and diversity of learners    | 4.34 | 0.45 | Very Satisfactory | Excellent   |
| Curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting | 4.20 | 0.57 | Very Satisfactory | Excellent   |
| Community linkages and professional engagement    | 4.25 | 0.52 | Very Satisfactory | Excellent   |
| Personal growth and professional development      | 4.32 | 0.56 | Very Satisfactory | Excellent   |
| Overall                                           | 4.30 | 0.51 | Very Satisfactory | Excellent   |

Table 2 indicates that teachers' professional competence was rated excellent across all IPCRF domains. Content knowledge and pedagogy recorded the highest mean, while curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting recorded the lowest mean. The findings show that teachers generally demonstrated strong professional competence, although curriculum-related competencies appeared comparatively lower than the other domains.

**Table 3. Relationship Between Collaborative Leadership Practices and Overall Teachers' Professional Competence**

| Collaborative Leadership Practice       | r    | p-value | Decision   | Interpretation  |
|-----------------------------------------|------|---------|------------|-----------------|
| Shared decision-making                  | 0.08 | 0.211   | Accept H01 | Not significant |
| Open communication and feedback         | 0.10 | 0.120   | Accept H01 | Not significant |
| Collaborative goal-setting and planning | 0.09 | 0.141   | Accept H01 | Not significant |
| Professional support and mentorship     | 0.08 | 0.196   | Accept H01 | Not significant |
| Teamwork and collective problem-solving | 0.05 | 0.411   | Accept H01 | Not significant |

Table 3 shows that none of the collaborative leadership dimensions had a statistically significant relationship with overall teachers' professional competence. All correlation coefficients were weak and all p-values were above 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore retained for the overall relationship. This suggests that collaborative leadership did not have a broad direct association with overall IPCRF-based teacher competence in the participating schools.

**Table 4. Domain-Specific Significant Relationships Between Collaborative Leadership and IPCRF Domains**

| Collaborative Leadership Practice   | IPCRF Domain                                      | r    | p-value | Decision   | Interpretation                    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------|---------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Professional support and mentorship | Curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting | .126 | .049    | Reject H01 | Significant positive relationship |
| Shared decision-making              | Personal growth and professional development      | .153 | .017    | Reject H01 | Significant positive relationship |

Table 4 presents the significant domain-specific relationships identified in the study. Professional support and mentorship had a weak but significant positive relationship with curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting. Shared decision-making had a weak but significant positive relationship with personal growth and professional development. These findings suggest that collaborative leadership may influence selected competence areas rather than overall teacher competence.

**Table 5. Regression Analysis on the Predictive Relationship of Collaborative Leadership Practices to Overall Professional Competence**

| Predictor                               | B                                | Std. Error | Beta  | t     | p-value | Decision        |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|-------|-------|---------|-----------------|
| Shared decision-making                  | -0.04                            | 0.14       | -0.05 | -0.31 | 0.755   | Not significant |
| Open communication and feedback         | 0.10                             | 0.14       | 0.11  | 0.70  | 0.486   | Not significant |
| Collaborative goal-setting and planning | 0.16                             | 0.14       | 0.18  | 1.12  | 0.265   | Not significant |
| Professional support and mentorship     | 0.02                             | 0.13       | 0.02  | 0.12  | 0.903   | Not significant |
| Teamwork and collective problem-solving | -0.16                            | 0.15       | -0.16 | -1.08 | 0.280   | Not significant |
| Model summary                           | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = -0.004 |            |       |       |         | Not significant |

Table 5 indicates that collaborative leadership practices did not significantly predict overall teachers' professional competence. The adjusted R-square value of -0.004 shows that the model did not explain a meaningful proportion of the variance in overall competence. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was retained for the overall regression model. This finding suggests that overall IPCRF competence may be shaped by other factors such as professional development participation, teacher motivation, experience, instructional resources, and contextual school conditions.

**Table 6. Domain-Specific Regression Results with Significant Predictors**

| Criterion Domain                                  | Significant Predictor                   | B      | Beta   | p-value | Interpretation                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------------------------------|
| Curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting | Collaborative goal-setting and planning | -0.444 | -0.375 | .014    | Significant negative predictor |
| Curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting | Professional support and mentorship     | 0.428  | 0.377  | .009    | Significant positive predictor |
| Community linkages and professional engagement    | Collaborative goal-setting and planning | -0.365 | -0.321 | .038    | Significant negative predictor |

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Table 6 shows that significant predictive effects appeared only in selected IPCRF domains. Professional support and mentorship positively predicted curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, indicating that direct guidance and mentoring may support curriculum-related competence. Collaborative goal-setting and planning had significant negative coefficients in curriculum-related competence and community linkages and professional engagement, suggesting a suppression or contextual effect that should not be interpreted causally. These findings reinforce the conclusion that collaborative leadership operates selectively and may require mediating supports to translate into professional competence outcomes.

## 5. Discussion

The findings show that collaborative leadership was highly practiced, but this did not translate into a significant overall relationship with teachers' professional competence. This result challenges the assumption that collaborative leadership automatically leads to broad gains in teacher performance. The weak and non-significant correlations suggest that collaborative leadership may be necessary for positive school culture but insufficient by itself to improve formal IPCRF ratings.

The results are consistent with the idea that leadership effects may be indirect and mediated by professional learning, motivation, self-efficacy, teacher autonomy, and access to instructional resources. Distributed Leadership Theory explains that shared leadership creates participation structures, but these structures may not immediately appear in formal performance indicators. Transformational Leadership Theory suggests that leadership first influences commitment, trust, and motivation, while Human Capital Theory emphasizes that competence develops through sustained investment in training and skill development.

The significant relationship between professional support and mentorship and curriculum-related competence is theoretically coherent because mentorship directly supports planning, instructional design, assessment, and reporting practices. This finding suggests that among collaborative leadership practices, direct professional support may be more closely connected to technical teaching competencies. Similarly, the significant relationship between shared decision-making and personal growth implies that teacher participation in school decisions may encourage professional agency, reflection, and ownership of development.

The regression results indicate that collaborative leadership should not be treated as a universal predictor of competence. Instead, it appears to have selective and domain-specific effects. This suggests the need for competence-based collaborative leadership, where specific leadership practices are intentionally aligned with the IPCRF domains they are most likely to support. General collaboration may strengthen relationships, but targeted collaboration may be needed to improve measurable professional competence.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that collaborative leadership practices among school leaders in the Division of Dinagat Islands were highly practiced, and teachers' professional competence based on IPCRF was rated excellent. However, collaborative leadership did not show a significant relationship with or predictive influence on overall teacher competence. The findings therefore indicate that collaborative leadership has limited broad direct effect on overall IPCRF-based competence. Nonetheless, significant domain-specific relationships were found: professional support and mentorship were related to curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, while shared decision-making was related to personal growth and professional development. Regression results also showed selective predictive effects in curriculum-related competence and community linkages. Overall, the study suggests that collaborative leadership matters most when it is targeted, competence-based, and supported by mentoring, professional development, and contextual resources rather than applied as a general leadership approach.

### 6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, school heads should strengthen collaborative leadership practices by aligning them with specific IPCRF domains rather than implementing collaboration in a general manner. Professional support and mentorship should be prioritized for curriculum planning, assessment, reporting, and instructional improvement because these areas showed stronger statistical relevance. Shared decision-making should be used to promote teacher ownership, professional reflection, and personal growth. Schools should sustain Learning Action Cells, peer mentoring, coaching, and collaborative planning sessions with clear objectives, documentation, and follow-up mechanisms. DepEd division officials may use the proposed predictive model to design leadership development programs that focus on competence-specific support in geographically isolated schools. Future researchers may examine mediating variables such as teacher motivation, self-efficacy, professional development participation, school culture, workload, and instructional resources to explain how collaborative leadership affects teacher competence over time.

### Declarations

#### Funding

This research was funded through the personal resources of the author. No external funding was received.

#### CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

Concorde Alber J. Deniega: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data collection, formal analysis, writing – original draft, and project administration.

#### Ethical Statement

The study obtained the necessary permission from the concerned education authorities and participating schools. Informed consent was secured from the respondents. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

#### Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares no competing financial, personal, institutional, or professional interests that may have influenced the conduct or findings of the study.

#### Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request, subject to applicable data privacy and school approval requirements.



## AI Usage Disclosure

AI-assisted tools were used for language refinement, organization, and formatting support. The author reviewed, verified, and approved the final manuscript and remains responsible for the accuracy and integrity of the content.

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