

## Does School Climate Matter in Inclusive Education? A Case of Instructional Leadership in the Philippines

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**Abstract:** With the integration of ALIVE (Arabic Language and Islamic Values) program into the basic education curriculum of the Philippines' public school system, this study was aimed to examine how school climate in pilot public schools relate to the instructional leadership of Asatidz (Islamic teachers) coordinators of ALIVE program in major cities in Davao region, the Philippines. Using mixed methods of correlational and phenomenological designs, the study revealed that the instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators was dependent on the school climate of pilot public schools. Finally, the recurring theme was the controlling image of an ideal Asatidz coordinator who is perceived to be competent, committed, proficient in the teaching of Arabic language and knowledgeable of Islamic values. Conversely, the patterns of lived experience of Asatidz coordinators unveiled that professional development program and instructional resources were perceived as important factors that impact implementation of the integration program of inclusive education.

**Keywords:** Instructional Leadership, School Climate, Madrasah Integration Program, Inclusive Education

### 1. Introduction

Historically, governments' programs to mainstream Islamic education in Europe and some countries in Asia like Thailand and the Philippines where Muslims were a minority are deterred by the unavailability of an Islamic-centered curriculum and instructional materials. The absence of these resources and an open culturally sensitive integration system have had, over the years, adversely affected Asatidz (Ustadz, singular form) or Islamic teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward governments' integration programs.

In the Philippines, for almost five decades, government's efforts to integrate Madaris (Madrasah, singular form) or Islamic schools to the national education system has not gained wider acceptance from Muslim communities. During the 1980s, the integrating mechanism of the Marcos regime was for Madrasah administrators to register their schools so that their schools can avail of Government assistance mostly in the forms of curriculum development, textbooks, and teachers' training. However, only very few responded to the call. Most of Madaris administrators were doubtful of government's motives. Hence, during those years their schools were unable to meet DECS (Department of Education, Culture and Sports)

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requirements; hence remained disintegrated with the national education system (Lacar & Moner, 2019).

However, with the signing of Final Peace Accord in 1996 between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the subsequent enactment of Republic Act 9054 or otherwise known as Strengthening and Expanding the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a long-term Madrasah development plan based on curriculum standardization and school recognition scheme was rolled out.

In 2001 or after the 9/11 incident of the World Trade Center in the United States of America, the Philippine Government together with international donor organizations, specifically USAid and AUSAid, renewed and vigorously pursued efforts to integrate and develop Madaris especially in areas not served by public schools and those areas which are considered vulnerable to penetration by Islamic extremist ideology. At this point, the goal of the Madrasah integration program of the Government is anchored on three overarching social justice goals, namely: to make Madrasah graduates knowledgeable of the true teachings of Islam as a religion of peace and to become proficient of the rigors of the Arabic language; to make Madrasah graduates competitive in terms of employment and entrepreneurial skills through holistic curriculum design; and to facilitate smooth transfer through school recognition of Madrasah students to government or private secular school or vice versa.

Notwithstanding this development, there are still many challenges to reckon with from curriculum down to instruction. First, almost all private Madaris in the Philippines operate without a written curriculum. Some had but did not conform to the standards prescribed by the Department of Education. One of the standard criteria is the teaching of secular subjects like Mathematics, Sciences, English and Makabayan or social science in all grade levels. The gap in the curriculum is considered as one of the factors that caused deterioration in literacy level of Muslim school children, specifically in the ARMM (Lacar & Moner, 2019).

Furthermore, the madrasah system in the Philippines severely lack textbooks for the teaching of Islamic values and Arabic language. Some textbooks are Middle eastern-oriented which means not localized or uncontextualized in the culture of the BangsaMoro people. Hence, many school children find it intensely challenging to read and relate their lessons to their family and community daily life. In addition, the majority of the Asatidz is deficient in professional trainings to be able to teach ALIVE subjects more effectively (Solaiman, 2017).

Considering these gaps surrounding Islamic schools, the Department of Education's (DepEd), together with donor agencies like AUSAid currently operates Madrasah integration program under two-integration schemes under DepED memorandum # 51 s.2004. The first scheme involves development assistance package for private Madaris that have complied with government's recognition requirements in terms of use of standard Madrasah curriculum for private Madaris and number of qualified Accelerated Teachers Education Program or ATEP-graduate Asatidz (faculty). Once private Madaris are given due recognition by the Government, development assistance in the forms of textbook and equipment acquisition, facilities development, including faculty professional training are extended to private Madaris in equity-sharing mode. On the other hand, the second scheme operates under the epistemological framework of secularization which involves infusion of Islamic values and Arabic language classes into existing secular

curricula of public elementary and secondary schools with at least 20 students number of Muslim students enrolled in each class size as directed by DepED memorandum #51 s.2004.

### **1.1 Rationale for the Study**

In the light of the second integration scheme, Muslim students who enrolled in public schools are now given the opportunity to study ALIVE or Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education as elective subjects in their schools. Under the scheme, Arabic Language is taught for 60 minutes daily while Islamic values is taught for another 40 minutes daily.

In Davao region, ALIVE classes are integrated in public schools with at least 20 Muslim students in each class. Pilot centers of this integration program are found in the cities of Davao, Digos, and Tagum. With ALIVE classes in pilot public schools put in place, a growing concern is raised on the teaching competency and the professional readiness of Asatidz to manage the teaching-learning process of their individual ALIVE classes.

In the context of these identified peculiar needs and gaps within a complex national integration program of Madrasah system in the Philippines, this study had focused its investigation on the relationship of school climate of pilot public schools and the instructional leadership competence of Asatidz coordinators of the ALIVE program in the cities of Davao, Digos, and Tagum.

### **1.2 Statements of the Research Problem**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship of school climate and instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators in pilot public elementary and secondary schools in Davao region and to explicate the implications of the findings for the Madrasah national integration program of the Republic of the Philippines.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of school climate of pilot public elementary and secondary schools in Davao region, the Philippines?
2. What is the level of instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators in pilot public elementary and secondary schools in Davao region, the Philippines?
3. Is there a significant difference in the instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators of the pilot public schools when grouped according to:
  - Educational Attainment
  - Teaching Experience
  - Professional Training?
4. Is there a significant relationship between school climate and instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators of the pilot public schools?
5. What are the recurring themes and patterns of lived experience revealed in the Asatidz coordinators' perspectives on school climate and on instructional leadership in the pilot public schools?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Ecological Systems Theory**

While most theories discussed the linear influence of instructional leadership to school climate, this study seeks to investigate the reciprocity of the relationship of the two variables. The rationale for this is seen in the main context of the study which inquires on the integration of an educational program into the instructional system of a school.

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on the Ecological Systems Theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner. His theory can be extended and modelled to postulate that the development of an organization like a school can affect and be affected by a system of human relationships that form the school's environment. This system has four complex layers, namely: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Rudasill et al., 2018).

A school, like a human person, develops its characteristics such as its organizational culture and climate or atmosphere largely due to the influence of different factors within its immediate and proximate environments. These environments are labelled by Bronfenbrenner (1989) as layers of systems which interact in complex ways with the school. The interaction has reciprocal effects on both the school and the elements within an environment or a layer.

### **2.2 The Concept of School Climate**

School climate is defined as the affective and cognitive perceptions regarding social interactions, relationships, values, and beliefs held by students, teachers, administrators, and staff within a school (Rudasill et al., 2018). It is a shared experience about organizational conditions like the school's atmosphere, norms, values and expectations (Hoy & Hoy, 2003).

School climate is influenced by the levels of conflict or cooperation among teachers and students, the expectations regarding students' academic achievement, the sense of collaboration, and the level of social connectedness and support (Haynes & Ben-Avie, 1997; Juvonen, 2007).

A reciprocal influence concept is introduced by Gorton and Alston (2009) when they explicated the importance of a positive school climate as having a positive effect on behaviour, social attitude and academic performance of a school's stakeholders. This in return enhances the school climate. Expounding on this concept, Weiner and Woulfin (2018) in their study on "The Challenges of the Transfer of Teacher Leadership", reported that a positive school climate in terms of structures and norm can be an enabler of effective instructional leadership which subsequently facilitates conducive school climate. Although there is a concord on the extent of school climate's influence on organizational motivation, behaviour, performance and leadership, it remains that no amount of organizational climate can guarantee effective instructional leadership. School climate by itself cannot make a poor academic program good, or a weak teacher strong. On the contrary, an open school climate such as staff respect and listen to each other's opinions, low directiveness and restrictiveness, high collegial relations among staff, and high cooperation can provide the necessary atmosphere for reflection, cooperation, change, and instructional improvement (Rothwell, 2002).

Framed on the contextual perspective of this study, if the climate is not propitious for change, then change is unlikely to be successful. The more open is the climate; the more conducive it is to change. An open climate is characterized by its high morale and cooperation. There is a minimum of bureaucracy and records low job stress, high motivation and mutual respect for all employees (Gorton & Alston, 2009).

### **2.3 The Concept of Instructional Leadership in Education**

In the 1980s, instructional leadership became the dominant paradigm for school leaders after researchers noticed that effective schools usually had principals who kept a high focus on curriculum and instruction. In the first half of the 1990s, attention to instructional leadership seemed to waver, displaced by discussions of school-based management and facilitative leadership (Glanz, 2006).

However, instruction surged back to the top of the leadership agenda during the first decade of the twenty-first century, driven by the relentless growth of standards-based accountability systems. Explicit standards of learning, coupled with heavy pressure to provide tangible evidence of success, reaffirmed the importance of instructional leadership through reflective practice and professional development (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). The term "instructional leadership" was institutionalized and given prominence as an effective enabler of learning (Hallinger, 2010).

Current definitions of instructional leadership are richer and more expansive than those of the 1980s. Originally, the role involved traditional tasks such as setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, and evaluating teachers. Today, it includes much deeper involvement in the "core technology" of teaching and learning, carries more sophisticated views of collaborative teacher leadership, professional development, and emphasizes the use of data in decision-making process (Diamond, 2002).

In a post-colonial era, concept of instructional leadership, Bennett and Anderson (2003) emphasized the importance of distributing and intensifying teacher's expansive roles in instructional leadership to cover incubating teaching and assessment innovations in subject communities and promoting a culture of learning collaboration in professional communities.

### **2.4 Models of Instructional Leadership**

Various models to explicate the functions of instructional leadership have been framed through the years. Two of these notable models are those of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and of Murphy (1990).

Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model, as cited by Ali-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005), outlined the three major functions of instructional leadership, namely: defining the mission, managing instructional program, and promoting a positive school climate which covers the sub-functions of protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, enforcing high academic standards, and providing incentives for teachers and students.

Murphy (1990), as cited Ali-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005), continued to elucidate on the three major functions of instructional leadership, but extended the last function and re-labelled it to "promoting academic learning climate" which covered developing supportive work environment that includes:

creating a safe and orderly learning environment, providing opportunities for meaningful student engagement, developing staff collaboration and cohesion, securing outside resources in support of school's goals, and forging links between the school and the learner's home.

It can be gleaned from the literatures and related studies that school climate influences to a certain degree instructional leadership in promoting inclusive education. However, one compelling aspect in the nature of their relationship is their reciprocity or the bi-directional influence on each other. This is elucidated in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and explicated in Hallinger and Murphy's models of instructional leadership.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Since the main objectives of this study was to assess the levels and determine the relationship of two variables namely: the school climate and the instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators in pilot public schools in Davao region, mixed methods were employed in this study. Specifically, the study involved correlational and phenomenological designs, and data were collected primarily utilizing the methods of survey and a series of focus group discussions (FGD) to identify recurring themes and patterns of lived experiences of the Asatidz coordinators in the ALIVE program implementation.

#### **3.2 Research Procedures**

The study includes three stages of data collection, namely: the preliminary visit, the primary data collection, and the primary data processing. In the first stage, the researcher sought written permissions from the regional offices the Department of Education and the Office of Muslim Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines. After the permission is granted for the study, the researcher then secured free, prior and informed consent from the Asatidz coordinators.

In the second stage which involved primary data collection: the researcher distributed and collected the adopted survey questionnaires from ALIVE program pilot public schools. Subsequently, a series of focus group discussions (FGD) sessions was conducted in the cities of Davao, Tagum and Digos.

In the third and final stage, the collected primary data was process. The researcher tabulated responses generated from survey questionnaires and computed for the means, significant difference and significant relationships. On the other hand, FGD recordings were transcribed and coded for analysis.

#### **3.3 Statistical Treatments**

The statistical tools that were employed in the interpretation of data are mean, ANOVA, and Pearson r. The mean was used to assess the levels of school climate and instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators in pilot public schools in Davao region. The ANOVA was utilized to determine the significant difference between the Instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators and their demographic profiles in terms of educational attainment, teaching experience, and professional training. In establishing the relationship between the school climate of pilot public schools and instructional leadership of Asatidz

coordinators in Davao region, the Pearson  $r$  was used. Please refer to supplementary tables on Appendix B for the Descriptive Rating Scales for School Climate and Instructional Leadership respectively.

### **3.4 FGD Codebook**

Recurring themes and patterns of perceptions and lived experiences elicited from the Asatidz coordinators were coded and classified into the theme: image of an outstanding ALIVE Asatidz Coordinator. Each theme had two sub-clusters based on patterns of lived experience: positive school factors and negative school factors that influence the implementation of ALIVE program in pilot public schools.

### **3.5 Sampling Design and Participation Rate**

In determining the participants for this study, purposive sampling was employed. The said sampling design entails the identification of all Asatidz coordinators of ALIVE classes in pilot public schools in Davao region. The objective of purposive sampling design was to ensure that those selected as participants were able to provide thick descriptions to characterize in-depth the subject of the study.

Since there were only 59 Asatidz coordinators in pilot public schools in Davao region, they were all included as participants for this study. However, only 50 Asatidz coordinators consented and participated in the study. The participation rate was at 84.7%. Please see Appendix D for participants' information.

### **3.6 Research Locale and Duration of the Study**

Collection of primary data was conducted in all pilot public schools in Davao region. It commenced on December 2019 and ended on June 2020 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and lockdowns. There were 50 Asatidz coordinator participants from pilot public schools in the cities of Davao in Davao del Sur, Tagum in Davao de Norte, and Digos in Davao del Sur that were covered in the study. The work locations of the participants were as follow: 36 serving in Davao City, the regional center; nine in Tagum City of Davao del Norte; and five in Digos City of Davao del Sur.

The educational levels of these pilot public schools were as follows: 23 pilot public elementary schools and 13 pilot public high schools in Davao City; six pilot public elementary schools and three pilot public high schools in Tagum City; and five pilot public elementary schools in Digos City.

## **4. Results and Discussions**

### **4.1 Level of School Climate of Pilot Public Schools in Davao Region**

There are seven correlates by which school climate is measured. They are the condition of resources; condition of organizational structure; extent of work autonomy; extent of organizational development; extent of collaboration; extent of communication; and extent of job stress.

Table 1: Summary on the level of school climate of pilot public elementary and secondary schools in Davao Region

Item	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Condition of Resources	3.68	High
Condition of Organisational Structure	3.51	High
Extent of Work Autonomy	3.79	High
Extent of Organisational Development	3.41	Moderate
Extent of Collaboration	3.19	Moderate
Extent of Communication	3.53	High
Extent of Job Stress	3.51	High
Overall	3.52	High

As shown in Table 1, the overall mean is 3.52 and descriptively valued as high. This means that in totality, considering the seven correlates and their 29 item-indicators, school climate of pilot public schools in the Davao region is 51-75 % conducive to instructional leadership. Although in general the level of school climate is high, it must be qualified that of the seven correlates, organizational development and collaboration register have moderate descriptive ratings at 3.41 and 3.19 respectively.

This supports the findings of Lacar and Moner (2019) when they reported on the recurring problem of underdevelopment of the Madrasah system in the Philippines. This implies that the school system in which the ALIVE classes have to be embedded must integrate the ALIVE program holistically into its academic system promoting dialogue, collaboration, and inclusion of all stakeholders, and at the same time ensuring that the ALIVE program would benefit from the organizational support of the school.

#### **4.2 Level of Instructional Leadership of Asatidz Coordinators in Davao Region**

There are six dimensions by which instructional leadership is measured. They are the ability to direct instructional goals; ability to facilitate instructional development; ability to create high expectation learning culture; ability to communicate shared visions and mission statements; ability to execute professional development; and ability to promote professional relationship.

Table 2: Summary on the level of instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators in Davao Region

Item	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Ability to direct instructional goals	4.43	High
Ability to facilitate instructional development	3.90	High
Ability to create high expectation learning culture	3.83	High
Ability to communicate shared vision and mission statement	3.79	High
Ability to execute professional development	3.32	Moderate
Ability to promote professional relationship	4.29	High
Overall	3.93	High

Table 2 displays the overall mean is 3.93 and descriptively valued as high. This means that in totality considering the six dimensions and their 29 item indicators, instructional leadership is exhibited 51-75 % of its dimension by Asatidz coordinators in Davao region.

Nevertheless, it has to be qualified that of the six dimensions, professional development registers with a moderate descriptive rating at 3.32. This supports the findings of Solaiman (2017) when he noted that the Asatidz of the ALIVE program were insufficiently trained in the areas of pedagogy, assessments, lesson planning, instructional materials development, and evaluation. The implies the importance of a strategic, responsive, and sustainable professional training program for the Asatidz coordinators to equip them with instructional leadership skills that would enable them to administer, manage and innovate the ALIVE classes in their respective schools.

### **4.3 Significance of Differences: Instructional Leadership and the Demographics of Asatidz Coordinators in Davao Region**

#### **4.3.1 Educational Attainment**

The mean of high school graduates is 3.89; the mean of college level is 3.72; and the mean of college graduates is 4.15. The F-value is 4.32 with a probability of .019 which is lesser than .05 level of significance for this study. It can be said, therefore, that there is a significant difference on the level of instructional leadership of the participants in terms of their educational attainment. Please see supplementary table on Appendix B.

This is particularly true for college graduates who register the highest mean at 4.15. Hence, it can be deduced that Asatidz coordinators with higher formal educational attainments are more disposed to executing the dimensions of instructional leadership to their ideal levels. This supports the contention of Blasé and Blasé (2004) who argued the pivotal role of instructional leadership in a complex school system. Hence, requiring a formal educational training for the instructional leaders. This implies that the

educational qualifications of Asatidz coordinators are pivotal. Asatidz in the ALIVE program should possess a minimum qualification of a college degree in education or related disciplines.

#### **4.3.2 Teaching Experience**

The mean of those with five years and below of teaching experience is 3.94; the mean of those with six years to 15 years of teaching experience is 3.73; and those with 16 years and above of teaching experience is 4.44.

The F-value is 5.78 with a probability of .006 which is lesser than .05 level of significance for this study. Thus, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference on the level of instructional leadership of the respondents in terms of their teaching experience. Please see supplementary table on Appendix B.

This is particularly true for those Asatidz coordinators who have been teaching for 16 years and above. They register the highest mean at 4.44. Hence, it can be asserted that the more experienced Asatidz coordinators are- the more they are able to meet the standards and expectations of an instructional leader. Therefore, it can be explicated that relevant professional trainings are crucial to enabling Asatidz coordinators to become adept leaders of instructions. This supports the assertion of Diamond (2002) who contended that supervisory experience in school empowers instructional leaders to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the school's academic system. This implies the importance of a "mentorship system" in the ALIVE program where junior Asatidz are mentored in the areas of content, lesson planning, pedagogy, instructional materials development and assessments by their peers with more senior teaching experience.

#### **4.3.3 Professional Training**

The mean of those with 184 hours and below of professional training is 4.01; the mean of those with 185 to 368 hours of professional training is 3.78; and those with 369 hours and above is 4.01.

The F-value is 1.29 with a probability of .286 which is greater than .05 level of significance for this study. Therefore, it can be said that there is no significant difference on the level of instructional leadership of the respondents in terms of their professional training. Hence, the number of hours of professional trainings of the respondents has nothing to do with their instructional leadership competence. Please see supplementary table on Appendix B.

This finding runs contradictory to Blasé and Blasé (2004) and Diamond (2002)'s assertions that professional training program influences positively the level of instructional leadership. However, in the context of ALIVE program in Davao region, it is untenable. The main reason is almost all of the ALIVE trainings are confined heavily to contents of Arabic language and Islamic values and not on pedagogy, assessments, instructional materials and curriculum development. Knowledge and skills on teaching and learning evaluation, including management strategies for educational administration are evidently underemphasized in the ALIVE training program. Nevertheless, this series of tests on significant difference implies that formal educational trainings along with teaching and supervisory experience are to a certain extent enhance the level of instructional leadership of the Asatidz coordinators.

#### **4.4 Significance of Relationship: School Climate of Pilot Public Schools and Instructional Leadership of Asatidz Coordinators in Davao Region**

The overall computed r-value of .532 is greater than the tabular value of .304 at .05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be declared that there exists a significant relationship between the school climate of pilot public schools and the instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators in Davao region. This further means that the instructional leadership level of the participants is dependent on the level of school climate of the pilot public schools. Please see Table 3 on Appendix A.

This reinforces Bronfenbrenner (1989)'s Ecological Systems Theory particularly on the concept of bi-directional influence especially of the first two layers of school climate, namely: the microsystem and the mesosystem, to the level of interpersonal and professional relationships and interactions between and among the school's stakeholders. These dynamics can be conjectured as pertaining to have impact on instructional leadership.

Further, this relationship may be on some degree reciprocal in nature supporting the contentions of Gorton and Alston (2009) and Weiner and Woulfin (2018). Specifically, as reflected in Table 3, five of the six dimensions are found to be significantly correlated with school climate with the ability to execute professional development as the most dependent indicator at .478 computed r-value. The other dimensions in descending order are the ability to communicate shared vision and mission statement at .463 r-value; ability to facilitate instructional development at .415 r-value; ability to create high expectation learning culture at .402 r-value; ability to promote professional relationship at .378 r-value. Conversely, the only dimension that indicates independence from school climate is the ability to direct instructional goals at .253 r-value which is lesser than the tabular value of .304 at .05 level of significance. This finding contradicts the contention of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership when they asserted that a positive school climate is essential to communicating the instructional mission or goals. In the context of the ALIVE program in Davao region, this contention is untenable. This is because ALIVE program's instructional mission and long-term goals are uncategorical to the Asatidz coordinators and are not strategically communicated to them. This implies that the instructional mission and goals of the ALIVE program must be communicated meaningfully and strategically in a clear and unequivocal language.

#### **4.5 Recurring Theme on School Climate and Instructional Leadership**

The image of an ideal Asatidz coordinator emerged as a recurring and controlling theme in the focus group discussions. On the other hand, perceived positive and negative factors surrounding the implementation of the ALIVE program in pilot public schools in Davao region appeared as common patterns of lived experience among participants.

Figure 1 presents the ideal image of an outstanding Asatidz Coordinator who is perceived to possess the traits of being competent, committed and a role model of good character. Moreover, being proficient in the teaching of Arabic language, knowledgeable in Islamic values and effective instructional manager are the exemplary skills of an ideal Asatidz Coordinator.

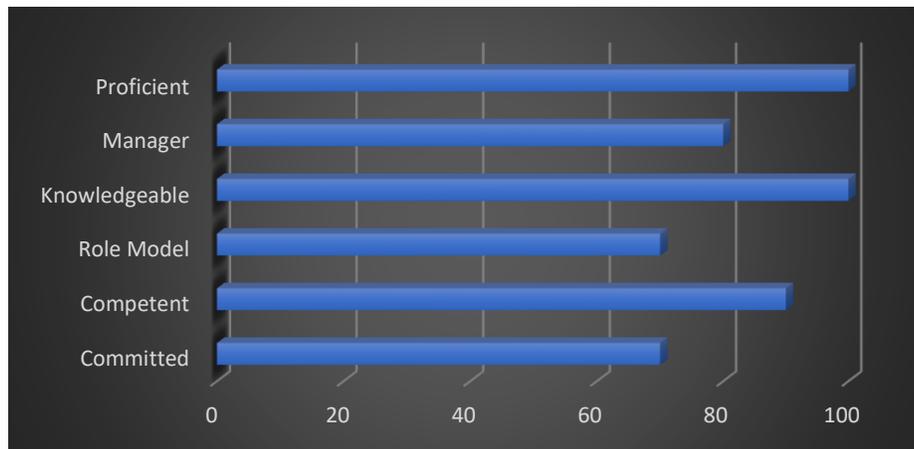


Figure 1: Profile of ideal traits and skills of an outstanding Asatidz Coordinator

All of the participants believe that an ideal Asatidz coordinator must possess the following skills: proficiency in the pedagogy and contents of Arabic language and knowledge in Islamic values centered on the teachings of Qu'ran, the hadith, sira (traditions and biography of the Prophet), usul al-din (principles of the faith), and aklaq (moral precepts). Participant 01-18 expounds: an ideal Asatidz is a person who is look up to not just by students but also by the school and the community. He/she is a role model of Islamic character- a man or woman of peace. He/she is committed to his/her teaching profession and lives as a living example.

This finding implies that professional development program of the Asatidz should also include training on teaching student-centered methods like interactive and collaborative activities, assessments including questioning techniques, lesson planning, contextualized and age or level appropriate instructional materials development, classroom management and program evaluation as these are essential skills for teacher and academic manager's competencies.

#### 4.6 Patterns of Lived Experience on School Climate and Instructional Leadership

Figure 2 shows the four factors identified by the participants as having positive impact on the ALIVE program. These factors are, in ranking order: professional development program (29%); instructional resources (26%), administrative support (24%) and inclusion of ALIVE subject grade in GPA (grade point average) computation (21%).

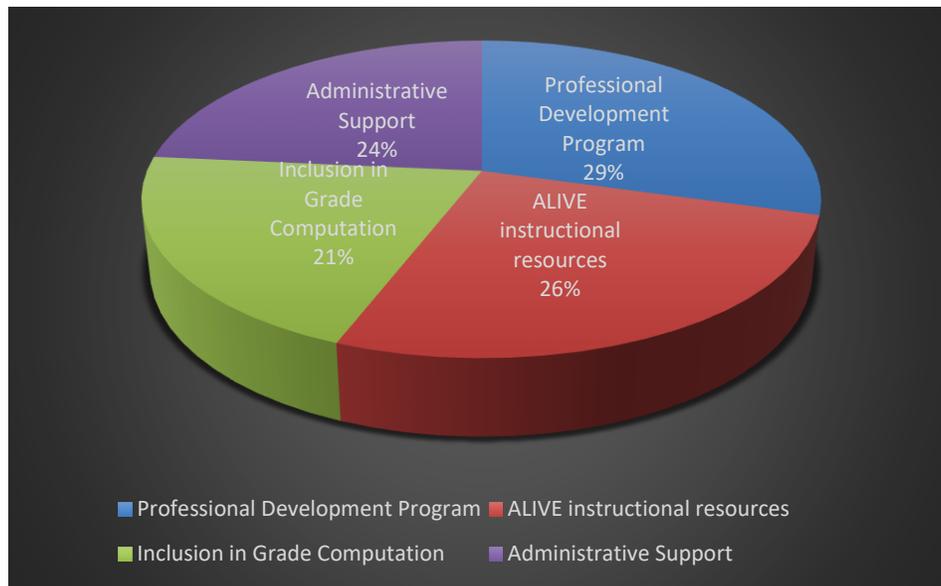


Figure 2: Percentage distribution of perceived positive factors affecting ALIVE Program

This finding reinforces the implications extracted from the recurring theme on the ideal image of an Asatidz coordinator. It points to the importance of professional development program and instructional resources as vital and indispensable components of the ALIVE program.

Participant 01-26 explains that "a relevant professional development program helps Asatidz develop effective teaching skills that benefit students' learning". Moreover, participant 02-09 points out that "contextualized instructional materials can help make learning more engaging and more meaningful for my students."

Conversely, Figure 3 displays the four factors identified by the participants as having negative effect on the ALIVE program. In the order of impact, these factors are: lack of professional development program (29%); lack of instructional resources (26%), cultural indifferences/biases (24%) and disruption of instructional time (21%).

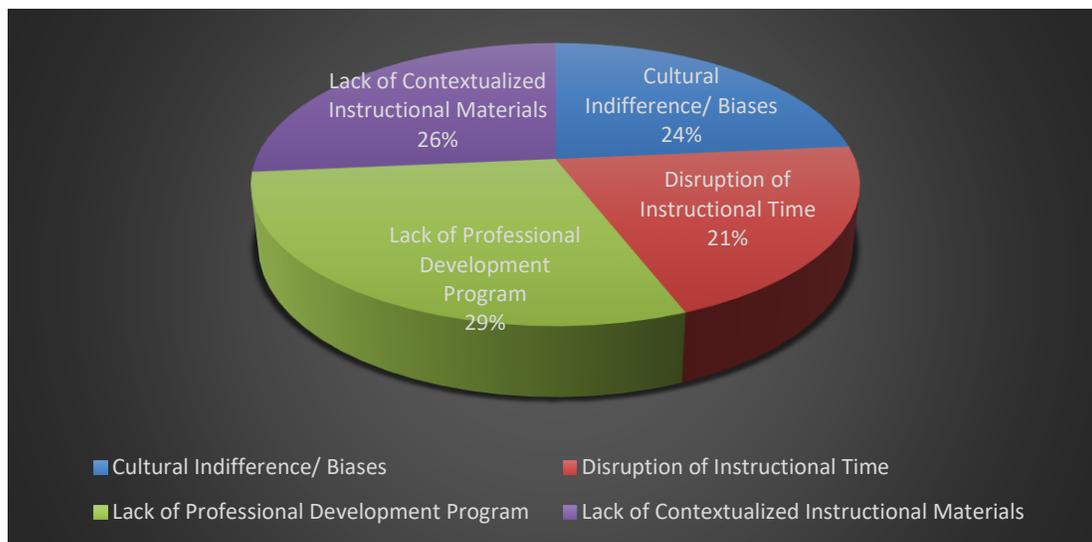


Figure 3: Percentage distribution of perceived negative factors affecting ALIVE Program

Participant 03-01 laments that: The cultural indifference of some school administrators and secular subject teachers in pilot public schools toward the ALIVE program has been adversely affecting its instructional time. For instance, some teachers would conduct activities within the class timing of ALIVE classes. Some administrators permit this class timing conflicts to happen sometimes to the detriment of ALIVE's instructional time.

This finding confirms the need for a holistic professional training program for the Asatidz of the ALIVE program, and the necessity of a meaningful and comprehensive teaching and learning materials. Finally, the finding also reinforces the need to strengthen cultural dialog and collaboration in order to integrate ALIVE goals into the overall instructional vision and mission of the pilot schools.

## 5. Conclusions

This study sought to examine, utilizing Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework, how school climate in pilot public schools relate to the instructional leadership of Asatidz (Islamic teachers) coordinators of ALIVE program in major cities in Davao region, the Philippines. Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

Pilot public schools in Davao region have high level of school climate, except for the extent of organizational development and collaboration variables. Moreover, Asatidz coordinators in Davao region have high level of instructional leadership, except for the ability to execute professional development variable. This is attributed to the fact that the instructional leadership of Asatidz coordinators in Davao region differs in terms of their educational attainment and teaching experience, except in their professional training.

It can therefore be concluded that instructional leadership is dependent on school climate with the exception on the ability to communicate instructional goals variable as assessed in the context of this study. In the light of these findings, it is worthy to note that the recurring theme in this study is the controlling

image of an ideal Asatidz coordinator who is perceived to be competent, committed, role model of good character, proficient, knowledgeable and abled instructional manager of the ALIVE program. Furthermore, the patterns of lived experience reveal that the Asatidz professional development program and ALIVE instructional resources are perceived as the most important factors that impact implementation of this educational integration program in the Philippines. This study recommends that similar studies be conducted to examine the influence of school climate to instructional leadership in other ethnic or cultural and demographic such as educational level contexts to verify findings of this study and to strengthen strategic policies and operational plans by which inclusive education for marginalized groups can be promoted and established holistically and most effectively.

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