



INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR OF SCHOOL HEADS, WORK VALUES AND MENTAL HEALTH OF TEACHERS: A PATH MODEL ON TEACHERS' SELF-ESTEEM

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Abstract:

This study was conducted to determine the best-fit path model on teachers' self-esteem in the Department of Education in Region XII as estimated by instructional leadership behavior of school heads, teachers' mental health and work values. It was conducted from May 2024 to September 2024. The study used a quantitative, non-experimental research design using correlational techniques and path analysis. A total of 400 elementary teachers from Sarangani, General Santos, Koronadal and South Cotabato divisions were determined and surveyed using the stratified sampling procedure. Mean, Pearson r, and path analysis were used as statistical tools. Moreover, adapted, modified and validated survey questionnaires were used as data collection tools. Results show that the level of instructional leadership behavior of school heads is very high. Additionally, the level of work values among elementary teachers is very high. On the other hand, the level of mental health among elementary teachers is high. Consequently, the level of teachers' self-esteem. Model 3 came out as the best-fit model that predicts teachers' self-esteem. The model showed that instructional leadership behavior, teachers' work values and mental health predict teachers' self-esteem among elementary school teachers in Region XII.

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1. Introduction

Teacher self-esteem, a needed factor in educational settings, has become a recognized challenge within the teaching profession. As Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2022) highlight, "*Stress and burnout are more frequent among teachers with low self-esteem*", leading to detrimental effects on classroom dynamics and student-teacher relationships. To further illustrate, Wahidi (2022) found that 75 percent of low self-esteem teachers experience emotional fatigue, directly impacting student engagement and teaching efficiency. Such findings underscore the pressing need for support systems that enhance teachers' self-esteem, as these are requirements for cultivating positive, resilient educators who can foster productive learning environments.

Furthermore, the significance of teacher self-esteem extends far beyond individual well-being, profoundly influencing student outcomes and overall educational quality. On the one hand, high teacher self-esteem is coupled with increased teaching performance and enhanced efforts to support student learning (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019; Grønlie, 2022). On the other hand, low self-esteem among teachers can inadvertently promote negative thinking patterns and hesitation among students (Martins, 2020). Moreover, Zhou and Urhahne (2021) argue that teachers with low self-esteem are more likely to exhibit poor classroom management skills, leading to disruptive student behaviors. Taken together, these findings underscore the significant need to address and enhance teacher self-esteem to create more conducive learning environments.

Additionally, it is important to examine the factors that affect teacher self-esteem. Research has consistently demonstrated a positive correlation between instructional leadership and teacher self-esteem (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2022). Specifically, school leaders who provide clear expectations, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support contribute significantly to teachers' confidence and ability to meet job demands (Berkovich & Eyal, 2021). Conversely, inadequate guidance and excessive workloads from leadership can diminish teacher self-worth (Yin, 2021).

Moreover, teachers' self-esteem is thoroughly linked to their work values and professional identity. For instance, Wang (2022) found that teachers with high self-esteem place greater importance on student development and societal contribution. In contrast, those with low self-esteem tend to prioritize extrinsic rewards like job security (Aloe, 2020). Furthermore, self-esteem impacts teachers' approach to professional growth, with higher self-confidence associated with greater enthusiasm for leadership roles and continuous improvement (Zhou, 2022). Research by Martinez *et al.* (2023) showed that teachers with positive self-esteem are more likely to engage in collaborative professional learning communities, sharing insights and best practices with colleagues.

In connection, the intersection of teacher self-esteem and professional show emerges as a critical area of educational research, with multiple studies highlighting the profound implications for classroom dynamics and educator well-being. Kim and Park (2024) revealed that educators with healthy self-esteem demonstrate enhanced emotional resilience, effectively navigating classroom challenges, while Garcia (2022) complemented this finding by showing that teachers maintaining a positive self-concept are more advanced in their pedagogical approaches. A comprehensive correlational study by Johnson *et al.* (2024) further illuminated this complex landscape, examining 247 K-12 public school teachers in California and uncovering a statistically significant negative correlation between occupational stress and self-esteem, thereby emphasizing the urgent need for targeted mental health interferences and support systems within educational institutions to protect educators' psychological well-being and professional efficacy.

Additionally, previous studies have examined links between individual variables and teacher self-esteem, and critical gaps persist in the perception of the collective, multivariate impacts on teacher self-concept (McIntyre *et al.*, 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2022). Few studies have tested the interconnection with multiple variables to see how collaboratively boosting leadership, development, and well-being may together elevate teacher self-esteem (Gkolia *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, there is an absence of focused inquiry on public elementary educators, who are likely to face unique challenges affecting self-concept (Zee & Koomen, 2021). Notably, most research uses correlation, regression, or qualitative methods unable to determine directional predictive things among variables (Liaw, 2022), with structural equation modeling remaining underutilized in this field (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2022).

Moreover, the research urgently addresses a critical gap in educational development by directly aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), recognizing that teacher self-esteem and well-being are foundational to improving global educational outcomes. Grounded in the UN's 2019 educational development report, this study illuminates the profound interconnection between institutional support, teacher professional confidence, and instructional effectiveness, presenting a compelling imperative for comprehensive intervention strategies. By systematically investigating the mechanisms that can enhance educators' psychological resilience and professional self-perception, the research offers actionable insights that transcend local contexts, potentially transforming educational systems worldwide. The study's strategic approach not only underscores the importance of protecting and nurturing educators as the primary agents of learning but also provides a rigorous, evidence-based framework for policymakers, school administrators, and educational stakeholders to develop targeted support systems that can meaningfully elevate the quality, equity, and inclusive of educational experiences globally.

The primary goal of this study is to find the structural model that best fits self-esteem among public elementary schools in Region XII. Specifically, this study aims to describe the level of instructional leadership behavior of school heads in terms of

instructional resource provider; maintain visible presence; professional development; monitoring students' progress; feedback on teaching learning; and curriculum implementation, determine the level of teachers' work values, assess the level of teachers' mental health in terms of authority; ambition; enjoyment; variety; autonomy; social justice; environmental sustainability; helping and supporting; rule respecting; traditional values; and safety, ascertain the level of teachers' mental health in terms of sleep; wellbeing (a and b); positive mental health; bouncing back; stress of levels, describe the level of self-esteem among teachers in terms of acceptance of profession; pride in the profession; value of the profession; belief in professional capabilities; belief in functionality of profession, and establish the significance of the relationship between instructional leadership behavior, work values, mental health, and self-esteem. Moreover, this study seeks to find the best-fit model that predicts the self-esteem of public elementary teachers.

The null hypotheses of the study posit that there is no statistically significant correlation between: instructional leadership behavior and work values, instructional leadership behavior and mental health, instructional leadership behavior and self-esteem, work values and mental health, work values and self-esteem, and mental health and self-esteem among public elementary school teachers and heads. These null hypotheses suggest that the variables under investigation are independent of each other and that any observed relationships can be attributed to random chance rather than meaningful underlying connections.

This study is anchored in William James's Self-Esteem Theory (1890), which defines self-regard as the weight between accomplishments and perceived merit. This theory directly connects the variables in the study by explaining how teachers' self-esteem is influenced by their ability to meet aspirations and achieve professional goals. In the educational context, the theory reveals how teachers' self-worth is tied to their success in achieving classroom management, goal setting, and student outcomes. By highlighting the dynamic nature of self-esteem and its dependency on achieving realistic goals, James's theory serves as the central framework for interpreting how instructional leadership, work values, and mental health impact teachers' self-esteem.

Supporting this foundational theory are several complementary frameworks. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985) emphasizes the fulfillment of three psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—as essential to enhancing teacher self-esteem. This theory proposes that school environments fostering these needs, through leadership that respects autonomy and facilitates professional development, significantly boost teachers' intrinsic motivation and professional satisfaction. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977) further enriches the study by linking belief in one's abilities to develop motivation and resilience. In the context of teacher self-esteem, Bandura's framework suggests that teachers with high self-efficacy are more confident, persistent, and effective, with their self-esteem reinforced by positive experiences such as mentorship and constructive feedback.

Additionally, Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values (2015) provides insights into the role of work values in teachers' self-esteem. By identifying key dimensions such as openness to change, self-enhancement, conservation, and self-transcendence, Schwartz's theory explains how value alignment between teachers' personal beliefs and professional environments fosters higher self-esteem, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Together, these theoretical frameworks offer a comprehensive understanding of how instructional leadership, work values, and mental health influence teacher self-esteem. The connection of these theories highlights a nuanced view of teacher dynamics, with James's Self-Esteem Theory serving as the anchor and the supporting theories providing additional dimensions to the analysis. This integrative approach underscores the importance of fostering positive leadership, work value alignment, and self-efficacy to enhance teacher self-esteem and overall educational outcomes.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) presents the hypothesized relationships between instructional leadership, work values, mental health, and teacher self-esteem. The rectangular shapes denote the key variables or constructs, such as instructional leadership behaviors, teachers' work values, and mental health components. Single-headed arrows connecting the constructs indicate hypothesized direct causal relationships. The arrows signify how leadership practices directly influence aspects of teacher guidance and growth. Likewise, arrows linking reflect how mental health dimensions impact self-esteem. By synthesizing theories and providing visual representation, the framework illustrates how these interconnected variables contribute to understanding and enhancing teacher self-esteem in elementary schools.

In connection, it highlights the interaction of instructional leadership, work values, and mental health in shaping teacher self-esteem among public elementary schools. The connections involving these constructs are informed by empirical studies that substantiate their relevance and interdependence. Instructional leadership is shown to positively influence teacher self-esteem by providing guidance and fostering professional development, which enhances teachers' sense of competence and belonging. Similarly, strong work values, including a focus on social justice and environmental sustainability, contribute significantly to teachers' self-esteem by highlighting their professional identity and sense of purpose. Mental health factors, such as well-being and resilience, are also essential in sustaining high self-esteem, as they directly impact teachers' ability to manage stress and maintain a positive outlook on their roles. This framework underscores the importance of addressing all these factors to create a holistic support system for teachers, ultimately benefiting both their personal well-being and professional effectiveness.

2. Literature Review

Research underlines the significant impact of instructional leadership on teacher performance and well-being. Studies suggest that effective instructional leaders foster a culture of collaboration, provide meaningful feedback, and support professional growth,

which collectively enhance teachers' morale and self-esteem. Moreover, instructional leadership practices such as observing student progress and curriculum implementation are found to positively influence teaching efficacy and job satisfaction, as evidenced by Piazza *et al.* (2023), who examined the transformative potential of instructional leadership in contemporary educational settings.

Furthermore, complementing the insights on instructional leadership, modern research by Rodriguez and Chang (2022) highlights the critical role of emotional intelligence and adaptive leadership strategies in educational management. Their study demonstrates that instructional leaders who exhibit high emotional intelligence can more effectively navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, create supportive work environments, and directly impact teachers' psychological resilience. By implementing directed professional development programs and establishing mentorship frameworks, these leaders can mitigate workplace stress and promote a more positive organizational culture. The research emphasizes that strategic leadership interventions not only improve individual teacher performance but also contribute to overall institutional effectiveness and educational quality.

Recent research by Liu *et al.* (2023) further illuminates the significance of work values in educational settings, particularly in the context of professional resilience and organizational commitment. Their study reveals that teachers who prioritize intrinsic values such as personal growth, social impact, and collaborative learning experience enhanced job satisfaction and psychological well-being. The research reveals that educational institutions that actively support and align with teachers' core values can create more meaningful work environments, reduce professional burnout, and foster a sense of purpose. By recognizing and integrating individual value systems into organizational culture, schools can develop more supportive, adaptive, and emotionally intelligent professional ecosystems that directly contribute to improved educational outcomes and teacher retention.

In connection, building upon these insights, Chen and Martinez (2024) handled a comprehensive study exploring the intersection of work values and professional development in educational contexts. Their research emphasizes the transformative potential of value-aligned professional learning communities, highlighting how collaborative environments that respect individual teachers' core values can significantly enhance motivation and job satisfaction. The study argues that schools implementing adaptive professional development strategies that acknowledge and integrate teachers' personal and professional value systems demonstrate improved organizational resilience, increased teacher engagement, and more effective knowledge sharing. By creating frameworks that recognize the unique value orientations of educators, educational institutions can cultivate more supportive, innovative, and psychologically maintainable workplace cultures that directly contribute to enhanced educational quality and teacher well-being.

Mental health is a vital component of teachers' well-being, influencing their capacity to manage classroom challenges and maintain positive relationships with

students. Research by Thompson *et al.* (2023) highlights the role of emotional resilience and stress management in sustaining teacher effectiveness. Positive mental health factors, such as adequate sleep and emotional recovery ("bouncing back"), are strongly correlated with improved job performance and self-esteem. Teachers with reduced stress levels and strong mental health frameworks are better equipped to navigate the demands of the profession. The study emphasizes the critical need for comprehensive mental health support systems in educational settings, demonstrating how targeted interventions can significantly improve teachers' psychological well-being and professional performance.

Additionally, complementing Thompson *et al.*'s research, García-Morales *et al.* (2022) conducted a comprehensive study examining the intersectionality of mental health, professional resilience, and organizational support in educational environments. Their findings reveal that educational institutions implementing holistic mental health strategies—including peer support networks, professional counseling services, and stress management workshops—experience significant improvements in teacher well-being and organizational effectiveness. The research underscores the importance of proactive mental health interventions that address the unique psychological challenges faced by educators, particularly in high-stress educational contexts. By creating adaptive support structures that recognize the complex emotional demands of teaching, schools can foster a more supportive, psychologically sustainable workplace that enhances teachers' emotional regulation, professional satisfaction, and overall psychological well-being.

This research highlights the critical role of teacher self-esteem in achieving the United

Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by demonstrating how strategic leadership, professional development, and welfare interventions enhance educators' well-being and instructional effectiveness. Grounded in theories of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985), it emphasizes that fostering teacher self-esteem through autonomy, skill development, and systemic support benefits both educators and students. These efforts improve mental health, job satisfaction, and resilience, creating a ripple effect that enhances classroom dynamics and educational quality. This multidimensional approach offers actionable insights for policymakers and educational leaders, supporting inclusive and equitable education worldwide while advancing sustainable development.

3. Material and Methods

This study utilized four instruments, each designed to address specific research variables: instructional leadership behavior of school heads, teachers' work values, mental health, and self-esteem. The survey questionnaires were sourced from existing, validated research instruments. Specifically, the instructional leadership questionnaire was adapted from Akram, Kiran, and İLĞAN (2017); the teachers' work values questionnaire from Albrecht, Marty, and Jones (2020); the mental health questionnaire from Jimenez (2021); and the self-esteem questionnaire from Iqbal, Bibi, and Gul (2016).

The instruments underwent a rigorous validation process by a panel of seven experts with doctoral qualifications, achieving an average content validity rating of 4.55 out of 5.0. Pilot testing further established the reliability of the instruments, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha scores. The instructional leadership variable had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.97, the teachers' work values variable scored 0.92, the mental health variable scored 0.91, and the self-esteem variable scored 0.84. These results indicate a high level of reliability for each instrument.

The means of the variables were interpreted using the following scales: a range of 4.20–5.00 is very high and it signifies the variable is always observed or manifested; 3.40–4.19 is high and it indicates often observed or manifested; 2.60–3.39 is moderate and it reflects sometimes observed or manifested; 1.80–2.59 is low and it denotes rarely observed or manifested; and 1.00–1.79 is very low and it represents almost not observed or manifested. These scales were applied to measure the level of instructional leadership behavior, work values, mental health, and self-esteem among respondents.

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design utilizing path analysis. This design was chosen to investigate the relationships among school heads' instructional leadership behavior, teachers' work values, mental health, and self-esteem. Descriptive-correlational research is well-suited for exploring the nature and strength of associations between variables without manipulating them, as highlighted by Creswell (2014). Path modeling, a structural equation modeling technique, was used to identify direct and indirect relationships among the variables and to find the best structural model that explains teacher self-esteem among public elementary school teachers in the Department of Education, Region XII.

The specific approach used in this study combined descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and path analysis. Descriptive statistics provided insights into the levels of instructional leadership behavior, work values, mental health, and self-esteem. Correlation analysis was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationships among these variables. Path analysis allowed the examination of complex relationships, revealing both direct effects of instructional leadership on teacher self-esteem and indirect effects mediated by work values and mental health. This methodology facilitated the identification of leadership behaviors and constructs that significantly influence teacher self-esteem, offering practical implications for improving teacher welfare and leadership practices.

The data collection procedures followed a systematic process. First, all necessary documents for conducting the study were prepared and submitted to the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) for approval. These documents included letters signed by the Dean of Professional Schools and the researcher's adviser. Once the UMERC Certificate of Approval was secured, pilot testing of the research instruments commenced to validate their reliability and relevance. Afterwards, the validated instruments were submitted for approval to the DepEd Regional Director of Region XII. Upon approval, 400 copies of the survey instruments were reproduced and distributed

based on a predefined schedule. Requests to distribute the questionnaires were coordinated with the division offices in Region XII through formal letters.

Statistical analysis employed various tools to examine the data effectively, beginning with mean calculations to assess variable levels and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to measure relationships between independent and dependent variables, followed by path analysis, which integrated multiple regression and factor analysis to estimate complex dependence relationships and evaluate the hypothesized model, where the model's goodness of fit was assessed using indices such as Chi-square/degrees of freedom (threshold <3), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (all should exceed 0.90 for a good fit), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (should be below 0.08 for acceptable fit and below 0.05 for excellent fit), with variables showing weak correlations being excluded from refining the model and ensuring it met validity and reliability standards for understanding teacher self-esteem.

Ethical considerations were integral to the conduct of this study. The research adhered to the ethical guidelines set by UMERC, ensuring confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, and respect for respondent privacy. The study was approved by UMERC under protocol number UMERC-2024-235. Key ethical principles such as avoiding plagiarism, securing permissions from organizations, preventing falsification of data, and mitigating conflicts of interest were strictly observed throughout the research process. Comprehensive training on ethical research practices was provided to all team members prior to the study's commencement. Furthermore, any unforeseen ethical issues were promptly addressed following established protocols to maintain trust and accountability. In addition, the research team-maintained transparency in the reporting of results, ensuring that all findings, whether positive or negative, were presented honestly and without bias. All participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences, further reinforcing the commitment to ethical standards.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and findings of the study. The first part describes the level of instructional leadership behavior of school heads, teachers' work values, mental health, and self-esteem. On the other hand, the second part presents the significance of the relationship between the instructional leadership behavior of school heads, teacher's work values, mental health, and self-esteem. Then, the third part presents the different generated Path Models on teachers' self-esteem in the Department of Education, Region XII.

4.1 Instructional Leadership of School Heads

Table 1 reveals that the overall mean score for the level of instructional leadership behavior of school heads is 4.36, interpreted as *very high*, indicating that their behaviors

are *always observed or manifested*. Among the specific indicators, the highest mean score was for "Curriculum Implementation" at 4.50, also interpreted as *very high*, suggesting that school heads consistently provide exceptional guidance and support for curriculum implementation. Conversely, the lowest mean score was for "Instructional Resource Provider" at 4.20, which, while still interpreted as *very high*, implies that this behavior is also always observed or manifested, albeit slightly less consistently compared to curriculum-related support. These results underscore the consistent and effective instructional leadership demonstrated by school heads in these key areas.

Table 1: Level of Instructional Leadership Behavior of School Heads

| Indicator | SD | Mean | D.E. |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Instructional Resource Provider | 0.592 | 4.20 | Very High |
| Maintain Visible Presence | 0.593 | 4.39 | Very High |
| Professional Development | 0.704 | 4.31 | Very High |
| Maximize Instructional Time | 0.547 | 4.48 | Very High |
| Monitoring Students' Progress | 0.667 | 4.26 | Very High |
| Feedback on Teaching Learning | 0.618 | 4.41 | Very High |
| Curriculum Implementation | 0.569 | 4.50 | Very High |
| Overall | 0.546 | 4.36 | Very High |

The findings align with previous research, such as the study by Ibrahim (2019) that found a strong correlation between principals' instructional leadership behaviors and school effectiveness. This aligns with the current findings, showing teachers perceive their school heads as providing high levels of instructional leadership. Overall, the table demonstrates that the elementary teachers in this study feel their school heads are exhibiting very high levels of instructional leadership behaviors across multiple key indicators.

4.2 Work Values

Table 2 reveals that the overall mean score for the level of work values among elementary school teachers is 4.39, interpreted as very high, indicating that these work values are always observed or manifested in their roles. The highest mean score was for "Environmental Sustainability" at 4.63, also interpreted as very high, signifying that teachers consistently demonstrate a strong commitment to practices that support environmental sustainability. In contrast, the lowest mean score was for "Authority" at 3.81, interpreted as high, which suggests that while authority-related values are often observed or manifested, they are less consistently emphasized compared to environmental sustainability.

Table 2: Level of Work Values

| Indicators | SD | Mean | D.E. |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Authority | 0.726 | 3.81 | High |
| Ambition | 0.534 | 4.27 | Very High |
| Enjoyment | 0.535 | 4.44 | Very High |
| Variety | 0.467 | 4.37 | Very High |
| Autonomy | 0.586 | 4.14 | High |
| Social Justice | 0.458 | 4.61 | Very High |
| Environmental Sustainability | 0.474 | 4.63 | Very High |
| Helping and Supporting | 0.443 | 4.48 | Very High |
| Rule Respecting | 0.509 | 4.46 | Very High |
| Traditional Values | 0.541 | 4.46 | Very High |
| Safety | 0.451 | 4.61 | Very High |
| Overall | 0.357 | 4.39 | Very High |

The findings align with previous research, such as the study by Lucman and Rivera (2020) found a positive correlation between teachers' high work values and student achievement, as well as teacher satisfaction. This aligns with the current findings showing teachers perceive themselves as having very high levels of work values across multiple areas. Overall, the table demonstrates that the elementary teachers in this study have a strong commitment to their work values, with particularly high emphasis on environmental sustainability, social justice, and safety.

4.3 Mental Health

Table 3 shows that the overall mean score for the level of mental health among elementary teachers is 3.89, interpreted as *high*, indicating that their mental health-related behaviors are *often observed or manifested*. Among the specific indicators, the highest mean score was for "Positive Mental Health" at 4.44, interpreted as *very high*, suggesting that teachers consistently exhibit positive mental health behaviors. Conversely, the lowest mean score was for "Stress Level of Teacher" at 3.20, interpreted as *moderate*, implying that stress-related behaviors are only sometimes observed or manifested.

Table 3: Level of Mental Health

| Indicators | SD | Mean | D.E. |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Sleep | 0.638 | 3.69 | High |
| Wellbeing A | 0.476 | 4.40 | Very High |
| Wellbeing B | 0.819 | 3.63 | High |
| Positive Mental Health | 0.504 | 4.44 | Very High |
| Bouncing Back | 0.682 | 4.01 | High |
| Stress Level of Teacher | 0.892 | 3.20 | Moderate |
| Overall | 0.421 | 3.89 | High |

The findings align with previous research, such as the study by Doyle *et al.* (2024) that found teachers who used cognitive reappraisal strategies reported lower burnout levels. This relates to the current findings showing the teachers have a high overall level of mental health. Additionally, the use of adaptive coping mechanisms may contribute to the teachers' resilience, further emphasizing the importance of mental health support. In summary, the table demonstrates that the elementary teachers in this study generally perceive themselves as having a high level of mental health, with strengths in areas like wellbeing and positive mental health. The one area of potential concern is their moderate stress levels, which is an important factor to consider for supporting teacher well-being. Addressing stress through targeted interventions could help sustain the teachers' health.

4.4 Self-Esteem

Table 4 shows that the overall mean score for the level of self-esteem among elementary teachers is 4.35, interpreted as *very high*, indicating that self-esteem-related behaviors are *always observed or manifested*. The highest mean score was for "Belief in Functionality of Profession" at 4.46, also interpreted as *very high*, suggesting that teachers consistently demonstrate a strong belief in the significance and functionality of their profession. In contrast, the lowest mean score was for "Acceptance of Profession" at 4.20, which, while still interpreted as *very high*, indicates that behaviors related to fully embracing their profession are always observed but slightly less consistently compared to their belief in the profession's functionality. These results reflect the teachers' strong overall sense of self-esteem, particularly regarding their professional value and purpose. This slight discrepancy between belief in functionality and acceptance suggests that while teachers strongly recognize the importance and impact of their work, there may be personal or external factors affecting their full professional acceptance, though both aspects remain at very high levels.

Table 4: Level of Self-Esteem

| Indicators | SD | Mean | D.E. |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Acceptance of Profession | 0.569 | 4.20 | Very High |
| Pride in the Profession | 0.523 | 4.45 | Very High |
| Value of the Profession | 0.546 | 4.37 | Very High |
| Belief in Professional Capabilities | 0.531 | 4.26 | Very High |
| Belief in Functionality of Profession | 0.527 | 4.46 | Very High |
| Overall | 0.479 | 4.35 | Very High |

The findings align with recent studies conducted which emphasize the significant role of self-esteem in educators' professional and psychological well-being. For example, Rodríguez and Chen (2024) highlighted that high self-esteem among teachers enhances resilience to stress and reduces the likelihood of burnout. Similarly, Sánchez-Martínez *et al.* (2022) found that elevated self-esteem fosters greater job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation, contributing to improved classroom dynamics and student outcomes. These contemporary findings support the current study, which demonstrates that elementary

teachers possess a very high level of self-esteem across multiple professional indicators, consistently manifested in their work and attitudes.

4.5 Correlation between Instructional Leadership of School Heads and Self-Esteem of Teachers

Table 5 reveals a significant positive relationship ($r=0.354$, $p=0.000$) between the instructional leadership behaviors of school heads and the self-esteem of elementary teachers, indicating that these behaviors are *always observed or manifested*. The strongest correlation was found between "Curriculum Implementation" ($r=0.389$) and teacher self-esteem, suggesting that when school heads actively engage in curriculum oversight and development, teachers consistently experience enhanced confidence and a strong sense of professional worth. Similarly, correlations between "Maintaining Visible Presence" ($r=0.357$) and "Providing Feedback" ($r=0.368$) with teacher self-esteem also show that these leadership behaviors are frequently observed and positively impact teachers' self-esteem. These results emphasize the critical role of active instructional leadership in consistently supporting and reinforcing teachers' self-esteem.

Table 5: Significance of the Relationship between Instructional Leadership Behavior of School Heads and Self-Esteem of Teachers

| Instructional Leadership Behavior | Self-Esteem | | | Belief in Professional Capabilities | Belief in Functionality of Profession | Overall |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| | Acceptance of Profession | Pride in the Profession | Value of the Profession | | | |
| Instructional Resource Provider | .180* (0.001) | .282* (0.000) | .254* (0.000) | .167* (0.002) | .302* (0.000) | .265* (0.000) |
| Maintain Visible Presence | .215* (0.000) | .444* (0.000) | .316* (0.000) | .203* (0.000) | .419* (0.000) | .357* (0.000) |
| Professional Development | .193* (0.000) | .345* (0.000) | .184* (0.001) | .135* (0.012) | .309* (0.000) | .260* (0.000) |
| Maximize Instructional Time | .188* (0.000) | .401* (0.000) | .250* (0.000) | .167* (0.002) | .395* (0.000) | .312* (0.000) |
| Monitoring Students' Progress | .174* (0.001) | .304* (0.000) | .242* (0.000) | .187* (0.000) | .320* (0.000) | .274* (0.000) |
| Feedback on Teaching Learning | .272* (0.000) | .406* (0.000) | .334* (0.000) | .270* (0.000) | .360* (0.000) | .368* (0.000) |
| Curriculum Implementation | .235* (0.000) | .461* (0.000) | .333* (0.000) | .259* (0.000) | .448* (0.000) | .389* (0.000) |
| Overall | .233* (0.000) | .421* (0.000) | .304* (0.000) | .221* (0.000) | .406* (0.000) | .354* (0.000) |

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

The findings align with recent research, such as the study by Rodriguez and Chen (2024), which found that instructional leadership behaviors, including providing clear guidance and fostering professional development, positively impact teachers' self-esteem and resilience. Similarly, Sánchez-Martínez *et al.* (2022) highlighted that effective leadership behaviors, such as offering feedback and promoting professional growth, strengthen teachers' belief in their professional capabilities and enhance their overall self-esteem. This connection is particularly relevant for elementary teachers, as evidenced by the current study. The data suggests that when school heads effectively balance their instructional leadership roles, they foster an environment that supports both professional and personal growth, ultimately enhancing teacher self-esteem.

4.6 Correlation between Work Values and Self-Esteem of Teachers

The findings from Table 2 reveal significant insights into elementary school teachers' work values, with an impressive overall mean score of 4.39 that falls within the "very high" category. This score suggests that teachers consistently demonstrate and embody these work values in their professional roles. Environmental Sustainability emerged as the highest-rated value with a mean score of 4.63 (very high), demonstrating that teachers place paramount importance on and regularly implement environmentally conscious practices in their work. Conversely, Authority received the lowest mean score at 3.81, which, while still categorized as "high," indicates that teachers place relatively less emphasis on authority-related values compared to environmental concerns. This pattern suggests that while elementary school teachers maintain a strong commitment to authority in their professional practice, they particularly excel in and prioritize environmental sustainability initiatives, reflecting a value system that emphasizes ecological responsibility over hierarchical structures.

Table 6: Significance of the Relationship between Work Values and Self-Esteem

| Work Values | Self-Esteem | | | Belief in Professional Capabilities | Belief in Functionality of Profession | Overall |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| | Acceptance of Profession | Pride in the Profession | Value of the Profession | | | |
| Authority | .122* (0.023) | -.026 (0.630) | .065 (0.225) | .213* (0.000) | .074 (0.169) | .102 (0.055) |
| Ambition | .282* (0.000) | .367* (0.000) | .422* (0.000) | .389* (0.000) | .482* (0.000) | .436* (0.000) |
| Enjoyment | .502* (0.000) | .535* (0.000) | .474* (0.000) | .490* (0.000) | .520* (0.000) | .568* (0.000) |
| Variety | .443* (0.000) | .413* (0.000) | .437* (0.000) | .490* (0.000) | .513* (0.000) | .517* (0.000) |
| Autonomy | .317* (0.000) | .299* (0.000) | .344* (0.000) | .270* (0.000) | .327* (0.000) | .350* (0.000) |
| Social Justice | .465* (0.000) | .598* (0.000) | .615* (0.000) | .441* (0.000) | .497* (0.000) | .589* (0.000) |
| Environmental Sustainability | .433* (0.000) | .495* (0.000) | .499* (0.000) | .308* (0.000) | .367* (0.000) | .474* (0.000) |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Helping and Supporting | .519* (0.000) | .592* (0.000) | .590* (0.000) | .456* (0.000) | .500* (0.000) | .599* (0.000) |
| Rule Respecting | .284* (0.000) | .394* (0.000) | .318* (0.000) | .218* (0.000) | .369* (0.000) | .356* (0.000) |
| Traditional Values | .397* (0.000) | .516* (0.000) | .551* (0.000) | .406* (0.000) | .413* (0.000) | .514* (0.000) |
| Safety | .490* (0.000) | .562* (0.000) | .551* (0.000) | .432* (0.000) | .534* (0.000) | .578* (0.000) |
| Overall | .544* (0.000) | .596* (0.000) | .618* (0.000) | .532* (0.000) | .585* (0.000) | .647* (0.000) |

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

The research findings indicate that elementary teachers' work values involving environmental sustainability ($r=0.474$) and social justice ($r=0.589$) have strong positive relationships with their self-esteem. This suggests that teachers who prioritize these broader societal concerns in their work tend to have a heightened sense of professional worth and belonging. Overall, the data shows a strong positive relationship between elementary teachers' work values and their self-esteem, with the most significant connections revolving around collaborative, supportive, and intrinsic aspects of their work. This aligns with previous research finding that higher levels of intrinsic work values, such as meaningful interactions with students and personal growth, are significantly associated with higher self-esteem among teachers (Wang & Chen, 2019).

Furthermore, teachers who embrace values like sustainability and social justice may feel more empowered to make a positive impact, further boosting their confidence and job satisfaction. This reinforces the idea that integrating such values into the educational framework could lead to greater teacher well-being and effectiveness. These results also emphasize the importance of aligning personal and professional values in fostering a positive, supportive work environment.

4.7 Correlation between Mental Health and Self-Esteem of Teachers

The research findings indicate a significant positive relationship between mental health and self-esteem among elementary teachers, with the strongest correlation observed between "Wellbeing A" and self-esteem ($r = 0.756$), suggesting that teachers' overall psychological wellness and sense of well-being are *always observed or manifested* in their self-esteem. Similarly, "Bouncing Back" shows a moderately strong correlation ($r = 0.558$), highlighting the importance of resilience and coping abilities in teachers' self-worth. In contrast, the correlation between "Stress Level of Teacher" and self-esteem is very low ($r = -0.006$), indicating that stress levels are *rarely observed or manifested* as a factor influencing teachers' self-esteem. These findings suggest that mental health factors such as resilience and overall wellbeing have a more pronounced impact on self-esteem than stress levels.

Table 7: Significance of the Relationship between Mental Health and Self-Esteem

| Mental Health | Self-Esteem | | | Belief in Professional Capabilities | Belief in Functionality of Profession | Overall |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| | Acceptance of Profession | Pride in the Profession | Value of the Profession | | | |
| Sleep | .171* (0.001) | .067 (0.212) | .113* (0.034) | .280* (0.000) | .096 (0.073) | .165* (0.002) |
| Wellbeing A | .617* (0.000) | .745* (0.000) | .677* (0.000) | .624* (0.000) | .701* (0.000) | .756* (0.000) |
| Wellbeing B | .118* (0.027) | .125* (0.019) | .105 (0.051) | .089 (0.095) | .103 (0.055) | .122* (0.023) |
| Positive Mental Health | .346* (0.000) | .373* (0.000) | .398* (0.000) | .419* (0.000) | .390* (0.000) | .432* (0.000) |
| Bouncing Back | .483* (0.000) | .372* (0.000) | .534* (0.000) | .655* (0.000) | .433* (0.000) | .558* (0.000) |
| Stress Level of Teacher | .145* (0.006) | -.102 (0.057) | -.032 (0.548) | -.001 (0.985) | -.046 (0.388) | -.006 (0.918) |
| Overall | .449* (0.000) | .337* (0.000) | .403* (0.000) | .478* (0.000) | .369* (0.000) | .459* (0.000) |

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

The findings underscore the significant connection between elementary teachers' mental health and self-esteem. Supporting teachers' well-being, resilience, and mental health is crucial for enhancing their self-worth and professional confidence. Recent studies, such as those by Rodríguez and Chen (2024), confirm that teachers who experience positive mental health and resilience tend to have higher self-esteem, leading to greater job satisfaction and improved professional performance. Similarly, Sánchez-Martínez *et al.* (2022) emphasize that fostering mental well-being among educators contributes to a positive feedback loop, enhancing both their personal and professional lives. Teachers with higher self-esteem are better equipped to handle classroom challenges, leading to a more fulfilling and productive career.

Additionally, focusing on mental health initiatives can help prevent burnout and stress, which are common issues in the teaching profession. By prioritizing teacher mental health, schools can create a more supportive and effective work environment, ultimately benefiting both educators and students. Moreover, this approach can lead to better student outcomes, as teachers who feel supported and valued are more likely to engage in innovative and effective teaching practices. Investing in teachers' mental health not only improves their well-being but also strengthens the overall educational system.

4.8 Goodness of Fit Measures of the Three Path Analysis Models

To come up with the best fit model that predicts teacher self-esteem in the Department of Education, Region XII, path analysis was applied to three hypothesized models. Table 8 presents the goodness of Fit Measures of the Path Analysis Model 1.

4.9 Generated Path Model 1

As shown in the table, the P-Close value for model 1 is 0.007 which is less than 0.05. The Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom value is 11.625 and the p-value is 0.001. On the other hand, the Goodness of Fit value is 0.984 and the Comparative Fit Index is 0.971, which is greater than 0.95. Additionally, the Normed Fit Index is 0.969 and the Tucker-Lewis Index is 0.487, both are lower than 0.95. The Root Means Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.174 which is greater than 0.05. Thus, this model does not satisfy the criteria needed for this to become the best fit model that predicts teacher self-esteem. While some indicators like the Goodness of Fit and Comparative Fit Index show acceptable values, the concerning RMSEA value coupled with the low Tucker-Lewis Index and significant Chi-Square test suggest that substantial model modifications are needed to achieve a better fitting model. Thus, Model 1 is not the best fit model.

Table 8: Goodness of Fit Measures of Path Analysis Model 1

| Index | Criterion | Model Fit Value |
|---------|---------------|-----------------|
| P-Close | > 0.05 | .007 |
| CMIN/DF | 0 < value < 2 | 11.625 |
| P-value | > 0.05 | .001 |
| GFI | > 0.95 | .984 |
| CFI | > 0.95 | .971 |
| NFI | > 0.95 | .969 |
| TLI | > 0.95 | .828 |
| RMSEA | < 0.05 | .174 |

Legend: CMIN/DF = Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom; NFI = Normed Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Means Square of Error Approximation; Pclose = P of Close Fit; P-value = Probability Level.

4.10 Variable Regression Weights in Path Analysis Model 1

Table 9 presents variable regression weights in Path Analysis Model 1. It has been noted that Generated Model 1 is not the best fit model that predicts teacher self-esteem. However, there are significant findings revealed in this model. It has been found out that instructional leadership behavior and work values have a statistically significant relationship. In addition, teachers' self-esteem has a significant relationship with teachers' work values. However, in this generated model, there is no significant relationship between instructional leaders' behavior of school heads and teachers' mental health.

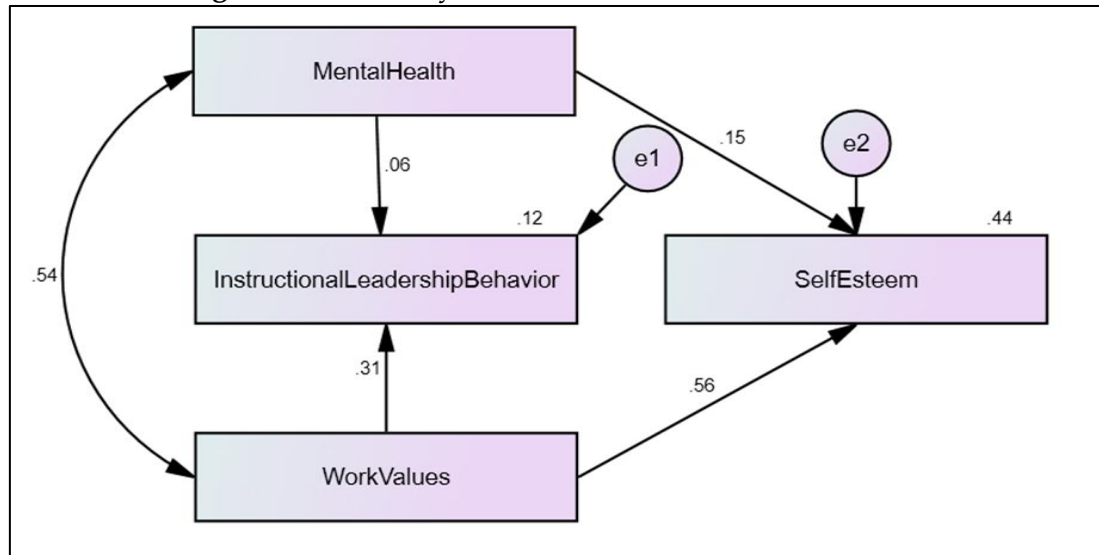
Table 9: Estimates of Variable Regression Weights in Path Analysis Model 1

| | | | B | S.E. | C.R. | BETA | P |
|-----------------------------------|------|---------------|------|------|--------|------|------|
| Instructional Leadership Behavior | <--- | Work Values | .472 | .092 | 5.144 | .308 | *** |
| Self Esteem | <--- | Work Values | .759 | .064 | 11.784 | .565 | *** |
| Self | <--- | Mental Health | .172 | .054 | 3.166 | .152 | .002 |

| | | | B | S.E. | C.R. | BETA | P |
|-----------------------------------|------|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Esteem | | | | | | | |
| Instructional Leadership Behavior | <--- | Mental Health | .077 | .078 | .992 | .059 | .321 |

Note: Chi-square = 11.625; Degrees of freedom = 1; Probability level = .001.

Figure 2: Path Analysis Model 1 in Standardized Solution



Legend: InstructionalLeadershipBehavior = Instructional Leadership Behavior; WorkValues = Work Values; MentalHealth = Mental Health; SelfEsteem = Self-Esteem.

4.11 Generated Path Model 2

Table 10 presents the Goodness of Fit Measures of the generated Path Analysis Model 2. The P-Value is 0.019 which is lower than 0.05 and the CMIN/DF (Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom) value is 9.077. Moreover, the computed p-value is 0.003 that is reasonably lower than the required value, which is 0.05. On the other hand, the Goodness Fit Index and Comparative Fit Index values have computed values of 0.987 and 0.978, which is good because it is higher than the required value, that is 0.95. Additionally, the Normed Fit Index results are also good because the computed value is 0.976, which is greater than the required value, that is 0.95. Also, the Tucker-Lewis Index is 0.870, which is lower than the required value, that is 0.95. Lastly, the Root Means Square of Error Approximation value is 0.152 which is greater than the required value which is 0.05. Thus, it could be concluded that the Generated Model 2 is not the best fit model that predicts teacher self-esteem because it does not satisfy all the criteria needed for it to become the best model.

Based on the comprehensive analysis of Model 2's fit indices, some measures showed promising results, particularly the Goodness Fit Index (0.987), Comparative Fit Index (0.978), and Normed Fit Index (0.976) exceeding the threshold of 0.95, the model exhibits critical limitations in other areas. The concerning RMSEA value of 0.152, which is substantially higher than the acceptable threshold of 0.05, combined with the Tucker-

Lewis Index of 0.870 falling below the required 0.95, indicates significant room for improvement in the model's structural validity. Furthermore, the P-Close value of 0.019 and CMIN/DF of 9.077 suggest that alternative model specifications should be explored to better capture the complex relationships underlying teacher self-esteem prediction.

Table 10: Goodness of Fit Measures of Path Analysis Model 2

| Index | Criterion | Model Fit Value |
|---------|---------------|-----------------|
| P-Close | > 0.05 | .019 |
| CMIN/DF | 0 < value < 2 | 9.077 |
| P-value | > 0.05 | .003 |
| GFI | > 0.95 | .987 |
| CFI | > 0.95 | .978 |
| NFI | > 0.95 | .976 |
| TLI | > 0.95 | .870 |
| RMSEA | < 0.05 | .152 |

Legend: CMIN/DF = Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom; NFI = Normed Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Means Square of Error Approximation; Pclose = P of Close Fit; P-value = Probability Level.

4.12 Variable Regression Weights in Path Analysis Model 2

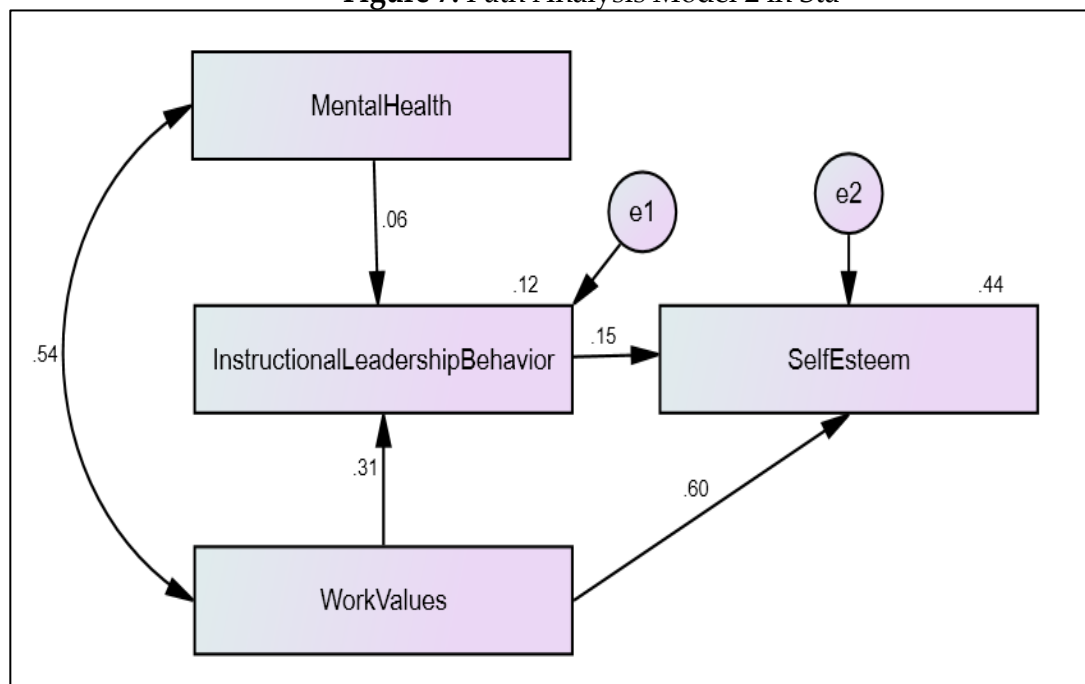
Table 11 presents the estimates of variable regression based on the generated Model 2. It can be gleaned that there is a significant relationship between instructional leadership behavior and teachers' work values. Additionally, there is also a significant relationship between teachers' self-esteem and teachers' work values. On the other hand, there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and instructional leadership. Since the overall p-value of the variables is below 0.05, it means that they are significant predictors of the variables they predicted except the instructional leadership behavior and teacher's mental health with no significant relationship. Since the overall p-value of the variables is below 0.05, it means that they are significant predictors of the variables they predicted.

Table 11: Estimates of Variable Regression Weights in Path Analysis Model 2

| | | | B | S.E. | C.R. | BETA | P |
|-----------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|------|------|--------|------|------|
| Instructional Leadership Behavior | <--- | Work Values | .472 | .092 | 5.144 | .308 | *** |
| Instructional Leadership Behavior | <--- | Mental Health | .077 | .078 | .992 | .059 | .321 |
| Self Esteem | <--- | Work Values | .801 | .057 | 13.981 | .596 | *** |
| Self Esteem | <--- | Instructional Leadership Behavior | .133 | .037 | 3.557 | .152 | *** |

Note: Chi-square = 9.077; Degrees of freedom = 1; Probability level = .003.

Figure 7: Path Analysis Model 2 in Sta



Legend: InstructionalLeadershipBehavior = Instructional Leadership Behavior; WorkValues = Work Values; MentalHealth = Mental Health; SelfEsteem = Self-Esteem.

4.13 Goodness of Fit of Path Analysis Model 3

Table 12 presents the Goodness of Fit results on Model 3 regarding the Path Analysis on self-esteem among elementary school teachers. It could be noted that the P-Value is 0.504, which is greater than 0.05. This suggests that model 3 has a good fit. On the other hand, the CMIN/DF (Chi-Square/degrees of freedom) CMIN/DF measures the relative fit of the model to the data. In this model, the value is 0.982, which falls within the acceptable range, indicating a good fit.

Additionally, the CMIN/DF value is 0.322, which is greater than 0.05. This suggests that the model fits the data well according to this measure. Also, the GFI value is 0.999, which is very close to the ideal threshold, indicating an excellent fit. Additionally, the CFI (Comparative Fit Index) value is 1.000, which is perfect and indicates an excellent fit. Furthermore, the NFI (Normed Fit Index) value is .997, which is very close to the ideal threshold, indicating a good fit. In addition, TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) value is 1.000, which is slightly above the ideal threshold. The value is above 0.95. However, a small deviation still indicates good fit. Lastly, the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value in this model is .000, which is excellent and indicates a very good fit. Overall, Model 3 is the best fit model that predicts teachers' self-esteem in the Department of Education, Region XII.

The exceptional fit indices demonstrated by Model 3 provide strong statistical evidence for its superiority in predicting teacher self-esteem compared to the previously tested models. The combination of a P-Value of 0.504, perfect CFI and TLI values of 1.000, and an RMSEA of .000 suggests that this model captures the underlying relationships with remarkable precision. What makes Model 3 particularly robust is that

it meets or exceeds all conventional thresholds for model fit across multiple indices, indicating that its structural representation of the factors influencing teacher self-esteem is not only statistically sound but also theoretically meaningful. This comprehensive satisfaction of fit criteria suggests that Model 3 provides educational administrators and researchers with a reliable framework for understanding and potentially enhancing teacher self-esteem in the Department of Education, Region XII, making it a valuable tool for both policy development and practical interventions.

Table 12: Goodness of Fit Measures of Path Analysis Model 3

| Index | Criterion | Model Fit Value |
|---------|---------------|-----------------|
| P-Close | > 0.05 | .504 |
| CMIN/DF | 0 < value < 2 | .982 |
| P-value | > 0.05 | .322 |
| GFI | > 0.95 | .999 |
| CFI | > 0.95 | 1.000 |
| NFI | > 0.95 | .997 |
| TLI | > 0.95 | 1.000 |
| RMSEA | < 0.05 | .000 |

Legend: CMIN/DF = Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom; NFI = Normed Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Means Square of Error Approximation; Pclose = P of Close Fit; P-value = Probability Level.

4.14 Variable Regression Weights in Path Analysis Model 3

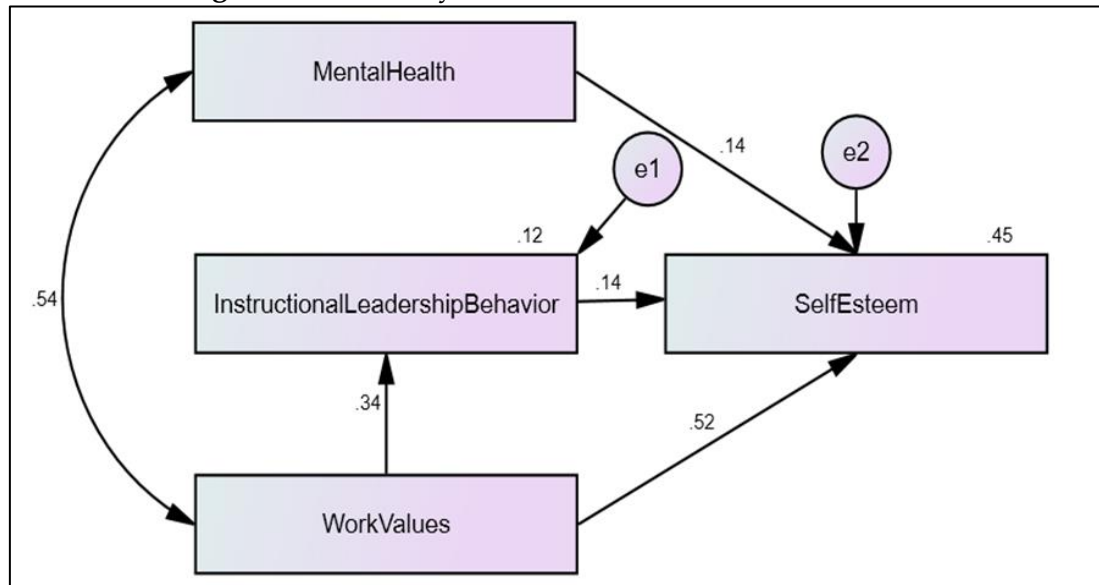
Table 13 shows the estimates of variable regression weights in Path Analysis Model 3. As shown in the table, instructional leadership behavior has a significant relationship with teachers' work values. Also, teachers' work values, mental health, and instructional leadership behavior were found to have a significant relationship with teachers' self-esteem. Thus, it could be concluded that all paths between variables obtained a p-value of less than 0.05, which means that they are significant predictors of the variables they predicted.

Table 13: Estimates of Variable Regression Weights in Path Analysis Model 3

| | | | B | S.E. | C.R. | BETA | P |
|-----------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|------|------|--------|------|------|
| Instructional Leadership Behavior | <--- | Work Values | .521 | .077 | 6.764 | .340 | *** |
| Self Esteem | <--- | Work Values | .699 | .066 | 10.559 | .521 | *** |
| Self Esteem | <--- | Mental Health | .163 | .054 | 3.037 | .143 | .002 |
| Self Esteem | <--- | Instructional Leadership Behavior | .127 | .037 | 3.443 | .145 | *** |

Note: Chi-square = .982; Degrees of freedom =1; Probability level = .322.

Figure 8: Path Analysis Model 3 in Standardized Solution



Legend: InstructionalLeadershipBehavior = Instructional Leadership Behavior; WorkValues = Work Values; MentalHealth = Mental Health; SelfEsteem = Self-Esteem.

4.15 Summary of Generated Path Models

Table 14 shows the summary of the Goodness of Fit Measures of the Three Path Analysis Models. It could be gleaned from the table that Models 1 and 2 are not the Best Fit Models that predict teachers' self-esteem in the Department of Education since it does not satisfy the criteria for the standard fit because of the path modeling of data. It could be noted that the P-Close value is 0.621. This suggests that model 3 has a good fit based on this measure. On the other hand, the CMIN/DF (Chi-Square/degrees of freedom) value is 0.619, which falls within the acceptable range, indicating a good relative fit. The p-value associated with CMIN/DF is 0.431, which is greater than 0.05. This suggests that the model fits the data well according to this measure.

Also, the GFI value is 0.999, which is very close to the ideal value, indicating an excellent fit. Additionally, the CFI (Comparative Fit Index) value is 1.000, which is perfect and indicates an excellent fit. The NFI (Normed Fit Index) value is 0.999, which is very close to the ideal value, indicating a good fit. In addition, TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) value is 1.003, which is slightly above the ideal value. While it is technically above 0.95, such a small deviation still indicates a good fit. Lastly, the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value in this model is .000, which is excellent and indicates a very good fit. Thus, Model 3 is found to be the best-fit model that predicts teacher retention in the Department of Education, Region XII. Model 3 is a product of a seemingly more elaborated theory where there is a removal of weak influencing variables that are observed as not significantly linked to the other variables in other models. This successful refinement process, which led to Model 3's superior fit indices through the strategic removal of weak variables, demonstrates the importance of iterative model development in achieving a more parsimonious and theoretically sound representation of the factors

influencing teacher self-esteem, ultimately providing a more reliable foundation for educational policy and intervention strategies.

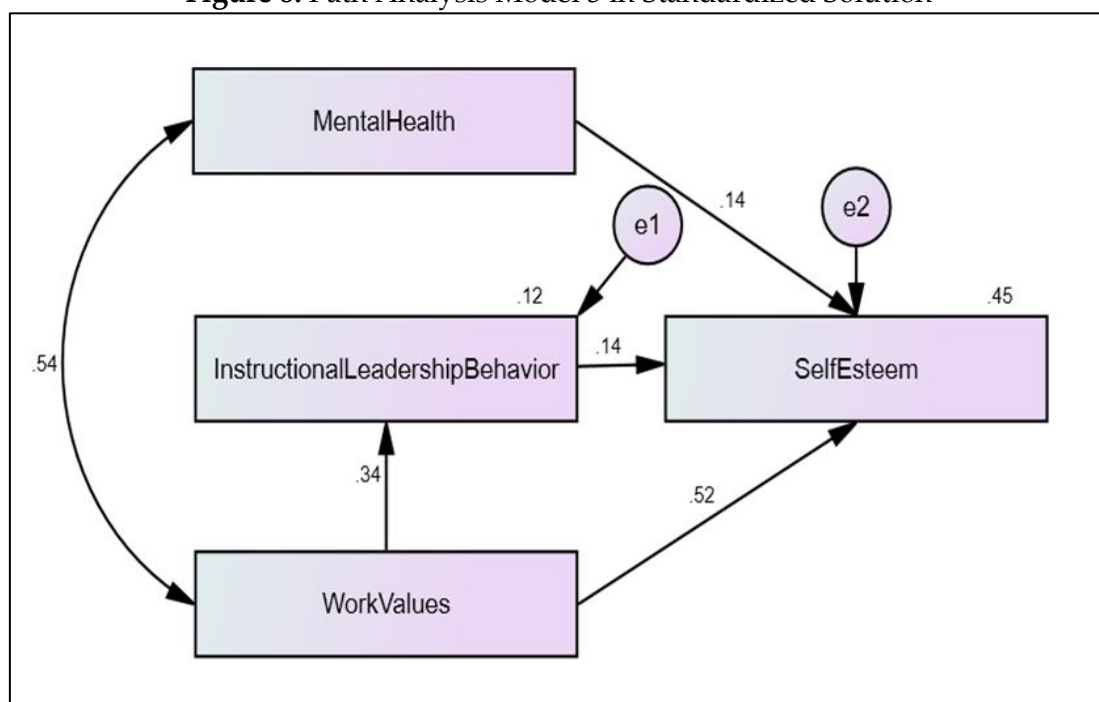
Table 14: Summary of Goodness of Fit Measures of the Three Path Analysis Models

| Model | CMIN/DF 0<value<2 | P-Value > .05 | NFI > .95 | TLI > .95 | CFI > .95 | GFI > .95 | RMSEA < .05 | P-Close > .05 |
|-------|----------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1 | 11.625 | .001 | .969 | .828 | .971 | .984 | .174 | .007 |
| 2 | 9.077 | .003 | .976 | .870 | .978 | .987 | .152 | .019 |
| 3 | .982 | .322 | .997 | 1.000 | 1.000 | .999 | .000 | .504 |

4.16 Best Fit Path Model

Figure 5 shows the Path Analysis Model 3 in Standardized Solution. This portion provides an analysis of the interrelationships among the variables of the study and an assessment of model fit. As shown in Figure 4, the amount of variance explained by the combined influence of teachers' mental health, instructional leadership behavior, and teachers' work values on teachers' self-esteem is 45 percent. On the other hand, 12 percent of the variance of instructional leadership behavior can be attributed to the combined influence of the teachers' work values. In addition, teachers' mental health (beta=0.14), and teachers' work values (beta=0.52) significantly influence teachers' self-esteem ($P < 0.05$). Moreover, instructional leadership behavior (beta=0.14) and teachers' work values (beta=0.52) significantly predict teachers' self-esteem ($P < 0.05$). Lastly, teachers' mental health and teachers' work values (beta=0.54) significantly predict each other ($P < 0.05$).

Figure 8: Path Analysis Model 3 in Standardized Solution



Legend: InstructionalLeadershipBehavior – Instructional Leadership Behavior; WorkValues – Work Values; MentalHealth – Mental Health; SelfEsteem – Self-Esteem

5. Recommendations

To address teacher stress, District Supervisors and School Heads play an important role in implementing a holistic support system that encompasses mental health, professional development, and workplace well-being. Comprehensive wellness programs should be established, including regular recognition initiatives, mental health resources, and stress management workshops. Flexible work arrangements reduce administrative burdens, and additional classroom management support through specialized training and resources can alleviate stress and enhance teacher efficiency. Peer mentorship programs and collaborative environments further foster professional growth, validate teachers' expertise, and promote a positive school culture that prioritizes well-being and autonomy.

For teachers, the journey of professional development and personal well-being is deeply interconnected and complex. Engaging in self-care practices that extend beyond traditional stress management is essential, incorporating holistic approaches such as mindfulness, regular physical exercise, and mental health support. Participation in professional development opportunities allows educators to expand their skills, stay updated with emerging educational technologies, and adapt to evolving pedagogical methodologies. By leveraging peer support networks, teachers gain emotional resilience and collaborative learning opportunities, creating spaces for sharing experiences, addressing challenges, and exploring innovative teaching strategies.

Learners also play a critical role in supporting teachers' professional journeys. By recognizing and respecting the challenges educators face, students contribute to a more empathetic and collaborative classroom dynamic. Active participation in classroom activities, engagement in learning, and maintaining respectful communication help foster a positive learning environment. Such efforts create a supportive atmosphere that acknowledges teachers as dedicated professionals committed to both their growth and their students' success.

Future researchers should adopt context-sensitive, interdisciplinary approaches when studying teacher self-esteem. By considering the influence of geographic and cultural factors, researchers can move beyond surface-level observations and develop a deeper understanding of the complex factors at play. Collaborating across disciplines like psychology, sociology, anthropology, and educational sciences will provide a more holistic perspective and help uncover the nuanced influences on teacher self-esteem.

6. Conclusion

With all the results and inferences gleaned from the results of this research that aims to determine the best fit model that predicts teachers' self-esteem in the Department of Education in Region XII, the following conclusions were made.

Based on the results, several key conclusions can be drawn, highlighting the interplay between instructional leadership, teachers' work values, mental health, and

self-esteem. The findings reveal that teachers' self-esteem is significantly influenced by instructional leadership behaviors exhibited by elementary school heads, as well as the alignment between teachers' work values and their professional identity. Additionally, teachers' mental health plays a role, with manageable stress levels observed among elementary educators. These factors collectively contribute to a very high level of self-esteem among teachers, as evidenced by their pride, belief in professional capabilities, and strong acceptance of their profession.

The study highlights that elementary school heads in Region XII, Department of Education, exhibit exceptionally high levels of instructional leadership, particularly in areas such as providing instructional resources, maintaining visibility, fostering professional development, maximizing instructional time, and monitoring student progress. These leadership behaviors create a supportive environment where teachers feel empowered and guided. Additionally, the study found that teachers' work values, particularly in areas such as environmental sustainability and social justice, are strongly linked to their self-esteem, indicating a high sense of professional worth and belonging. Although teachers' mental health is rated high overall, the presence of moderate stress levels suggests a need for continuous support to ensure long-term well-being. This finding emphasizes the importance of balancing leadership effectiveness with mental health initiatives to foster a positive, sustainable work environment for educators.

The study also emphasizes the best-fit predictive model for teachers' self-esteem (Model 3), which integrates the interplay of leadership behaviors, work values, and mental health. This theoretical alignment draws on established educational psychology frameworks, such as Hallinger and Murphy's Instructional Leadership Model and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Theory, to provide a vigorous understanding of the dynamics at play.

The theoretical underpinnings for the study's results draw on several established frameworks in educational psychology and leadership. These include Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Instructional Leadership Model, which links leadership behavior to teachers' self-esteem; Super's (1990) Career Development Theory, connecting work values to professional identity and self-esteem; Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Theory, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between mental health and self-esteem; Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Transformational Leadership Model, emphasizing visible leadership; Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, explaining the impact of professional development on self-esteem; Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, addressing teacher stress levels; and Kelchtermans' (2009) concept of teacher professional identity, which aligns with the high levels of teacher self-esteem observed. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the complex interactions between instructional leadership, work values, mental health, and teacher self-esteem revealed in the study.

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