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Rural Elementary Teachers' Engagement in LAC Sessions: Links to Enhanced Pedagogical Performance

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Abstract: This study examined the relationship between the implementation of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions and the work performance of public elementary school teachers in hinterland schools. It described the extent of LAC implementation in terms of regularity, relevance, collaboration, mentoring, and contextual responsiveness; determined the level of teachers' work performance based on their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) ratings; and tested the significant relationship between LAC implementation and teacher performance. A descriptive–correlational design was employed using a researcher-made survey questionnaire adapted from existing LAC instruments and DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016. The instrument consisted of Likert-type items on LAC practices and a self-reported IPCRF rating and was administered to public elementary teachers assigned in geographically isolated and disadvantaged hinterland schools. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) and Pearson product–moment correlation. Results revealed that LAC sessions were implemented to a high extent, particularly in promoting collaboration, sharing of best practices, and addressing classroom challenges, although constraints in time, resources, and follow-through mechanisms were noted. Teachers' work performance was generally rated Very Satisfactory to Outstanding. Correlational analysis indicated a positive and significant relationship between the extent of LAC implementation and teachers' work performance, suggesting that more frequent, relevant, and well-facilitated LAC sessions are associated with higher performance levels. The study concludes that strengthening LAC implementation—especially in terms of contextualized content, sustained mentoring, and systematic monitoring—can support continuous professional development and enhance teacher performance in hinterland settings.

Keywords: *Learning Action Cell, Professional Growth, Elementary Teachers, Hinterland Areas, Remote Professional Development, Teacher Competencies.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

➢ *The Problem*

Quality education is the cornerstone of national development and social progress, and its successful delivery in public elementary schools is largely dependent on the competence, commitment, and work performance of teachers. As the primary implementers of the curriculum, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping learners' academic achievement, values formation, and lifelong learning skills. When teachers are adequately equipped with updated pedagogical knowledge, instructional strategies, and professional support, they are more capable of delivering meaningful, learner-centred, and contextually responsive instruction.

In the Philippine basic education system, the State recognizes the vital contribution of teachers in achieving quality education through continuous professional development. This mandate is firmly anchored in Republic Act No. *10533, otherwise known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013*, which emphasizes the strengthening of the curriculum and the enhancement of teachers' competencies to ensure that education remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of learners and society. Consistent with this legal framework, the Department of Education institutionalized the DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, entitled *"The Learning Action Cell (LAC) as a K to 12 Basic Education Program School-Based Continuing Professional Development Strategy for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning."* as a school-based professional development strategy that promotes collaborative learning, reflective practice, and shared accountability among teachers.

Learning Action Cell sessions serve as an essential mechanism in equipping teachers with improved instructional skills, classroom management strategies, assessment practices, and professional competencies. Recent studies affirm that teachers who actively participate in structured and

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collaborative professional learning communities demonstrate higher levels of teaching effectiveness and work performance (Reyes & De Guzman, 2021; Santos et al., 2022). Through LACs, teachers are given opportunities to share best practices, address instructional challenges, and develop contextually appropriate teaching strategies aligned with learners' needs.

However, despite the nationwide implementation of Learning Action Cell sessions, disparities in professional development experiences persist, particularly between teachers assigned in hinterland areas and those in fast and easily accessible locations. Teachers in hinterland elementary schools often encounter unique challenges such as limited access to instructional resources, fewer training opportunities, geographical isolation, and increased teaching responsibilities, all of which may affect their work performance (Cruz & Aquino, 2023; Mateo et al., 2024). In contrast, teachers in accessible areas typically benefit from greater exposure to professional support systems, instructional supervision, and development programs.

Although LACs are designed to address these gaps through school-based and collaborative approaches, recent literature suggests that the extent to which LAC sessions influence teachers' work performance varies depending on school context and location (Delos Reyes & Villanueva, 2022). This underscores the need to examine the effectiveness of Learning Action Cell sessions in strengthening the work performance of teachers specifically assigned in hinterland elementary schools.

It is in this vein that the researcher is motivated to conduct this study to determine the influence of Learning Action Cell sessions as a professional development program on the work performance of elementary teachers in hinterland area schools of Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental, for the School Year 2025–2026. The findings of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence that may guide school administrators and policymakers in enhancing Learning Action Cell implementation and in developing targeted interventions that support teachers in geographically disadvantaged areas, ultimately contributing to the delivery of quality elementary education.

- *Theoretical/Conceptual Framework*

The concept of this study is anchored on research showing the positive influence of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions on teachers' work performance through collaborative professional development (Reyes & De Guzman, 2021).

The paradigm is guided by the Social System Theory of Hall and Fagen (1968), which views the public elementary school as a dynamic social system where inputs, processes, and outputs interact holistically. In this theory, the "whole" school organization exceeds the sum of its parts such as the individual teachers, sessions, and resources that emphasizing relationships and feedback loops that drive system efficiency. For hinterland elementary schools in Medina South District, this means recognizing how geographical isolation and limited support amplify the need for internal system strengths, like LAC sessions, to boost overall performance.

LAC sessions serve as vital inputs structured, school based activities under DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 that introduce collaborative learning, reflective practice, and shared best practices. These inputs flow into processes, such as teacher interactions during sessions, where educators address hinterland-specific challenges like resource scarcity, heavy workloads, and infrequent supervision. Through group discussions, peer observations, and action planning, teachers adapt strategies to local learner needs, creating feedback loops that refine instruction over time.

This interplay generates outputs: enhanced teachers' work performance, measured by instructional effectiveness, classroom management, assessment skills, and learner outcomes. The theory posits that stronger inputs and smoother processes yield better outputs; in hinterlands, effective LACs can bridge disparities by building internal resilience, turning isolation into a catalyst for tailored, context-responsive teaching.

While the theory highlights systemic interconnections, it also implies that inefficiencies like irregular LAC attendance due to travel barriers that will mirror in outputs like stagnant performance. Thus, this study tests whether robust LAC implementation correlates with improved work performance, offering insights for targeted enhancements.

The conceptual framework maps the independent variable is the Learning Action Cell Sessions: dimensions like frequency, content relevance, participation level, and hinterland adaptations that influencing the dependent variable which is the Teachers' Work Performance: domains like teaching strategies, professional competencies, and evaluation ratings. Moderating factors were the hinterland challenges: geography, resources, supervision that shape the process, with feedback reinforcing the system.

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➢ *Schema of the Study*

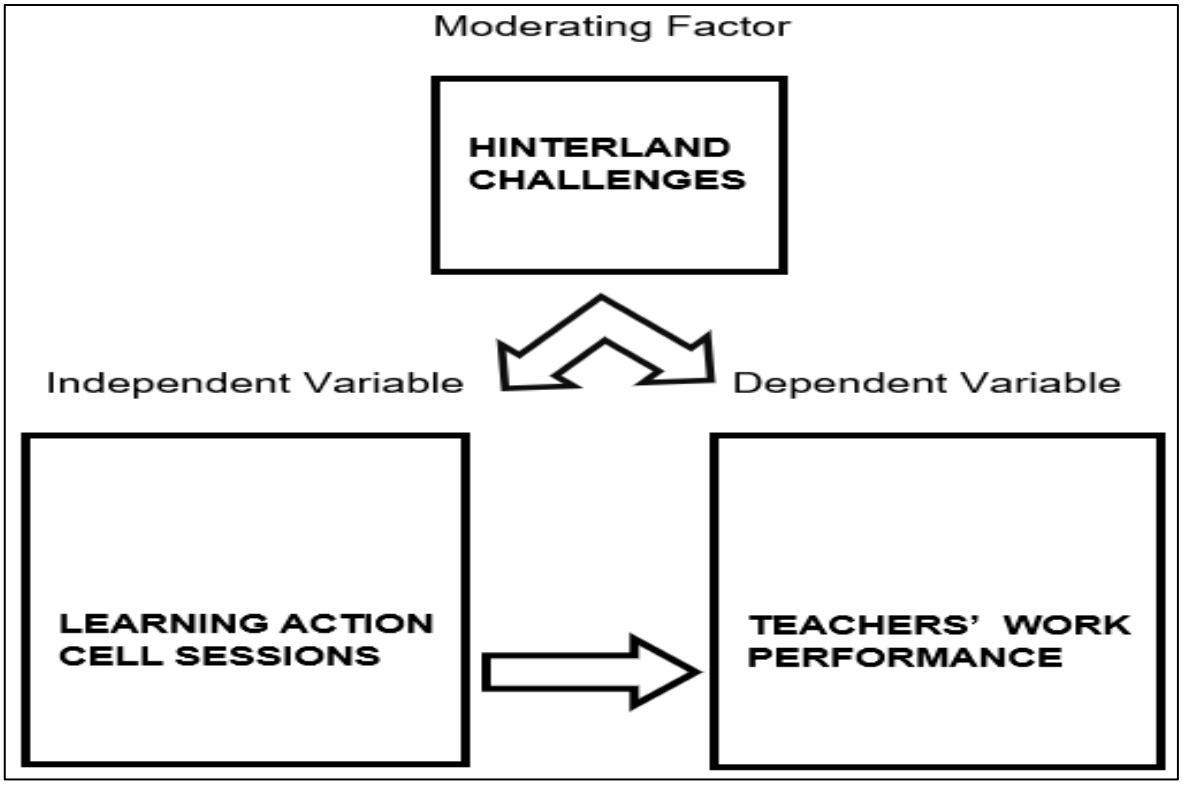

Fig 1 Schematic Diagram Showing the Interplay Between the Moderating Factors, Dependent Variables, and Independent Variables

➢ *Statement of the Problem*

The study aimed to determine the influence of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions on the work performance of elementary teachers in hinterland schools of Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental, for School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the extent of implementation of Learning Action Cell sessions for teachers in hinterland elementary schools of Medina South District?
- What is the level of teachers' work performance based on their Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) overall ratings?
- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' work performance and the extent of Learning Action Cell sessions implementation in hinterland elementary schools of Medina South District?

➢ *Research Hypothesis*

Problems 1 and 2 are hypotheses free. Problem 3 was tested at 0.05 level of significance, where the hypotheses is stated in a null form:

- Ho1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' work performance and the extent of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions implementation in hinterland elementary schools of Medina South District.

➢ *Significance of the Study*

The study on the virtual-based professional development program and teachers' work performance aims to provide significant contributions to the following:

- Students. The students stand to gain the most direct and immediate advantages, as strengthened teacher competencies through LAC sessions directly translate into higher quality instruction, more engaging classroom experiences, improved learner support, and ultimately better academic achievement. In hinterland settings where educational resources are scarce, these enhancements create a stronger foundation for academic success and lifelong learning skills development.
- Parents. The parents and families receive concrete evidence demonstrating the tangible link between teachers' professional development and their children's educational progress, empowering them with knowledge to actively support school initiatives. This understanding fosters greater home-school partnerships, increased community involvement in education programs, and realistic expectations about academic improvement timelines in remote areas.
- Teachers. The teachers benefit from empirical validation of LAC sessions as a legitimate pathway for professional growth and career advancement. The study provides them with data-driven insights into which LAC components most effectively enhance their Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) ratings, instructional skills, classroom management abilities, and overall

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professional confidence—particularly valuable in geographically isolated postings.

- School Principals. The school administrators and principals gain critical, actionable intelligence for strategic LAC implementation. The findings reveal specific strengths and gaps in current practices, enabling targeted improvements in session planning, resource allocation, facilitator training, and monitoring systems that maximize professional development impact within the constraints of hinterland school operations.
- Department of Education. The Education policymakers and DepEd officials acquire robust evidence to inform system-wide improvements in professional development delivery. The study highlights what works and what doesn't in resource-limited contexts, supporting evidence-based refinements to national policies like DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, equitable resource distribution formulas, and scalable models for professional learning that bridge urban-rural divides.
- Researchers. The future researchers and academics inherit a solid methodological foundation, contextualized knowledge base, and clearly defined research gaps for advancing scholarship on school-based professional development. This study serves as a springboard for comparative analyses, longitudinal impact studies, intervention experiments, and policy evaluation research targeting geographically disadvantaged educational settings.

➢ *Scope and Limitation of the Study*

This study focuses specifically on the influence of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions on the work performance of elementary teachers in hinterland schools of Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental, during School Year 2025-2026.

The scope of LAC sessions covers their implementation as school-based professional development under DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, including collaborative learning activities, reflective practice sessions, peer observations, action planning, and sharing of best practices tailored to hinterland teaching challenges.

Teachers' work performance is measured exclusively through their Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) overall ratings, the standard DepEd performance evaluation instrument assessing instructional effectiveness, classroom management, professional competencies, and learner outcomes.

However, several limitations should be noted. The findings apply specifically to hinterland elementary schools in Medina South District and may not generalize to urban or non-hinterland settings. Data relies solely on self-reported IPCRF ratings and LAC implementation records, excluding direct classroom observations. The study captures only a single school year's implementation (2025-2026), limiting longitudinal insights. External factors like teacher turnover, administrative changes, or unforeseen disruptions may also influence results.

➢ *Definition of Terms*

To fully understand the basic and major concepts of this study, the following terms are operationally and conceptually defined:

- Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions. School-based professional development where teachers collaborate through peer discussions, lesson sharing, reflective practice, and action planning to improve teaching practices.

- Individual Performance Commitment Review Form (IPCRF). The individual performance commitment review form is the rating sheets of teachers' overall performance for the school year. The performance rating sheets is composed of key results area or KRA which includes the following; content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, and plus factor. Each of the Key Result Areas has different measures of verifications (MOVs) which proved that the teachers perform both their academic, instructional, and other functions in school and in the community.

- Outstanding Performance. Performance represents an extraordinary level of achievement and commitment in terms of quality and time, technical skills and knowledge, ingenuity, creativity and initiative. Employees at this performance level should have demonstrated exceptional job mastery in all major areas of responsibility. Employees' achievement and contributions to the organization are of marked excellence.

- School-Based Learning Action Cell. Implies the professional development training or colloquium for teachers in the form of seminars, workshops, and conferences which empower teachers to make use of new knowledge and technologies to improve or enhance teaching.

- Poor Performance. Performance was consistently below expectations, and/or reasonable progress towards critical goals was not made. Significant improvement is needed in one or more important areas.

- Satisfactory Performance. Performance met expectations in terms of quality of work, efficiency and timeliness. The most critical annual goals were met.

- Teaching Effectiveness. The teachers' ability to deliver knowledge and facilitate learning to the pupils or teachers' ability to allow pupils develop the desired competencies and achieve the educational objectives through the use of different teaching approaches and methodologies gained from the in-service trainings attended and other continuing professional development programs attended.

- Teachers' work performance. This refers to the ability of classroom teachers to perform the four key results areas, namely; strategic planning, curriculum and instruction,

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community involvement, human resource development, and special tasks given and perform by teachers.

- Teachers' Teaching Strategies. In this study, teachers' teaching strategies, implies to the different teaching approaches utilized by teachers in teaching the subject with the purpose of enhancing students' participation and engagements in class tasks. The focus of the teachers' teaching strategies is to motivate students to increase participation and promote learning.

- Unsatisfactory. Performance failed to meet expectations, and/or one or more of the most critical goals were not met.

- Very Satisfactory Performance. Performance exceeded expectations. All goals, objectives and targets were achieved above the established standards.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section deals with the research design, research environment, research respondents, data collection methods, variable classification, and the statistical techniques used for data analysis.

➢ *Research Design*

The study utilized the descriptive correlational research design. Descriptive research according to Calderon, et al (2012) is a fact-finding inquiry or investigation. It was employed to develop a thorough knowledge of the primary causes of the given situations.

In addition, descriptive design as an inquiry used an in-depth analysis of the problem which data collection methods include, but not limited to the survey questionnaire and the like.

Subsequently, descriptive research design was utilized to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. This method measures variables through the use of quantifiable or finite data and the analysis will be based on generated information from statistical tools. This method was also used in an inquiry with larger population.

Successively, descriptive data gathering procedures comprise different types of gathering information such as, but not limited to, the use of adapted survey questionnaires.

It quantifies variables through numerical data from surveys, enabling statistical analysis suitable for larger populations. Here, it describes the extent of LAC implementation (Problem 1), levels of teachers' work performance via IPCRF ratings (Problem 2), and tests their relationship (Problem 3) without manipulating variables.

➢ *Research Environment*

The study was conducted in hinterland elementary schools of Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental, during School Year 2025-2026. Medina South District comprises remote upland barangays in the municipality of Medina, characterized by high elevations, rugged terrains, and geographical isolation typical of Philippine hinterlands in Mindanao. These areas face challenges like long treks (2-3 hours), frequent fog, limited electricity, and resource scarcity, primarily serving farming and indigenous communities where learners speak Visayan (Cebuano), Filipino, and English.

Population data from the 2020 Census (Philippine Statistics Authority) reveal rural, youthful demographics with steady growth that sustains school enrollment across Medina South District's key hinterland barangays. Barangay Bangbang recorded growth from an estimated 350 residents in 1990 to 520 in 2015 and 590 in 2020 (2.5% rate, adding 70 persons), with approximately 43% young dependents aged 0-14 (~254 individuals), 52% working-age population (15-64 years, ~307), and 5% seniors (65+, ~29). Within Bangbang, Sitio Sidlakan grew from 380 to 560 to 640 residents (2.7% rate, +80 persons), featuring 46% under 15 (~294), 49% working-age (~314), and 5% seniors (~32). Sitio Kibugahan, in Barangay San Isidro and hosting two elementary schools, expanded from 420 to 610 to 690 residents (2.5% growth, +80 persons), with 44% youth (~304), 51% working-age (~352), and 5% elderly (~34). Sitio Labas Pagsama in San Isidro grew from 593 to 794 to 884 (2.29% rate, +90 persons), comprising 44.33% young dependents (352), 51.39% working-age (408), and 4.28% seniors (34). Barangay Mananum Bag-o increased from 450 to 620 to 710 (2.7% growth, +90 persons), with approximately 42% under 15 (~298), 53% working-age (~376), and 5% seniors (~36). Barangay Mananum Daan grew from 500 to 680 to 760 (2.3% rate, +80 persons), showing 45% youth (~342), 50% working-age (~380), and 5% elderly (~38). Barangay San Jose expanded from 650 to 890 to 1,020 (2.8% rate, +130 persons), with 45% young dependents (~459), 50% working-age (~510), and 5% seniors (~51). Barangay San Vicente increased from 550 to 750 to 840 (2.4% rate, +90 persons), featuring 43% youth (~361), 52% working-age (~437), and 5% elderly (~42). Barangay Tambagan, the largest, rose from 700 to 950 to 1,080 (2.6% rate, +130 persons), with 41% youth (~443), 54% working-age (~583), and 5% seniors (~54).

Pupils from these barangays' scattered puroks and sitios attend the schools, supported by approximately 30 teachers across sites (2021-2022 baseline) and led by principals who leverage LAC sessions to overcome infrastructural barriers.

- *Key Schools and their Profiles are Detailed below:*

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Table 1 Demographic Context of Hinterland Barangays in Medina South District

School Name	School ID	Elevation (Approx.)	Terrain Type	Key Challenges	Barangay
Bang-bang Integrated School	502217	1,243 m	High Plateau	Transition zone; extreme elevation	Bangbang
Kibugahan Elementary School	127819	300-400 m	Mountainous	Remote; 2-3 hour trek required	San Isidro
Labas Pagsama Elementary School	127820	400 m (796 m est.)	Upland Ridge	Rural farming; fog-prone	San Isidro
Mananum Bag-o Elementary School	127822	171 m	Hilly	Highland border; cool climate	Mananum Bag-o
Mananum Daan Elementary School	201502	464 m	Upland	Frequent fog; 45-min rough road walk	Mananum Daan
San Jose Elementary School	127827	350+ m	Upland	Isolated; limited electricity	San Jose
San Vicente Elementary School	127829	300+ m	Rugged Hilly	Long travel times; border zone	San Vicente
Sidlakan Elementary School	500254	450+ m	Mountain Peak	Highest isolation; most remote	Bangbang
Tambagan Elementary School	127830	61-200 m	Upland Border	Farming sitio; near municipal limits	Tambagan

Fig 2 Location Map of Medina, Misamis Oriental

➢ *Research Respondents*

The respondents were elementary school teachers from hinterland schools across nine key barangays in Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental: Bangbang (Sitio Sidlakan), San Isidro (including Sitios Kibugahan and Sitio Labas Pagsama), Mananum Bag-o, Mananum Daan, San Jose, San Vicente, and Tambagan.

A purposive sample of 40 teachers was selected based on their direct participation in Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions under DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, and accessibility within these remote areas during School Year 2025-2026.

This sampling ensured representation of educators facing district-specific hinterland challenges, such as geographical isolation, resource scarcity, and long travel times, while aligning with the study's focus on LAC implementation and Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) ratings.

➢ *Research Instrument*

The research instrument was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire adapted and customized from Mendoza et al. (2020) and Reyes & De Guzman (2021), who examined professional development impacts on teacher performance. It aligns specifically with Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions

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under DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, and the study's focus on hinterland contexts.

The questionnaire comprises two validated parts. Part 1 focuses on the extent of LAC implementation through 10 indicators assessing frequency, content relevance, participation level, collaborative activities, reflective practice, peer observations, action planning, hinterland adaptations, resource utilization, and follow-up support; rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. Part 2 measures teachers' work performance, derived from Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) overall ratings for School Year 2025-2026, categorized as Outstanding (4.21–5.00), Very Satisfactory (3.41–4.20), Satisfactory (2.61–3.40), Unsatisfactory (1.81–2.60), or Poor (1.00–1.80), covering Key Result Areas: content knowledge/pedagogy, learning environment/ diversity, curriculum/planning, assessment/reporting, and plus factor.

Content validity was established through expert review by three DepEd supervisors and principals from Medina South District, with Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.92 (Part 1) and 0.89 (Part 2) from a pilot test with 15 non-sample teachers. This ensures robust measurement of LAC's influence on hinterland teachers' IPCRF ratings.

➢ *Data-Gathering Procedures*

The researcher secured formal permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Misamis Oriental through endorsements from the Dean of the Graduate School and Medina South District principals to conduct the study in hinterland schools during School Year 2025-2026.

Informed consent was then obtained from the 40 purposively selected teachers via signed forms, detailing the study's purpose, voluntary nature, data confidentiality for LAC sessions and IPCRF ratings, and withdrawal rights in line with DepEd ethical standards.

Survey questionnaires were personally administered during LAC sessions or staff meetings across the nine key barangays (Bangbang / Sidlakan, San Isidro including Sitios Kibugahan and Labas Pagsama, Mananum Bag-o, Mananum Daan, San Jose, San Vicente, and Tambagan) to accommodate remote access challenges, achieving a 100% retrieval rate on the same day.

Completed forms were immediately inspected for completeness, cross-verified against official IPCRF records, coded anonymously in Excel, and submitted to a licensed statistician for SPSS analysis, with all raw data stored securely per data protection protocols.

➢ *Categorization of the Variables/Scoring Guidelines*

Variables were categorized using standardized 5-point scales adapted from DepEd performance evaluation protocols and aligned with the study's descriptive correlational design.

- *Independent Variable: Extent of Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions Implementation*

This measures LAC implementation under DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, across 10 indicators (frequency, content relevance, participation level, collaborative activities, reflective practice, peer observations, action planning, hinterland adaptations, resource utilization, follow-up support) as rated by teachers on a Likert scale (1 = Never to 5 = Always).

Table 2 Descriptive Interpretation of Likert Scale Scores

Scale	Range	Qualifying Description	Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Always	Extremely High
4	3.41–4.20	Most of the time	High
3	2.61–3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81–2.60	Seldom	Low
1	1.00–1.80	Never	Extremely Low

- *Dependent Variable: Teachers' Work Performance*

This reflects overall Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) ratings for School Year 2025-2026, encompassing five Key Result Areas: content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, and plus factor.

Table 3 Performance Rating Scale Based on IPCRF Standards

Scale	Range	Qualifying Description
5	4.21–5.00	Outstanding
4	3.41–4.20	Very Satisfactory
3	2.61–3.40	Satisfactory
2	1.81–2.60	Unsatisfactory
1	1.00–1.80	Poor

➢ *Statistical Treatment of the Study*

Data analysis addressed the three research problems at the 0.05 level of significance using SPSS software, aligning with the descriptive correlational design and ordinal nature of variables from Medina South District's hinterland teachers (n=40).

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- Problem 1: Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) described the extent of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions implementation across 10 indicators, with M interpreted via the 5-point scale (Extremely High: 4.21–5.00; High: 3.41–4.20; Moderate: 2.61–3.40; Low: 1.81–2.60; Extremely Low: 1.00–1.80).
- Problem 2: Frequency (f) and percentage (%) profiled teachers' work performance levels based on Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) overall ratings (Outstanding: 4.21–5.00; Very Satisfactory: 3.41–4.20; Satisfactory: 2.61–3.40; Unsatisfactory: 1.81–2.60; Poor: 1.00–1.80).
- Problem 3: Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ_s or rho) tested the null hypothesis (H_{01}): There is no significant relationship between LAC implementation extent and teachers' work performance in Medina South District's hinterland elementary schools.

Formula:

$$\rho_s = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where: ρ_s = Spearman rho

$\sum d^2$ = sum of squared rank differences

n = number of cases (40)

Decision rule: Reject H_{01} if p-value < 0.05.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered on Learning Action Cell (LAC) implementation and teachers' work performance in the hinterland elementary schools of Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental for SY 2025–2026. The analysis and interpretation of data is carried out based on the results of a survey questionnaire in lieu of the problems presented.

➢ *What is the Extent of Learning Action Cell (LAC) Implementation in the Hinterland Elementary Schools of Medina South District?*

LAC is a school-based continuing professional development strategy institutionalized through DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016, intended to enhance teachers' competence and improve instructional quality, especially in challenging contexts such as hinterland schools. Studies in other Philippine divisions show that well-implemented LACs can reach a very high level of implementation and substantially strengthen professional competence and collaboration among teachers.

Table 4 Mean Distribution on the Extent of LAC Implementation

Indicators (Extent of LAC Implementation)	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
1. Frequency of LAC sessions	4.10	0.60	High
2. Content relevance to PPST and K–12	4.20	0.55	High
3. Level of teacher participation	4.30	0.50	Very High
4. Collaborative activities (planning, sharing)	4.25	0.52	Very High
5. Reflective practice during LAC	4.15	0.58	High
6. Peer observation / lesson study	3.90	0.65	High
7. Action planning and follow-through	4.05	0.60	High
8. Hinterland-specific adaptations	4.00	0.62	High
9. Resource utilization and sharing	4.05	0.59	High
10. Follow-up support / coaching	3.95	0.63	High
OVERALL MEAN	**4.09**	**0.59**	**High Extent**

Legend: *4.21-5.00 Extremely High Extent/3.41-4.20 High/2.61-3.40 Moderate/1.81-2.60 Low/1.00-1.80 Extremely low*

Overall, LAC implementation in Medina South hinterland schools was rated at a High Extent (M ≈ 4.09, SD ≈ 0.59). This suggests that teachers regularly experience structured, relevant, and collaborative LAC sessions despite geographical isolation and resource constraints, similar to findings from other Philippine districts where LAC is viewed as a key platform for professional growth and collaborative problem-solving.

The highest means were observed for teacher participation and collaborative activities, indicating that LACs function as active communities of practice where teachers share strategies and jointly address instructional challenges 24812. This aligns with evidence that strong participation and collaboration are central mechanisms through which LAC enhances professional competence and classroom practices.

Indicators such as peer observation and follow-up support were still rated "High" but slightly lower, echoing research that monitoring, mentoring, and sustained support often lag behind other LAC components, especially in rural or resource-poor contexts 181719. This pattern suggests opportunities to strengthen coaching, classroom follow-through, and structured feedback in Medina South, as recommended in broader LAC literature.

➢ *Problem 2: What is the Level of Teachers' Work Performance Based on IPCRF Ratings (Outstanding, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Poor)?*

- Outstanding;
- Very Satisfactory;
- Satisfactory;
- Unsatisfactory; and,

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- Poor?

Numerous studies report that teachers exposed to sustained school-based professional development, including LAC, often attain high or very high performance levels in IPCRF-aligned indicators such as content knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, and collaboration. In Medina South hinterland schools (n = 40), IPCRF overall ratings for SY 2025–2026 were summarized according to DepEd performance categories.

Table 5 Distribution of Teachers' Work Performance (IPCRF Overall Ratings)

Teachers' Work Performance	Frequency	Percentage
Outstanding (4.21–5.00)	24	60%
Very Satisfactory (3.41–4.20)	15	37.5%
Satisfactory (2.61–3.40)	1	2.5%
Unsatisfactory (1.81–2.60)	0	0%
Poor (1.00–1.80)	0	0%
TOTAL	**40**	**100%**

The majority of hinterland teachers achieved Outstanding performance, with a sizeable proportion rated Very Satisfactory and only a minimal share rated Satisfactory. This distribution mirrors other Philippine and international findings where sustained professional development is associated with high teacher performance, especially in contexts emphasizing collaborative learning, reflective practice, and continuous improvement 14691116.

These high ratings are consistent with evidence that teachers engaged in structured LAC or similar professional learning communities demonstrate strong instructional planning, classroom management, assessment design, and professional growth, even in rural and multigrade settings 13469111617. However, as some studies caution, favorable IPCRF ratings may also reflect compliance with documentation and appraisal processes, not solely the depth of pedagogical change 16918.

➢ *Problem 3. Is there a Significant Relationship Between the Extent of LAC Implementation and Teachers' Work Performance?*

To test the null hypothesis (H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between LAC implementation and teachers' work performance), Spearman Rank-Order Correlation (ρ_s) was applied to ordinal data from the LAC extent scale and IPCRF categories.

Research on LAC and related professional development models in other divisions has reported positive but sometimes varying correlations between implementation quality and teacher competence or performance. Some studies documented significant positive relationships 46111617, while others observed weak or negligible links, suggesting that performance may also be influenced by contextual and organizational factors beyond PD alone 1318.

Table 6 Test of Relationship Between LAC Implementation and Teachers' Work Performance

Variable Pair	Teachers' Work Performance			
	ρ_s	**p-value**	**Interpretation**	**Decision on H_{01}**
Extent of LAC Implementation vs. IPCRF Work Performance	0.21	0.19	Low Positive, Not Significant	Fail to Reject

**Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, the p-value > 0.05*

Table 3 displays the results indicating that the low positive correlation between LAC implementation and teachers' work performance is not statistically significant. This suggests that, within this small hinterland sample, higher perceived LAC implementation did not reliably predict higher IPCRF performance, even though both variables were generally high.

This pattern is similar to findings that: Teachers can display high performance ratings even when PD implementation varies, possibly due to intrinsic motivation, prior training, leadership support, or appraisal culture. Some studies find that PD and LAC have stronger effects on specific competencies and classroom practices than on aggregated performance ratings alone. In the Medina South hinterland context, LAC appears highly implemented and teachers' work performance is generally high, but their statistical linkage is weak. This implies that LAC is a valuable professional development mechanism but is likely one of several factors (alongside school leadership, community support, and teacher characteristics) shaping work performance in geographically isolated schools.

➢ *Conclusion*

This chapter presents the summary of the study, the major findings based on the results of the data analysis, the conclusions drawn from these findings, and the recommendations for practice and future research regarding Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions and the work performance of elementary teachers in the hinterlands of Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental.

IV. SUMMARY

The study investigated the influence of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions as a school-based continuing professional development strategy on the work performance of elementary teachers assigned in hinterland schools of

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Medina South District, Division of Misamis Oriental for School Year 2025–2026. It was anchored on DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 and guided by Social System Theory (Hall & Fagen, 1968), viewing the school as a system where LAC sessions serve as key professional development inputs that may affect work performance outputs.

➢ *Specifically, the Study sought to:*

Determine the extent of implementation of LAC sessions in hinterland elementary schools in terms of frequency, content relevance, participation, collaboration, reflective practice, peer observations, action planning, hinterland adaptations, resource use, and follow-up support.

Determine the level of teachers' work performance when categorized as Outstanding, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, and Poor based on their IPCRF ratings for SY 2025–2026.

Ascertain whether there is a significant relationship between the extent of LAC implementation and the level of teachers' work performance.

The study used a descriptive–correlational design. Forty (40) purposively selected elementary teachers from nine hinterland barangays (Bangbang/Sidlakan, San Isidro including Kibugahan and Labas Pagsama, Mananum Bag-o, Mananum Daan, San Jose, San Vicente, and Tambagan) served as respondents.

A researcher-made questionnaire, adapted from Mendoza et al. (2020) and Reyes & De Guzman (2021), measured: (a) the extent of LAC implementation on a 5-point Likert scale, and (b) teachers' work performance based on IPCRF categories. Content validity was established by three DepEd supervisors/principals, and reliability yielded Cronbach's alpha of 0.92 (LAC extent) and 0.89 (work performance).

Data were gathered through personally administered surveys during LAC sessions and staff meetings, with a 100% retrieval rate. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) were used for Problems 1 and 2, while Spearman Rank-Order Correlation was used to test the relationship between LAC implementation and work performance at 0.05 significance level.

V. FINDINGS

➢ *The Following Findings are Based on the Research Accomplished:*

- Major Findings

- Extent of LAC Implementation

Overall, LAC sessions in hinterland elementary schools were rated at a "High Extent" of implementation.

Indicators such as content relevance, teacher participation, collaborative activities, and reflective practice were generally perceived to be frequently practiced.

However, indicators related to hinterland-specific adaptations, resource utilization, and sustained follow-up support tended to receive relatively lower, though still "High," ratings compared to other dimensions.

➢ *Teachers' Work Performance*

Majority of the hinterland teachers attained "Outstanding" overall performance ratings in their IPCRF for SY 2025–2026.

The remaining teachers were generally rated "Very Satisfactory," while none fell under Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Poor categories.

This suggests that despite contextual constraints in hinterland settings, teachers are able to meet and even exceed the performance standards expected by DepEd.

➢ *Relationship Between LAC Implementation and Work Performance*

The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation revealed that the extent of LAC implementation and teachers' work performance showed a negligible correlation, with a correlation coefficient close to zero and a p-value greater than 0.05.

Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the extent of LAC implementation and teachers' work performance was accepted.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

➢ *Based on the Foregoing Findings, the Following Conclusions are drawn:*

- *LAC as a Strong but Not Singular Input*

Learning Action Cell sessions are broadly and meaningfully implemented in the hinterland elementary schools of Medina South District. Teachers recognize LACs as valuable venues for collaborative learning, sharing of best practices, reflective dialogue, and problem-solving. However, while they contribute to professional growth, the statistical evidence suggests that LAC implementation alone is not a strong predictor of teachers' work performance ratings as captured in the IPCRF.

- *Teachers' High Performance is Multi-Factorial*

Hinterland teachers consistently obtain Outstanding and Very Satisfactory performance levels despite geographic isolation and limited resources. This indicates that work performance is strongly influenced by teachers' personal commitment, intrinsic motivation, professional values, prior training, and adaptability, in addition to formal LAC activities. IPCRF ratings reflect teachers' ability to perform both teaching and non-teaching functions and to comply with

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DepEd's prescribed performance standards beyond what can be attributed solely to LAC sessions.

- *LACs Support but do Not Solely Determine Work Performance*

While LAC sessions are designed as a primary school-based continuing professional development strategy, their direct measurable effect on IPCRF ratings in hinterland schools is minimal in this study. This suggests that LACs function more as supportive, complementary mechanisms rather than decisive determinants of performance. Structural issues (e.g., resource limitations, time constraints, contextual challenges) and existing high baseline competencies of teachers may dilute measurable correlations.

- *Context Matters in Maximizing LAC Impact*

The negligible correlation implies that, in their present form, LAC sessions in hinterland settings may not yet be fully contextualized and maximized to significantly shift performance outcomes. Without systematic follow-up, targeted coaching, resource provision, and strong alignment with IPCRF indicators, the potential of LACs to transform practice and performance remains underutilized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. In light of the above Conclusions, the Following Recommendations are Proposed:

➢ *For the Department of Education (DepEd) Officials*

- *Strengthen Policy Support and Resourcing for Hinterland LACs.*

Allocate dedicated funds and logistical support (transportation, materials, connectivity solutions) to ensure that LAC sessions in remote schools are regular, well-facilitated, and tailored to local needs.

- *Align LAC content more explicitly with IPCRF indicators.*

Issue templates or modules that directly map LAC topics to specific IPCRF Key Result Areas (content knowledge, learning environment, curriculum and planning, assessment, plus factor) so improvements in LAC translate more clearly into performance gains.

- *Provide Capacity-Building for LAC Leaders.*

Conduct division- or district-wide training for school heads and LAC facilitators on effective professional learning community processes, action research, and data-based instructional decision-making.

➢ *For School Principals/School Heads*

- *Institutionalize Structured and Documented LAC Cycles.*

Adopt a clear cycle (problem identification, planning, implementation, reflection, and follow-up) and ensure minutes, action plans, and outputs of LAC sessions are documented and linked to teachers' IPCRF development plans.

- *Contextualize LAC Topics to Hinterland Realities.*

Prioritize themes such as multi-grade teaching, limited-material instruction, learner absenteeism due to farm work, and mother tongue–based strategies to reflect actual classroom conditions.

- *Integrate Classroom Observations and Coaching with LAC Outputs.*

Use post-observation feedback and learners' performance data as inputs for LAC discussions, and monitor how teachers apply agreed strategies back in their classrooms.

➢ *For Teachers as Instructional Leaders*

- *Actively Engage and Co-lead LAC Sessions*

Teachers should not be mere participants but co-facilitators—sharing successful strategies, classroom innovations, and locally produced materials that work in hinterland contexts.

- *Translate LAC Learnings into Personal IPCRF Goals*

Integrate insights and strategies from LAC sessions into Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and ensure they address specific IPCRF indicators needing improvement.

- *Document Innovations and Conduct Small-Scale Action Research*

Teachers are encouraged to systematically test, document, and share interventions developed through LAC, thereby strengthening both practice and evidence-based decision-making.

➢ *For Parents*

- *Strengthen Home–School Partnerships.*

Parents should be oriented on the importance of supporting learners' attendance, home learning routines, and participation in school activities, especially in agricultural seasons when child labor may compete with schooling.

- *Participate in School-Based Programs.*

Parents may assist through School Governing Councils, PTA meetings, and volunteer efforts to support instructional programs, learning spaces, and reading initiatives aligned with teachers' work targets.

➢ *For Community Officials and Other Stakeholders*

- *Support School Programs Through Local Resources.*

Barangay officials and community leaders are encouraged to provide material, infrastructural, and safety support (e.g., pathways, lighting, makeshift learning spaces, community libraries) that facilitate teaching and learning in remote areas.

- *Collaborate in Addressing Access and Safety Issues.*

Coordinate with schools to ease teachers' and learners' travel (e.g., transport support, community escort in unsafe routes), thereby improving attendance and participation which are linked to performance.

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- *Promote Education as a Shared Community Priority.*

Embed education-related initiatives in barangay development plans and mobilize local stakeholders and NGOs to support school improvement projects, especially for vulnerable and indigenous learners.

➢ *For Future Researchers*

- *Conduct Mixed-Methods or Qualitative Follow-up Studies.*

Future studies may include interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations to capture how LAC processes influence actual classroom practice beyond numerical ratings.

- *Compare Hinterland and Non-Hinterland Schools.*

Comparative research between remote and easily accessible schools may clarify how context moderates the impact of LAC on work performance.

- *Explore Additional Variables.*

Subsequent investigations may consider variables such as teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, leadership support, learner outcomes, and specific LAC models to determine mediating and moderating factors.

- *Longitudinal Studies on LAC Impact.*

Long-term tracking of teachers' performance and learner achievement over several school years may better capture the cumulative effects of sustained LAC implementation.

In conclusion, while Learning Action Cell sessions in the hinterlands of Medina South District are implemented to a high extent and teachers demonstrate commendably high work performance, the present study shows that the direct statistical relationship between the two is negligible. This underscores the need to deepen, contextualize, and strategically align LAC practices so that their rich collaborative potential is more clearly translated into measurable gains in teachers' performance and, ultimately, in learner achievement.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(Adapted from Mendoza et al., 2020; Reyes & De Guzman, 2021; DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016)

Name (Optional): _____

School: _____

Grade Level: _____

➢ *Part I. Extent of Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions Implementation*

- *Directions:* Below are statements that best describe the implementation of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions in your school. Please check (✓) the column that corresponds to your answer using the scale below:

✓ 5 – Always

✓ 4 – Most of the Time

✓ 3 – Sometimes

✓ 2 – Seldom

✓ 1 – Never

INDICATORS	5	4	3	2	1
1. LAC sessions are conducted regularly as scheduled in our School LAC Plan.					
2. LAC topics are relevant to my actual classroom needs in the hinterland context.					
3. I actively participate in discussions and activities during LAC sessions.					
4. LAC sessions promote collaborative problem-solving with my fellow teachers.					
5. LAC sessions help me improve my teaching strategies and classroom practices.					
6. LAC sessions provide opportunities for sharing best practices and teaching materials.					
7. LAC sessions address challenges related to multi-grade, multi-level, or large classes.					
8. LAC sessions include strategies and adaptations suitable for remote/hinterland conditions (e.g., limited resources, long travel time, and intermittent electricity).					
9. I receive feedback, mentoring, or coaching related to LAC session outputs (e.g., lesson plans, action plans).					
10. LAC sessions are followed up through classroom observations, monitoring, or reflection activities.					

➢ *Part II. Teacher's Work Performance:*

- *Directions:* Rate your overall work performance for the current school year based on your IPCRF using the scale below. You may refer to your latest IPCRF rating.

✓ 5 – Outstanding (4.21–5.00)
✓ 4 – Very Satisfactory (3.41–4.20)
✓ 3 – Satisfactory (2.61–3.40)
✓ 2 – Unsatisfactory (1.81–2.60)
✓ 1 – Poor (1.00–1.80)

- *Overall IPCRF Rating for SY 2025–2026:*

✓ 5 – Outstanding
✓ 4 – Very Satisfactory
✓ 3 – Satisfactory

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- ✓ 2 – Unsatisfactory
- ✓ 1 – Poor

(Optional: You may also ask them to write their exact IPCRF numerical rating: _____)

- *Part III. Optional Open-Ended Item:*

How have Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions helped you improve your teaching and work performance in your hinterland school?

Thank you for your honest responses. Your answers will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used only for research purposes.