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## **Taking the Lead: Instructional Leaders' Experiences in the New Normal**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The primary duty of school leaders, All school leaders need to be aware of what is happening in the classroom and work to improve the skills of their proficient teachers who are deeply engaged in curriculum and teaching issues that have a direct impact on student achievement, This study aims to describe the experiences of instructional leaders during the new normal. Specifically, it sought answers to the following: 1. What supervisory strategies do instructional leaders employ during the new normal? 2. What problems do instructional leaders encounter in the performance of their functions? 3. How do instructional leaders navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the new normal of education? 4. What instructional supervision model could be formulated? 5. What is the level of validity of the formulated model? The researcher used qualitative research design. It made use of research guide questions for the study on instructional leaders' experiences in the new normal. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. The experiences of instructional leaders were evidence of hard work, resiliency, patience, and collaboration. The ups and downs of instructional leaders represented beyond commitment and dedication. They have imprint different leadership skills pertinent to the new normal education set-up. Their honesty for self-improvement and innovation paved way for effective leadership. their leadership inculcate lifelong learning, extremely in setting directions and technological advancements. Their being flexible to the rise and fall of difficulties has strengthened their cooperation, responsibility, communications and intensified school parent and community collaborations. Instructional leaders pursue to work even harder to provide relevant and unselfish leadership in the new normal to sustain effective supervision.

Based from the following conclusion, the following conclusion were drawn. To ensure that all schools are producing a 21st century graduates, instructional leaders must effectively practice instructional supervision, explores trends in instructional leadership practices that provides comparative analysis across different educational context and the effectiveness of interventions at enhancing leadership capacity and need thrive to compete in the current situations. The evidence base on instructional leadership has consolidated the positive impact that school leaders can have on learning and learner outcomes. School leaders must lead by examples, most leaders want to set standards within their school, but they forget how to set it on how they wanted their teachers to behave and perform. If one leader expects their teachers to work and be productive, they must first demonstrate those behaviors in themselves. If they want their teachers to be ethical and honest, they must lead by example and show them that they value those qualities. There should be continuity, regularity, and quality in the supervision. A closer, regular, and continuous supervision of teachers should be encouraged rather than snappy and unscheduled visits. For the instruction to be effective and religiously be practice, The department of education must seek and provide individual/ person who may assists our school leaders in terms of their administrative works, there should be one administrative officer who will be in charge of all the administrative tasks of the school leader so that instructional supervisors can fully practice, give their full time, commitment, focus on their instructional supervision, and perform their functions and duties as instructional leaders effectively. For better understanding of the trends in instructional leadership practices and other comparative analysis across different educational context, the use of formulated model will be the basis in addressing issues and through intervention plan it will assess effectiveness of interventions at enhancing leadership capacity, it will also provide a conceptual framework for all instructional leaders to guide them address needs. g. This study will be disseminated and will be share to all educators, other stake holders or even the next researchers, this will be used or presented through conferences, presentations, school based in service training, LAC Sessions, and other Social Media Platforms to maximize the impact of reach of this study for future studies and future

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*Keywords: instructional leader, new normal, supervision, intervention, learning outcomes.*

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### **Introduction**

Everybody is struggling just like the educational system that has shift into new normal set up. Unknown to many, there are these unsung heroes who put in more work, time, and dedication. These are the instructional leaders, often known as principals, administrators, school heads, and even master teachers are among them. When teachers and students are having trouble, what is more about the educational leaders in charge of the school, not anyone at the school acknowledged their achievements, strategies that have been successful or plans for intervention. And since new normal is the new way of life, these school leaders found it hard to run the curriculum in a time of crisis. However, this did not prevent them from leading their own schools in an unrestricted manner.

The aim of learning supervision is to support teachers in developing a mindset that recognizes the value of their students' learning processes. The primary duty of school leaders, according to the Wallace Foundation (2013), is to enhance instruction to support instructors in educating students in a way that

maximizes their academic performance. All school leaders need to be aware of what is happening in the classroom and work to improve the skills of their proficient teachers who are deeply engaged in curriculum and teaching issues that have a direct impact on student achievement. All public-school leaders have a firm understanding of their roles as instructional leaders. They are aware of their roles as teaching leaders in every local public schools. They are making a lot of them at the schools where they operate. In their respective schools, they are very well-functioning they can reflect on their skills and contributions as how to implement strategies in the classroom through modeling, providing team teaching, working with groups of students in the classroom and teaching sessions, providing various help to teachers who need it. School head, area coordinators, master teachers and teachers in different schools should assess the ability to implement strategies in classrooms through working with student groups, modelling, team teaching or providing various forms of support. In addition, school leaders are working closely with the leadership team to examine the data on student achievement and assessment, to analyze the specific needs of students, and to research the various strategies that are needed in these challenging times, not only for students' strategies, but also for teachers' strategies. These roles as school heads are designed for them as instructional leaders. They can also gain a deeper understanding of their position and the ways in which they might assist teachers at this difficult time. Thus, the main reasons for the importance of educational supervision are as follows: to give teachers unbiased feedback; to identify and address issues related to teaching and learning; to assist teachers in developing strategies and skills that are appropriate for the new normal and in adjusting to it; to assess teachers for promotions or appointments based on their quality of teaching practice; and to support teachers in keeping a positive outlook during times of change and difficulty (Chen, 2017).

### ***Statement of the Problem***

This study aims to describe the experiences of instructional leaders during the new normal. Specifically, it sought answers to the following: 1. What supervisory strategies do instructional leaders employ during the new normal? 2. What problems do instructional leaders encounter in the performance of their functions? 3. How do instructional leaders navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the new normal of education? 4. What instructional supervision model could be formulated? 5. What is the level of validity of the formulated model?

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### **Research Design**

The researcher used qualitative research design. It made use of research guide questions for the study on instructional leaders' experiences in the new normal. Based on findings from the literature, the population sample was drawn from Master Teachers, School Heads or Principals in the Five Integrated Schools of Tagudin Ilocos Sur, Tagudin District. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences and leadership of school leaders who led their schools in the new normal. Qualitative data collection approaches were exploratory and concerned with gaining insights and understanding underlying reasons and motivations. The respondents of the study were 2 Head Teachers 3 Principal and 6 Master Teachers of the Five Integrated Schools of Tagudin District. Total of 11 respondent were used in the study. An interview protocol guide through an aide mémoire. This aide mémoire interview guide contains questions to be asked during the interviews. This also served as the main gathering tool. The Interview protocol used and included questions about participants' experiences in their leadership practices, and reflective questions about leaderships' perspectives about their future needs as leaders. All interviews were conducted in person at the participants' school offices. All answers were transcribed verbatim, and field notes were taken and incorporated as observer comments during the interview process.

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### **Results and Findings**

Participants expressed their view on specifying how they are getting into the balcony of challenges as instructional leader at a variety of levels. In this regard, school leaders spoke about their roles and detailed their position as a dynamic head on the following responses: "I consider Instructional leaders that supports the development of teaching and learning, and we should provide guidance and direction to our teachers for instructional improvement." (P1) "As a master teacher, I had developed problem-solving skills where I learned how to analyze situations, consider various perspectives, gather relevant information, and make solutions, I also came to the realization that my emotional intelligence is growing because I think I'm more aware of and considerate of other people's emotions and circumstances. I can also relate to my fellow teachers and provide helpful criticism, encouragement and guidance when needed to complete a task." (P4) "When I say instructional leader for me, it means taking an active role in guiding and inspiring colleagues, fostering a collaborative and cooperative learning environment, and continuously improving teaching practices." (P5) "As a master teacher, I honed instructional design, classroom management, and differentiated instruction skills. Transitioning to a school leader, I developed leadership, communication, strategic planning, and team collaboration skills to effectively guide and inspire educators while fostering a positive learning environment." This claim is in support of Murray and Gill's (2018) exploration of kindness and compassion, which suggests that kindness is an easily understood concept, in contrast to compassion, care and empathy. They conclude that leaders of 21st century workplaces will benefit from focusing on developing kind leaders and kind organizations. This can be achieved through distributive and adaptive leadership (De Zulueta's 2016). The second theme emerged on instructional leaders' experiences shows at the managerial level especially in terms of their adaptability in school-related concerns and issues, interventions needed to provide, ideas, plans, and developments in schools endeavors. "Setting milestones for assessment and reflections." (P1) "I overcome challenges or barriers by uniting and working together to respond to every challenges. Our school conducted school-based LAC sessions to orient teachers on what they will do and the things that we need to be implemented." (P2) "Have a conference with parents regarding the problems met to the learners. Discuss with them the problems that causes the low performance of their children and the remedies to be done to address the problems." (P3) Based on the responses from the different participants, it shows that school leaders are always dealing with adversity, and that in place of these

challenges, school leaders are always there to develop a sense of continuity to adapt for growth and development, they can work under pressure, that is why they are the one who help teachers to become more receptive to changes.

The third theme dug into the strategies needed for effective instruction. It focuses specifically on the strategies, pedagogy, methods and skills of the teachers and learners to be learned. They are connected to curricular materials and assessments aligned with the subject matter and skills. Instructional leaders lead teachers to sustain a connection between all activities and teaching practice. The following responses show how focused instruction assess teachers effectively. "Sometimes they are being evaluated through classroom observation, that is the one of the many ways on how teachers would be evaluated these are done by documenting through monitoring tool used and to assess how effective and efficient they are. In the lens of a school leader, it is important to know they're strengths and weaknesses. When teachers are empowered, they can deliver quality teaching among their learners. They need to be capacitated along instruction and assessments and that suits in the current situation of the learners." (P3) "Performance assessment is necessary to evaluate mastery of the lesson because through this, it can help teachers adapt their lessons to be more beneficial for their learners needs. By watching a learners perform a task, teachers can see specific areas where their learners struggle or excel." (P8) The fourth theme revolves-around keeping up to date with developments, innovations in the field of technology, it is the driving force of school leaders for ongoing education and enhancements, All parts of technical progress, individual professional growth and participation in conferences, seminars, and training. This reflects the characteristics of successful school leaders. In this theme, it disclosed the supervisory duties of school leaders that embraces the significance of being open to innovation. "As a school leader, I facilitate professional development opportunities for teachers, including school-based seminars, training sessions, focusing on the latest teaching methods, innovations, technology integration and classroom management." (P1) "In terms of opportunities, teachers in the new normal can develop their ICT skills and undergone more online trainings and seminars regarding the conduct of modality implemented. From the given seminars and trainings, we, teachers became more resourceful and innovative in using available spaces in the school. Teachers also tend to collaborate and able to share their best practices as to how they can improve their teaching and learning practices." (P2) "Teachers became more resourceful and innovative in using available spaces in the school. Teachers also tend to collaborate and able to share their best practices as to how they can improve their teaching and learning practices." (P4) "Common opportunities lie most on the part of the teacher because during the new normal there are more leveraging technology, trainings for teachers and as well as professional development." (P6) The fifth theme emerge on embracing challenges as opportunities for growth, opportunity to gain experience, adapt and build inner strength as they navigate through challenges. "Learning in the new normal is very challenging. The problem is how to handle the learning gap occurred, during the pandemic it is evident to all learners. Thus, making teaching more difficult as a teachers need to start from the very basics of the lesson or the subject." (P1) "Also, in understanding different learning styles of the learners, lack of effective communication, creating engaging lesson plans that fit the curriculum, behavior management and time-consuming administrative work became our challenges." (P2) "The lack of parent's follows up to their children, the poor study habits of learners due to the overuse of gadgets, destruction by a lot of things at home." (P3) "Problem in handling the class sizes, some grade levels have large class size, and the poor study habits of learners." (P4)

"How to foster good study habits to children who have poor study habits of learners is our school is currently facing that we encounter in the new normal of education." (P5) "some of the problems are on the assessment practices may include limited resources, resistance to change, time constraints and most especially the follow up of parents on their child's progress in school." (P6) "Some of the problems we encounter in the new normal are on the assessment practices this may include limited resources, teacher burnout due to bulk of paper works, time constraints, and assessment pressure that we need to finish on time" (P8)

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## Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. The experiences of instructional leaders were evidence of hard work, resiliency, patience, and collaboration. The ups and downs of instructional leaders represented beyond commitment and dedication. They have imprint different leadership skills pertinent to the new normal education set-up. Their honesty for self-improvement and innovation paved way for effective leadership. their leadership inculcate lifelong learning, extremely in setting directions and technological advancements. Their being flexible to the rise and fall of difficulties has strengthened their cooperation, responsibility, communications and intensified school parent and community collaborations. f.Instructional leaders pursue to work even harder to provide relevant and unselfish leadership in the new normal to sustain effective supervision.

Based from the following conclusion, the following conclusion were drawn. To ensure that all schools are producing a 21st century graduates, instructional leaders must effectively practice instructional supervision, explores trends in instructional leadership practices that provides comparative analysis across different educational context and the effectiveness of interventions at enhancing leadership capacity and need thrive to compete in the current situations. The evidence base on instructional leadership has consolidated the positive impact that school leaders can have on learning and learner outcomes. School leaders must lead by examples, most leaders want to set standards within their school, but they forget how to set it on how they wanted their teachers to behave and perform. If one leader expects their teachers to work and be productive, they must first demonstrate those behaviors in themselves. If they want their teachers to be ethical and honest, they must lead by example and show them that they value those qualities. There should be continuity, regularity, and quality in the supervision. A closer, regular, and continuous supervision of teachers should be encouraged rather than snappy and unscheduled visits. For the instruction to be effective and religiously be practice, The department of education must seek and provide individual/ person who may assists our school leaders in terms of their administrative works, there should be one administrative officer who will be in charge of all the administrative tasks of the school leader so that instructional supervisors can fully practice, give their full time, commitment, focus on their instructional supervision, and perform their functions and duties as instructional leaders effectively. For better understanding of the trends in instructional leadership practices and other comparative analysis across different educational context, the use of formulated model will be the basis in addressing issues and through intervention plan it will assess effectiveness of interventions at enhancing leadership capacity, it will also provide a

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