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Instructional Leadership as a Leading Construct of School Effectiveness in Tagum City Division

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A B S T R A C T

The study determined the extent of instructional leadership and school effectiveness in public elementary schools of Tagum City Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of instructional leadership of school heads that significantly influence school effectiveness. With the use of probability sampling, 150 elementary teachers in the public schools were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean and Product-Moment correlation. Results revealed that there was an extensive instructional leadership of school heads and an extensive school effectiveness. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may identify means on how to help school heads in reinforcing their instructional leadership in order to attain school effectiveness. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, school effectiveness, descriptive correlation, Tagum City Division, Philippines

Introduction

More efficient school management and administration procedures, a supportive school atmosphere and cultural framework for teaching and learning, respectful partnerships with management and staff, peer teachers and teachers with pupils, and teachers with parents and society can all be used to measure school effectiveness. It is believed that school effectiveness is the result of an institution using all school capital to achieve goals and meet shared objectives. Furthermore, school effectiveness may be measured by several aspects of fairness or inclusion for kids to obtain an education regardless of cognitive, physical, heritage, financial level of students' parents, religious background, ethnicity and descent, or comprehension of students. However, the issue of how to make schools effective becomes a pressing concern for educators to search for the important factors that will spur their effectiveness.

In US, the education system is failing for some specific reasons which affect its school effectiveness. It was revealed that parents are not involved in academics. Also, schools are closing due to mismanagement. There are overcrowded classrooms and a study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 14 percent of U.S. schools exceed capacity. At a time where children need more attention than ever to succeed, overcrowded classrooms are making it even tougher to learn and tougher still for teachers to be effective. More so, the U.S. Department of Education released student performance data in its National Assessment for Educational Progress report. The data points to the places in the U.S. that still struggle with inequality in student opportunity and performance, otherwise known as the achievement gap (Lynch, 2017).

Since colonial days, the same fundamental issues are afflicting Philippine education. These include high dropout rates, low pupil performance, poor teacher quality in a system where teachers are central to the education process, irrelevant learning materials, excessive centralization, and inadequate financial resources. At this time, about 72 percent of 15-year-old Filipinos are low achievers in the subjects of reading, math, and science. They ranked last in reading comprehension out of 79 countries. They also ranked 78th in science and math (Schleicher, 2018). This implies that many Filipinos cannot read or do simple math. Likewise, the assessment by the World Bank (2018-2019) indicates that 80 percent of Filipino students fall below the minimum proficiency levels. The World Bank discloses that the Philippines is ranked 103 among 173 countries in the Human Capital Index. The average length of schooling is 12.9 years, but what Filipino learners know is only equivalent to 7.5 years of schooling (Anni, 2022). These situations imply that school effectiveness is not evident.

In the Division of Tagum City, it was observed that overcrowded classrooms, struggling and exhausted teachers, insufficient school facilities, declining performance of the students, and poor connections among stakeholders were evident in some of the schools. Furthermore, the researcher observed that investigating school effectiveness had not been given much attention. In fact, no studies had been conducted that explored the extent of instructional leadership of school heads and school effectiveness.

Given these situations, the researcher was compelled to explore the extent of instructional leadership of school heads and school effectiveness specifically in the public elementary schools in Tagum City Division. Furthermore, it investigated the correlation of the two variables. In this academic endeavor, the

researcher shed light regarding instructional leadership of school heads and school effectiveness. This undertaking also hoped to provide insights to the policy makers in crafting policies, programs, interventions, projects, activities that would motivate all school leaders to be proactive in upgrading their instructional leadership leading to school effectiveness.

The theory for this study was based primarily on the Instructional Leadership Model by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) defined instructional leadership as principals' behaviors aimed at promoting and improving the process of teaching and learning in schools involving teachers, students, parents, school planning, school management, school facilities and resources.

Based on this model, there are three dimensions in instructional leadership activities, namely determining school missions, managing instructional programs and creating school learning environment. While instructional leadership sub-dimensions in this model include eleven leadership functions, which include drawing on school goals, explaining school goals, supervising and evaluating teaching, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, assure instructional time, maintaining learning support, providing incentives for teachers, enforcing academic standards, promote professional development and provide incentives for learning (Esa et al., 2017).

School leadership practices are among the key elements that contribute to the effectiveness of education change as well as external factors. The findings from previous studies show the importance of instructional leadership principals in managing change (Shafinaz, 2017). When education changes take place, instructional leaders with the help of teachers are responsible for achieving school academic goals and are willing to devote their efforts in implementing school changes with emphasis on pedagogical aspects, teaching methods, and learning to improve academic quality of the school. This suggests that school leaders act as instructional leaders to mobilize changes among teachers.

The role of instructional leadership is influential and relevant in managing education changes in the 21st-century towards preserving the quality of education in the country. Principals can act as instructional leaders who prioritize teaching and learning in schools. School leadership practices are among the key elements that contribute to the effectiveness of education change as well as external factors. The findings from previous studies show the importance of instructional leadership principals in managing change (Nor Azni,2015). When education changes take place, instructional leaders with the help of teachers are responsible for achieving school academic goals and are willing to devote their efforts in implementing school changes with emphasis on pedagogical aspects, teaching methods, and learning to improve academic quality of the school. This suggests that school leaders act as instructional leaders to mobilize changes among teachers (Esa et al., 2017).

Another theory that supported this study was the Theory of School Effectiveness by Rutter et al. (1979), it was found that an excellent school can fight the negative effect that affects the school an example of a student background that is favorable. It was found that the school effectiveness occurs when there is efficiency in leadership, high expectations by listeners, school environment conducive to learning, focusing on basic skills, look up with students regularly (Edmonds, 1979; Scheerens, 2016). The most important thing in determining the highest level of effectiveness is balance in the reward system, intellectual, the school environment, opportunity for student's role, an academic goal, teacher as a role model, excellent classroom management, strong leadership and democratically in making –decision.

Meanwhile, in the School Effectiveness Model, Marzano (2005) emphasized eight (8) dimensions to make the school successful which are instructional leadership, clear mission, good environment, high expectation of successful, keep review student progress, learning opportunity, perform task on time, and has a positive relationship between school and home. This highlighted that the instructional leadership of school heads is very much important in the attainment of the school effectiveness.

School effectiveness emphasis is on the enhancing conditions of schooling and output measures; mostly academic achievement of students (Farhat, Zarghuna, Khalid, Ashiq & Muhammad, 2012). The ability of the principal to effectively supervise instruction and manage school time to facilitate quality instructional delivery that offers rich learning opportunities for students to academically perform well is an evident of school effectiveness. School effectiveness means the ability of the school to accomplish its objectives (Botha, 2010). Indices of school effectiveness according to Mohan (2011) are; school with shared visions and goals, effective teaching and learning, greater cooperation between principal and teacher and among teachers, positive learning environment and effective evaluation and monitoring.

In the context of this study, school effectiveness is the ability of the principal to improve learning environment to foster the attainment of educational goals and objectives. To measure school effectiveness, there must be adequate inputs in terms of good instructional leadership practices, effective management practices and enabling teaching and learning environment leading to students" academic achievement.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive correlational technique in its quantitative research methodology. By gathering numerical data and analyzing it mathematically, especially using statistics, quantitative research methods are utilized to explain a problem or phenomena (Apuke, 2017). The variables and the connections that emerge spontaneously between and among them are described in descriptive correlational investigations (Davis, 2021). This study was categorized as quantitative since it relied on numerical data for data analysis and interpretation. It was descriptive since its goal is to evaluate the performance of the school and the level of instructional leadership provided by school leaders. This academic endeavor was also correlational because it evaluated the relationship between school heads' instructional leadership and Tagum City Division schools' effectiveness.

Research Respondents

This study catered 150 elementary teachers in the public school. Hair et al. (2018) believed that at least 150 samples were considered for a study in the correlational study. In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, elementary teachers with 3 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavor since their 3 years stay in the public school would help them to assess the instructional leadership of their school heads and how it influenced school effectiveness. However, elementary teachers with less than 3 years teaching experience and those who were employed in the private elementary schools were not included in the study. Respondents who felt awkward and uncomfortable in answering the survey questionnaire were free to withdraw from their participation. They were not forced to be part of the study. Their decision to withdraw was respected. Apparently, the respondents' welfare was given utmost importance in the conduct of the study.

Research Instruments

As to the form of gathering data, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set was focusing on the instructional leadership of school heads while the second set was about school effectiveness.

The instructional leadership questionnaire was adapted from Akram et al. (2017). The instrument consisted of 40 items. It had the following indicators, namely: instructional resource provider (1-7); maintain visible presence (1-6); professional development (1-7); maximize instructional time (1-7); maintaining students' progress (1-4); feedback on teaching and learning (1-5); and curriculum implementation (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .77 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The school effectiveness questionnaire was adapted from the study of Baldwin et al. (1993). The tool had a total of 44 items. It had seven variables, namely: clear school mission (1-7); high expectation for success (8-12); instructional leadership (13-20); opportunity to learn and time on task (21-27); safe and orderly environment (28-32); positive home-school relations (33-38); and frequent monitoring student progress (39-44). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .75 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The instruments in this study were contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher incorporated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

Table

Table 1

Summary on the Extent of Instructional Leadership of School Heads

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Instructional Resource Provider	3.53	Extensive
2	Maintain Visible Presence	3.49	Extensive
3	Professional Development	3.64	Extensive
4	Maximize Instructional Time	3.63	Extensive
5	Monitoring Students' Progress	3.55	Extensive
6	Feedback on Teaching and Learning	3.62	Extensive
7	Curriculum Implementation	3.58	Extensive
Overall		**3.58**	**Extensive**

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of instructional leadership of school heads. It is exhibited that the overall mean of instructional leadership of school heads is 3.58, which is in an extensive level. This means that instructional leadership of school heads is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all seven (7) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, professional development has the highest mean score (3.64). This is followed by maximize instructional time (3.63), feedback on teaching and learning (3.62), curriculum implementation (3.58), monitoring student progress (3.55), instructional resource provider (3.53), and maintain visible presence (3.49).

The data analysis reveals that all seven indicators consistently demonstrate an extensive level of influence, highlighting the multifaceted nature of instructional leadership provided by school heads. These results imply that instructional leadership is a comprehensive and multifaceted role for school heads, encompassing diverse responsibilities aimed at fostering a conducive learning environment, supporting teachers and students, and promoting continuous improvement in education. The extent of their involvement in these various areas highlights the pivotal role they play in shaping the quality of education within their institutions.

With the extensive instructional leadership of school heads, this reaffirmed the widely held belief of Manaseh (2016) indicating that a head of the institution who is an instructional leader is tasked with redefining his or her position in order and becoming the main learner in an environment striving for excellence in education. This is a significant difference from a traditional head of school who spends most of his or her time dealing with administrative duties. As a result, it is the role of the head of school to collaborate with the instructors to manage the program of education. By enhancing their staff members' strengths and minimizing their weaknesses, instructional leaders can help their staff members grow as professionals.

Similarly, Salo et al. (2014) claimed that principals who engage in instructional leadership will have an organized plan for their school and will share this vision with their team in order to advance student learning. Principals who are instructional leaders help teachers further their practice by providing them with the tools they need, coaching and mentoring them, and formal and informal professional development opportunities. The role of instructional leaders is to serve as a resource for teachers who want to develop their teaching methods. Principals said that they find it difficult to be successful instructional leaders due to a lack of time and knowledge or because they feel uncomfortable criticizing teachers' classroom procedures. Brolund (2016) indicated that the ability of principals to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom is increased when they apply these principles of instructional leadership.

Table 2

Summary on the Extent of School Effectiveness

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Clear School Mission	3.57	Extensive
2	High Expectation for Success	3.63	Extensive
3	Instructional Leadership	3.59	Extensive
4	Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task	3.60	Extensive
5	Safe and Orderly Environment	3.56	Extensive
6	Positive Home-School Relations	3.46	Extensive
7	Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress	3.66	Extensive
Overall		**3.58**	**Extensive**

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of school effectiveness. It is exhibited that the overall mean of school effectiveness is 3.58, which is in an extensive level. This means that the school effectiveness is oftentimes evident. Data show that all seven (7) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, frequent monitoring student progress has the highest mean score (3.66). This is followed by highest expectation to success (3.63), opportunity to learn and time on task (3.60), instructional leadership (3.59), clear school mission (3.57), safe and orderly environment (3.56), and positive home-school relations (3.46).

The data analysis reveals that all seven indicators consistently demonstrate an extensive level of influence, underscoring the profound importance of various aspects of school effectiveness. These results imply that school effectiveness is a multifaceted concept, encompassing diverse aspects that are fundamental to effective school leadership. It highlights the pivotal role of school leaders in promoting student success, creating a conducive learning environment, fostering high expectations, and building strong relationships with students and their families.

The favorable findings of this study supported the findings of Magulod, (2017) indicating that the decisive impact of improving conditions at the school level is referred to as school effectiveness. It includes all significant elements connected to administration, instruction, teaching, student learning, and community engagement. Focus is placed on student achievement as well as the interaction of several elements, including management of the classroom, student learning attitude, and involvement. The idea that having an elevated standard for success is a key component of a good school relates to how the institution fosters a culture of high learning expectations for its students, with instructors and staff modeling the notion that every student is capable of doing their absolute best.

According to Saleem et al. (2012), school effectiveness is a factor that influences students' academic progress. Additionally, the fundamental output of successful schools should be student achievement. In order to define and explain what makes schools effective, multiple theories of school effectiveness have been developed. Effective instructional leaders who reinforce the school mission and vision; students are given the opportunity and time to learn; teachers have clear expectations regarding what to teach; and students are given the opportunity and time to succeed.

Generally, several correlates of effective schools have been proposed. Burušić et al. (2016) mentioned that it includes: a clear school mission developed in agreement with and agreed upon by the principal and the teachers; expectations that are shared by the school staff that students are capable of achievement and that teachers can help them succeed; and high expectations shared by parents; positive home-school relations are fostered, and parental involvement in school is stimulated; and student progress is frequently monitored and the results are used to improve their performance.

Table 3

Significance of the Relationship Between the Extent of Instructional Leadership of School Heads and School Effectiveness

Instructional Leadership of School Heads Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p- value	Decision on Ho
Instructional Resource Provider		0.510	0.000	Rejected
Maintain Visible Presence		0.502	0.000	Rejected
	School Effectiveness			
Professional Development		0.589	0.000	Rejected
Maximize Instructional Time		0.585	0.000	Rejected
Monitoring Student Progress		0.552	0.000	Rejected
Feedback on Teaching and Learning		0.579	0.000	Rejected
Curriculum Implementation		0.568	0.000	Rejected
Overall		**0.555**	**0.000**	**Rejected**

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between instructional leadership of school heads and school effectiveness. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .555 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between instructional leadership of school heads and school effectiveness. This shows that instructional leadership of school heads is correlated with school effectiveness.

When assessing the significant relationship, the Pearson r scale was employed. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) stands out as the predominant method for gauging a linear correlation. Ranging from –1 to 1, this numerical value indicates both the strength and direction of the association between two variables. Positive correlation becomes apparent when the result falls between 0 and 1, signifying that when one variable undergoes a change, the other variable follows suit in the same direction. Conversely, a result of 0 indicates no correlation, suggesting the absence of a relationship between the variables when one undergoes a change. Furthermore, negative correlation is evident when the result ranges from 0 to -1, indicating that as one variable changes, the other variable changes in the opposite direction.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that instructional resource provider, maintain visible presence, professional development, maximize instructional time, monitoring students' progress, feedback on teaching and learning, and curriculum implementation revealed computed r-values of 0.510, 0.502, 0.589, 0.585, 0.552, 0.579, and 0.568 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as instructional resource provider, maintain visible presence, professional development, maximize instructional time, monitoring students' progress, feedback on teaching and learning, and curriculum implementation increases, the school effectiveness also increases.

The overall statistical analysis presents compelling evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This underscores the correlation between the quality of instructional leadership and the overall effectiveness of a school, highlighting the pivotal role of school leaders in shaping educational outcomes. Further examination through pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables reveals strong associations between various elements of instructional leadership and school effectiveness. The results emphasize the critical role of instructional leadership in driving school effectiveness. School leaders who excel in providing resources, maintaining a visible presence, supporting professional development, and effectively managing various aspects of instruction contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness of the school and, consequently, to the academic success of students.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted by Alsaleh (2018) revealing that instructional leadership of the school leader is considered to be a key factor in school effectiveness. Ozdemir, Sahin, and Ozturk (2020) stated that instructional leadership is the school leader's practices aimed at achieving success in the teaching-learning process and an effective instructional leader drives all stakeholders towards achieving the school's goals. Thus, instructional leaders influence school outcomes by aligning the school's plans and actions with the mission of the school.

Similarly, Setwong and Prasertcharoensuk (2013) claimed that factors of instructional leadership have direct effects on school effectiveness. Similar to this study, Ali (2017) found that there is a strong relationship between instructional leadership and school effectiveness. Also, Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) confirmed that instructional leadership is one of the most effective leadership models related to school effectiveness and improvement. Likewise, Hassan et al. (2018) claimed that instructional leadership is a leadership model that should be embraced by all school leaders to achieve excellence in schools.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The extent of instructional leadership of school heads means that it is oftentimes evident in the school. In fact, all dimensions are oftentimes evident from the school heads, namely, instructional leadership of school heads in terms of instructional resource provider, maintain visible presence, professional development, maximize instructional time, monitoring students' progress, feedback on teaching and learning, and curriculum implementation. Meanwhile, the school effectiveness is extensive. Apparently, all indicators are found to be high specifically on clear school mission, high expectation for success, instructional leadership, opportunity to learn and time on task, safe and orderly environment, positive home-school relations, and frequent monitoring student progress.

Based on the findings, instructional leadership of school heads and school effectiveness are related. All domains of instructional leadership are linked to the school effectiveness. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

The higher officials in the Department of Education may be provided invaluable insights into the factors that underpin successful educational institutions, helping officials identify best practices and areas of improvement. They may craft professional development programs and training initiatives aimed at enhancing instructional leadership skills among school heads. Ultimately, by comprehensively examining and bolstering instructional leadership in schools, the Department of Education can significantly contribute to the continuous improvement of the Philippine education system and the academic success of its students.

Moreover, school principals may find means in enhancing their leadership skills and strategies. Furthermore, they may empower themselves with a solid foundation of instructional leadership which pave a way to attain school effectiveness. School heads may be equipped with comprehensive understanding of how their leadership impacts the success of their schools, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and student achievement.

Furthermore, teachers may play a pivotal role in supporting instructional leadership of school heads and, subsequently, school effectiveness. To harness this synergy, it is crucial for teachers to actively engage in professional development opportunities that align with the instructional leadership goals set by their school administrators. Furthermore, teachers can contribute to school effectiveness by fostering a positive and constructive teaching and learning environment, aligning their classroom practices with the school's mission and goals, and actively participating in the monitoring of student progress.

Lastly, future researchers may significantly contribute to the advancement of instructional leadership of school heads and the promotion of school effectiveness by continuing to explore these critical domains within educational leadership. They may focus on conducting comprehensive studies that delve into the nuances and intricacies of instructional leadership, examining specific practices and strategies that yield the most significant impact.

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