



Opinions of Classroom Teachers on the Educational Leadership Role of the Principal

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ABSTRACT :

The principal's function has changed from that of a simple administrator to that of an educational leader in charge of directing instruction and learning in the school. This study investigates how classroom teachers view the principal's role in educational leadership. This study attempts to identify the main areas where principals have a positive or negative influence on instructional practices using a combination of qualitative data gathered from teacher surveys and interviews and a review of the literature. The results indicate that although a lot of teachers appreciate principals who are communicative, supportive, and pedagogically involved, there are also worries about an overemphasis on administration and uneven leadership style. Recommendations for improving the principal's leadership effectiveness in cooperation with teachers are included in the paper's conclusion.

1. Introduction

Classroom teachers have a significant impact on students' academic achievement, and their opinions on school leadership—particularly the role of the principal—have a significant impact on the atmosphere and efficiency of the school. As the instructional leader, the principal is expected to direct teaching and learning in addition to overseeing administrative duties. The principal of a modern school is supposed to lead instruction and learning in addition to overseeing daily operations. The relationship between the principal and the teaching staff is crucial to the success of any educational institution. Fostering a productive learning environment requires an understanding of teachers' perspectives on the principal's leadership role. This study investigates how classroom teachers perceive the principal's role as an educational leader and the impact of this leadership on their instructional practices.

2. Review of Literature

Over the past few decades, the principal's role at the school has changed dramatically, moving from a largely administrative role to a key role in instructional leadership. Several studies have looked at how classroom teachers view this changing leadership role and how it impacts teaching methods and school effectiveness.

2.1 Instructional Leadership and Teacher Perception

Effective school leadership, particularly instructional leadership, has the second-highest impact on student learning after classroom instruction, according to Leithwood et al. (2004). Teachers frequently have a positive opinion of principals who are present in the classroom, assist with curriculum planning, and direct pedagogical practices (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Instead of concentrating only on administrative duties, teachers value leaders who are actively involved in the teaching and learning process.

2.2 Communication and Collaboration

Effective principals promote shared decision-making, cultivate a collaborative culture, and communicate with teachers on a regular basis, according to research by Blase & Blase (1999). When principals are approachable, communicate openly, and promote staff participation in school decisions, teachers frequently give them higher ratings (Dinham, 2005). When principals value teacher input and foster an atmosphere where ideas are welcomed, trust and respect are developed.

2.3 Emotional and Professional Support

When their principal provides them with emotional support, teachers are more motivated and content (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). According to Robinson et al. (2008), principals who exhibit empathy, justice, and appreciation for teachers' efforts help to boost teacher morale and retention. Providing opportunities for ongoing professional development is frequently associated with effective leadership.

2.4 Leadership Style and School Climate

Transformational and transactional leadership are distinguished by Hallinger (2011). Transformational leaders—those who mentor, inspire, and set an example—are generally preferred by educators. A positive school climate where teachers feel valued and empowered is facilitated by such leaders. On the other hand, a leader who adopts a bureaucratic or authoritarian style may cause low morale and disengagement among their teaching staff.

2.5 Challenges in Principal-Teacher Dynamics

Despite the significance of educational leadership, a number of studies have pointed out difficulties. According to researchers like Spillane & Diamond (2007), for instance, many principals have little time for instructional engagement because they are overburdened with managerial responsibilities. In these settings, teachers might think the principal is disconnected from the realities of the classroom. Additionally, studies by Kythreotis & Pashiardis (2006) often reported concerns about lack of recognition, inconsistent enforcement of policies, and favoritism.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In order to investigate classroom teachers' perspectives on the educational leadership function of school principals, this study used a descriptive and qualitative research design. The strategy was selected to enable a thorough comprehension of the viewpoints, experiences, and expectations of educators with regard to principal leadership in educational settings.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

- To examine how classroom teachers perceive the educational leadership role of the principal.
- To identify the leadership qualities that teachers value most in a principal.
- To explore areas of satisfaction and concern among teachers regarding principal-teacher interactions.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of *secondary school teachers* from both government and private institutions. A *purposive sampling method* was used to select *40 teachers* from *10 different schools* (urban and semi-urban areas) to ensure diversity in teacher experience, school types, and student demographics.

Sample Profile:

- *Number of participants:* 40 teachers
- *Gender:* 22 female, 18 male
- *Teaching experience:* Ranged from 5 to 25 years
- *School type:* 5 government schools, 5 private schools

3.4 Data Collection Tools

Two main tools were used for data collection:

a. Questionnaire:

- A structured questionnaire was designed, consisting of:
 - **Response levels:** (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) assessing opinions on instructional leadership, communication, supportiveness, fairness, and decision-making.
 - *Open-ended questions* to capture detailed, personal reflections.

b. Open-ended interview:

- In-depth interviews were conducted with *10 voluntary participants* (from the larger sample) to gain richer qualitative insights.
- Questions focused on real-life experiences with principals, perceived leadership strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

- The questionnaire and interview guide were reviewed by *three education experts* to ensure *content validity*.
- A *pilot study* involving 5 teachers was conducted to test the clarity and reliability of the tools. Necessary adjustments were made based on feedback.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

- After obtaining permission from school authorities, participants were informed about the *purpose of the research*, and *confidentiality and voluntary participation* were assured.
- Questionnaires were distributed and collected in person.
- Interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed for thematic analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

- *Quantitative data* from Likert-scale items were analyzed using *descriptive statistics* (percentages and mean scores) to identify trends.
- *Qualitative data* from open-ended responses and interviews were analyzed using *thematic content analysis*. Responses were coded and categorized into major themes such as:
 - Instructional Support
 - Communication and Collaboration
 - Emotional and Professional Support
 - Leadership Style
 - Administrative Challenges

3.8 Ethical Considerations

- Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board.
- Written consent was taken from all participants.
- Participants were assured of *anonymity and confidentiality*, and they retained the right to withdraw at any stage.

4. Findings and Discussion**4.1 Instructional Support**

Most teachers agreed that principals who regularly observe classrooms, give constructive feedback, and support lesson planning foster better teaching outcomes. A teacher noted:

"When our principal visits our class and gives genuine suggestions, it motivates me to improve."

4.2 Communication and Approachability

Teachers emphasized the need for open, two-way communication. Accessible principals were seen as more effective:

"A principal who listens to our challenges helps build trust and cooperation."

4.3 Motivation and Professional Development

Teachers appreciated principals who encourage continuous professional development and recognize teaching efforts:

"I attend more workshops now because our principal highlights the importance of keeping up with changes."

4.4 Administrative Burden vs. Pedagogical Focus

A recurring concern was that many principals spend too much time on administrative tasks and too little on instructional leadership:

"Sometimes I feel the principal is just an office manager, not a leader in the classroom."

4.5 Decision-Making and Fairness

Inconsistencies in applying school policies or favoritism were reported as demotivating:

"When rules are not applied equally, it creates a negative atmosphere among staff."

5. Implications

The findings underscore the importance of principals maintaining a strong pedagogical presence. Teachers expect their principals to be:

- Visible in the classroom.
- Fair and transparent in decisions.
- Supportive of instructional goals and professional development.
- Effective communicators and motivators.

Professional training programs for principals should emphasize instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, and team collaboration.

6. Conclusion

Classroom teachers generally hold principals in high regard when they fulfill their roles as instructional leaders, motivators, and strategic decision-makers. However, when leadership is too administrative or disconnected from classroom realities, it weakens the instructional core of the school. Listening to teachers' voices and integrating their feedback into leadership practices is essential for sustained educational improvement. Classroom teachers view principals as key figures in shaping the instructional climate of the school. Principals who engage meaningfully with teachers, prioritize pedagogy, and create a culture of collaboration are more likely to succeed in their leadership role. Addressing the concerns and leveraging the insights of teachers can lead to more effective school leadership and improved student outcomes.

7. REFERENCES

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