

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN THE URBAN SCHOOLS OF BHUTAN

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Abstract

The main objective of this research was aimed at finding out the relationship between Principal's Instructional Leadership and School Effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan.

Purposive random sampling method was employed to select all the 53 urban schools as the samples based on the 2013 data from the lists of schools in Bhutan. The total number of respondents for the study was 53 school principals and 53 teachers from each of the sample schools spread across the 16 provinces of Bhutan. For data analysis, the principal's instructional leadership score was calculated by averaging the scores of the principal and the selected teacher of the same school. The instrument used for data collection consisted of two sets of the questionnaire; the first one concerning to the Principal's Instructional Leadership variable with four dimensions had 30 measures with reference to 5-point rating scale. The second concerning School Effectiveness variable used the existing secondary data from the national evaluation of the schools in Bhutan for the academic year 2013. This was collected from the school principals.

The overall view of the respondents on the dimensions of principal's instructional leadership was perceived at the high level. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients showed no significant correlation between the overall Principal's Instructional Leadership and School Effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan. There was significant relationship found between professional development and curriculum dimensions of principal's instructional leadership and overall school effectiveness. The correlation was however low positive correlation for the former and little correlation for the latter.

Keywords: Principal's Instructional Leadership, School Effectiveness, Urban schools of Bhutan

INTRODUCTION

Education has been the most powerful impact on determining the future of the children, youth and adults. The world today is concerned about the education and the quality

of education being provided. The UNESCO sponsored World Education Forum (2000) on Education for All (EFA) held in Dakar recognized the quality of education as a crucial component in the broad movement of achieving Education for All. These may be in the form of formal schooling, non-formal education for those with limited or no access to formal education, and informal modes. Development and many significant achievements have been realized in terms of both formal and non-formal education, but the world has still a long way to go to ensure good quality education for millions of children and youth both in and out of the school system.

The step must begin from our schools. It is the school leaders or principals that matter for the excellence of the school. Their responsibility to the school, community and the children has widened. The leadership role and the styles of the principals have a greater impact. Numerous studies have revealed the high quality of the leadership for the positive outcome of the school. Many are of the view that instructional leadership is accountable for the students' performance and school effectiveness. The school principal as the instructional leader plays the pivotal role in the school who affects the quality of instruction by the teacher, students' performance and the degree of efficient school functioning. Findley, B., and Findley, D. (1992, p.102) believe that for a school to be effective one, the instructional leadership of the principal matters. Flath (1989, p.20) agrees that for the condition of effective schools it depends upon the principal too. Ubben and Hughes as cited in Findley, B., and Findley, D. (1992, p.102) claim that the principal keeps the focus on the activities which will enhance high student achievement though he must address the managerial task for school efficiency.

Many studies of effective schools emphasized instructional leadership as one of the features of effective schools. It was the driving force behind the principal to ensure that effective teaching and learning took place in the school. According to Stewart (2006, p.2) "Instructional leadership helps school and communities address the challenge of promoting leadership for quality and teaching." Bush (2007, p.400) instructional leadership is different from the other models of leadership because it focuses on the direction of influence, rather than its nature and source. Instructional leaders are concerned to promote and develop their school as learning organization or professional learning communities in order to bring about the school learning goals for its pupils." Therefore the key role of the principal as a change agent in the model of instructional leadership is to provide resources, curricula and teaching as the highest priority and support to improve instruction and students achievement.

In a study conducted by Edmonds, 1979 as cited in Rogers, D.Kipp (2009) findings identified seven correlates that schools should use in order to increase student achievement. One of the correlates is strong instructional leadership by all administrators and staff members. Research clearly indicates instructional leadership is a strong attribute of effective schools (Rogers, D. Kipp, 2009). Further in the effective school, the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and continually communicates the mission of the school to staff, parents,

and students. In addition, the principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program. The role of the principal as the articulator of the mission of the school is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the school (Lezotte, L., 2001, p.5). “In the effective school, pupil progress over the essential objectives are measured frequently, monitored frequently, and the results of those assessments are used to improve the individual student behaviors and performances, as well as to improve the curriculum as a whole leading to school effectiveness” (Lezotte, L., 2001, p.8).

The findings reflected in various reports provided the evidence that all was not well with the education system of Bhutan (Royal Education Council-National Educational Framework, 2012). The principals being the custodian of the school need to develop a strong education system in their respective schools and make difference in the delivery of quality education to children through teachers in the students’ outcome and to make school effective, it was therefore felt to transform as instructional leader. Instructional leadership is the focus of the leadership directly to teaching and learning. It also refers to the functions that contribute to managerial behaviors to strengthen teacher skills, systematizing of the curriculum, improvement of the organizational structures for effectiveness (Marks, M. Helen, Printy and P. Suran, 2003). School effectiveness is the ability of a school to achieve or exceed its goals. The goals set should be reflective of students’ academic ability. There is a need to take value added scores into consideration of prior achievement of pupils on entry to school (Reynolds, D., 2000) With reference to the positive findings on instructional leadership worldwide, the Bhutanese education system incorporated the change of school leaders as instructional leaders.

Thus, the school leaders or principals’ and the teachers’ are in transitional phase. Especially the school leadership phase in Bhutan is undergoing transformation to adjust scope and style to serve the modern needs where professionalism and competence are the orders of the day. The leaders have to widen and deepen understanding of what leadership really entails in the 21st century for the quality of education and the school effectiveness (Royal Education Council-School Enabling Conditions, 2012). It is the personal initiative of the principal that can be the only reason why many schools perform, in spite of the steep challenges.

This research employed a quantitative data to study the Principal’s Instructional Leadership Dimensions of the Ministry of Education (Bhutan) for the schools. The Principal’s Instructional Leadership was the (X) variable with four dimensions: General Roles and Responsibilities (X_1), Curriculum (X_2), Assessment (X_3) and Professional Development (X_4) (Policy and Planning Division-Guide to School Management, 2012). For the school effectiveness was from the national evaluation developed by the Ministry of Education (Bhutan) to evaluate the effectiveness of the schools in Bhutan. It was the (Y) variable. The following were identified to assess the school effectiveness: Leadership and management Practices (Y_1), Green school: A. Physical Ambience B. Psycho-social Ambience (Y_2), Curriculum: Teaching and classroom

Management Practices (Y₃), Continuous and Holistic Students' Assessment (Formative and Summative) (Y₄), Co-curricular Dimensions: For Wholesome Education (Y₅), School-Community Relationship (Y₆). This assessment was carried out twice in a year by the principal, teachers, relevant students, office staff and members of the School Management Board (SMB) individually and later came to consensus to one. The ratings were justified by the school and later confirmed by the District Education Officer (DEO) and Assistant District Education Officer (ADEO) and Education Monitoring Officers (EMO) by visiting the schools. The characteristics were very fundamental to the overall development of the school and the students in learning processes (Policy and Planning Division-Educating for Gross National Happiness, 2010). This could help us to modify, redefine and leap forward the instructional leadership.

Conducting research on the relationship between Principal's Instructional Leadership and School Effectiveness in the urban schools would suggest appropriate actions to improve educational quality. It would also reveal the effectiveness of the principal's instructional leadership in the schools. The results would help further enhance and bring forth notable improvement and change. It would explain what works well and what needs to be done to further improve the Principal's Instructional Leadership and School Effectiveness. This would serve as a guide to overcome the problems mentioned above to achieve success in providing quality education and in making the schools effective (Royal Education Council-School Enabling Conditions, 2012).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the dimensions of principal's instructional leadership in the urban schools of Bhutan.
2. To study the relationship between principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative approach to study the principal's instructional leadership practices and the relationship between principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan.

A. Source of Data

The samples of the study were selected from the population of 53 urban schools based on the 2013 data of the list of urban schools in Bhutan by purposive random sampling method. The samples were 53 urban schools of Bhutan spread across 16 provinces of Bhutan. The respondents were 53 school principals and 53 teachers from each of the sample schools.

B. Statistical Design

This was a quantitative research that used two variables mentioned below for the study.

Variables: There were two variables: Principal's Instructional Leadership was the (X) variable with four dimensions developed by the Ministry of Education, Bhutan namely, General Roles and Responsibilities (X_1), Curriculum (X_2), Assessment (X_3) and Professional Development (X_4).

School Effectiveness was the (Y) variable with six dimensions: Leadership and management Practices (Y_1), Green school: A. Physical Ambience B. Psycho-social Ambience (Y_2), Curriculum: Teaching and classroom Management Practices (Y_3), Continuous and Holistic Students' Assessment (Formative and Summative) (Y_4), Co-curricular Dimensions: For Wholesome Education (Y_5), School-Community Relationship (Y_6). This was developed by the Ministry of Education, Bhutan to evaluate the schools.

C. Instrumentation

The research instrument for the principal's instructional leadership had 30 measures with 5-point rating scale. The measures were constructed based on the four dimensions of principal's instructional leadership in Bhutan after the literature review on the topic. The research instrument was reviewed for the validity by the experts. The Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated based on the experts rating. All the 30 measures had the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) of 1.00. The questionnaire was checked for reliability test with 15 respondents who were not in the sample size. The Cronbach's (alpha) reliability coefficient was calculated at 0.933.

For school effectiveness, the existing data from the national evaluation for 2013 academic year was collected from the school principals.

D. Data collection and analysis

The data was collected from the 53 principals and 53 teachers of the 53 sample schools spread across the 16 provinces in Bhutan. The principal's instructional leadership score was calculated by averaging the scores of the principal and the selected teacher of the same school. For the school effectiveness the existing data of the academic year 2013 scored by the respective school from national evaluation was collected from the school principal. After the data collection, the following procedures of data analysis were operated through SPSS.

The mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) was analyzed for the dimensions of principal's instructional leadership with reference to 5-point rating scale. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients was analyzed to study the relationship between principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan.

Findings of the Research

1. The result of the study on the dimensions of the principal's instructional leadership in the urban schools of Bhutan revealed that the overall principal's instructional leadership was at the high level. In investigating the individual dimensions, the principal's roles in the curriculum and the professional development were perceived at the high level whereas the general roles and responsibilities and the principal's role in assessment were at the very high level.

2. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients produced by the data analysis revealed that there was no significant correlation relationship between the overall Principal's Instructional Leadership and overall School Effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan ($r = .189$, $p < .05$).

There was significant relationship found between professional development and curriculum dimensions of principal's instructional leadership and overall school effectiveness ($r = .304$, $p < .05$, and $r = .294$, $p < .05$, respectively). The correlation was however low positive correlation for the former and little correlation for the latter.

Also, there was little significant correlation coefficient found between the professional development dimension (X4) of principal's instructional leadership and co-curricular: for wholesome development dimension of school effectiveness (Y5), with $r = .337$, $p < .05$ (low positive correlation). No significant relationship was found among the other principal's instructional leadership dimensions and school effectiveness dimensions.

DISCUSSIONS

This section provides a discussion of the results of the present study which studied the dimensions of principal's instructional leadership and the relationship between the principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan.

1. To study the dimensions of Principal's Instructional leadership.

The dimensions of overall principal's instructional leadership were at high level. The transition into instructional leadership for the principals was a new concept in Bhutan. All agree that principal instructional leadership was crucial for the realization of effective schools vision but it's seldom practiced. The result reminded the need to improve the instructional leadership of the Principals. Many researchers have found instructional leadership as one important aspect of school effectiveness. Edmonds, 1979 as cited in Rogers, D. Kipp (2009) identified strong instructional leadership of the principals by all administrators and staff members as a strong correlate. Research clearly indicated principal instructional leadership as a strong attribute of effective schools (Rogers, D. Kipp., 2009). Many believed that the school effectiveness solely depended upon the characteristics of the principal, and the leadership styles (Findley, B. and Findley, D., 1992, p.102).

2. To study the relationship between the principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between Principal's Instructional Leadership and School Effectiveness in the urban schools of Bhutan surprised the researcher. There was no significant correlation between the two main variables (X and Y) ($r=.189$).

As stated in Hallinger (2003, p.329) the shift from principal as manager to principal as instructional leader has not yet been effective. The instructional leadership is not effective in Bhutan too. Instructional leadership in schools continues to be a challenge today, firstly due to its narrow definition cast against the large number of roles of the principal. In Bhutan, the transition into instructional leadership began just few years ago. Many schools principals lacked the ideas of instructional leadership as well as other leadership types and theories. The lack of such ideologies of leadership may be the reason for not having significance.

Also it was found that all was not well with the education system of Bhutan. Although there has been considerable improvement in terms of access and enrollment, at different points the research findings, various reports and public reactions gave the evidence that there were low student performances at all levels, lack of effective management practices, over centralization of decision making, a feeling of powerless and low self-esteem among school leaders and teachers. There was over all culture of passivity entrenched in the education system (Royal Education Council-National Education Framework, 2012)

The other reason could be that when one variable increases in value, the second variable decreases in value. The descriptive analyses showed the first variable with increased value while the second variable with decreased value. And also when we have small samples, for example only a few participants, moderate correlations may misleadingly not reach significance. The respondents may have biased their response of to the higher level also. It could also be the distribution of the response. The respondents may have ignored their weakness and randomly rated in the higher level. They may not have taken the survey questionnaire seriously. It could be that the instrument may have been sensitive enough to assess principals' perceptions on their instructional behavior.

While for the school effectiveness the ratings were done jointly in the school. The chance for being biased was very limited. Thus, the occurrence of correlation or significance was deterred. However, this also informed that although many schools practice instructional leadership still the leaders continue as the manager-administrator. Many agree that instructional leadership is crucial for the realization of effective schools vision but it's seldom practiced. Many focus only one tenth of their time to provide instructional leadership. The concept and practice of instructional leadership is so much of a challenge to the Bhutanese principals. They do not practice instructional leader citing lack of in-depth training as instructional leader or lack

of time to execute instructional duties. Thus, it demands a realistic and futuristic training for the principals'. They must be trained and made aware on the different leadership skills and theories apart from being instructional leaders. This would immensely benefit them as the school leaders. They may use the skills and traits of leadership in running the school effectively.

However, the result analysis hinted the need to improve the educational leadership of the principal's as instructional leaders and the teachers too. There was a need for reform in the system. A need to deliberate, discuss and explore new and effective horizons for the principal's Instructional leadership. Thus, it would greatly help in shaping the school effectiveness and instructional leadership. It's in the hands of the Principals' to uplift the school. Flath, B (1989, p.20) agrees that for the condition of effective schools depends upon the principal too. Many studies of effective schools emphasized instructional leadership as one of the features of effective schools. It is the driving force behind the principal to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place in the school.

To further discuss about the principal's instructional leadership dimensions, the general roles and responsibilities of the principal's instructional leadership had no correlation with school effectiveness. This revealed that the general roles and responsibilities of the principals were not at par with the school effectiveness. Leithwood, et al (2006, p.5) argued "instructional leaders often make important second order change such as building a shared vision, improving communication, and developing collaborative decision making processes." However a weakness in both leadership concepts of instructional and transformational leadership is that it presents a view of leadership that resides in the individual leader. This neglected the fact that leadership context bound and exists among the followers. If leadership is to be effective it must be validated by the consent of followers (Sheppard, B and Anderson, Kirk, 2013). The result informed that the school leaders in Bhutan needed to understand and apply the various skills and traits of instructional leadership appropriately.

The second dimension curriculum of principal's instructional leadership had little significance ($r = .284$, $p < .05$) with school effectiveness. However the significance level was not very high as it was just little correlation. This showed that there was a statistically significant correlation between the dimension and the variable.

It reflected the concern of the principal for the curriculum and its appropriate implementation. Many school leaders do take active role to implement the curriculum effectively. The curriculum is indeed a ready-made document to be used by the schools without having to modify. The principals' can easily guide and support its implementation. Southworth as cited by Bush (2007, p.401) says that "instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, and includes the professional learning of teachers as well as student growth". Thus, leaders' influence and concern for curriculum would further enhance student learning via teachers. The schools maybe given the freedom to modify the curriculum

based on the location, culture and ethnicity. A school level curriculum could be developed from the main curriculum of the government.

This dimension of principal's instructional leadership, assessment had no correlation. This indicated that there was a weak relationship between the dimension and the variable (Y). It implied that there was a need to check and work on the improvement of the assessment policy and the system. Schools must have a clear policy and strictly implemented. It was found mandatory to have the assessment policy in written and known by the teachers, students and parents. However, the success of it depended on the principal and the teachers. This must be collaboratively carried out by the principals and the teachers in a holistic way to benefit our children.

Chappuis, et al. (2004) pointed that to provide necessary steps that principals needed to implement solid assessment systems. Administrators must: 1) assist in the development of a clearly articulated and appropriate set of achievement standards for each student as the foundation for quality assessment, 2) have a commitment to providing accurate, understandable, and usable information about student achievement to all users of assessment results, 3) build an assessment-literate culture, 4) consider how best to collect, store, manage, and communicate information about student achievement, and 5) lay a foundation of assessment policy that supports quality practices. This would greatly help the assessment system to improve and benefit the learners.

The professional development dimension of principal's instructional leadership had little significant correlation ($r = .304$, $p < .05$) with the school effectiveness. This revealed that the school principals' were concerned about the professional development of themselves and the fellow teachers. This indicated that all the schools have professional development programs in place. It reflected the presence of sound professionalism of the principals' to enhance the staff and the learners but still more had to be done to increase the correlation. The principal and teachers share responsibility for staff development, curricular development, and supervision of instructional tasks. This dimension even had significant relation with Co-curricular Dimensions: For wholesome development ($r = .337$, $p < .05$). This clearly indicated the presence of sound professional development programs in the school and the professionalism of the principal to improve the school and the staff. The principal was not the sole instructional leader but the leader of instructional leaders. A study done by Davis and Nicklos, 1986 as cited in Sim, Quah Cheng (2011) proved that the principal's role is indispensable in promoting staff development program to achieve the school's goals.

In conclusion the instructional leadership was also one of the most useful tools in creating a forward-looking environment. Almost everyone agrees that the key to improving student achievement and school effectiveness are quality instructional leadership. But there are still some questions as to what being an instructional leader means Prytula, Michelle (2013).

There are many roles to be established although the Principal's performed their role successfully. It points that instructional leadership role must be sustained and established continuously to its best to enhance School effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study provided a useful base from which to draw conclusions regarding the views of the principals role as an instructional leader. The study concluded that there were many roles to be established although the principals performed their roles successfully. It pointed out that instructional leadership role must be sustained and established continuously to its best to enhance school effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the findings of this study, the followings are recommended.

Recommendation for application

1. The principals and teachers must be made aware of their specific roles in the school as an instructional leadership. The various leadership traits, styles and concepts need to be incorporated or implemented for moving forth to the 21st century.
2. The assessment policy in the school maybe reviewed and reformed to bring about fair assessment system and further improve the teachers as well as the learners.
3. Effective school is one major component to enhance and enrich our students. Thus, school principal and the teachers must share and adopt various ways and means to make the school effective by enhancing the curriculum and professional development further.

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