

The Role of Instructional Leadership in Enhancing Teacher Learning Services for Improved Educational Outcomes: A Literature Reviews

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of instructional leadership in improving teacher learning services to enhance the quality of education. The objective is to explore how principals, as instructional leaders, foster teacher professionalism, improve instructional materials, and create conducive learning environments. A literature reviews method was used to gather and analyze data from relevant academic sources, including books, articles, and policy documents. Key findings highlight that instructional leadership directly contributes to teacher professional development by encouraging innovative teaching practices, facilitating collaboration, and providing feedback for continuous improvement. This leadership approach enhances teacher's capacity to address student needs effectively, apply innovative teaching methods, and foster both academic and personal growth in students. Furthermore, the study identifies five components of effective instructional leadership: focusing on learning, fostering collaboration, analyzing student achievement, supporting teacher development, and adapting curricula and assessments to current demands. These actions ultimately improve the quality of teacher learning services and positively impact student achievement. The study concludes that instructional leadership is a critical factor in achieving high-quality education, underscoring the interconnected roles of principals and teachers in the learning process.

Keywords: *Instructional leadership, Teacher learning services, Educational quality, Professional development, Student achievement.*



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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in national development by shaping high-quality Human Resources (HR), which is a key effort in enhancing the intellectual capacity of the nation. Investing in human resources through education serves as a critical mechanism for fostering a country's economic growth. A primary focus in the development of education systems worldwide is the enhancement of education quality. A significant aspect of this endeavor is the role of the principal as an effective instructional leader. Instructional leadership is defined as a principal's efforts to shape teaching and learning practices within a school by providing sufficient support, fostering the professional development of teachers, and cultivating a student-centered school culture (Blase & Blase, 2003).

Education is also a crucial element in improving the quality of life within a society. Teachers play an essential role in advancing education quality. As professionals, they are responsible for educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students (Chapman & Adams, 2002). Furthermore, they serve as facilitators, motivators,

and developers of students' abilities throughout the teaching and learning process. Consequently, the competence of teachers significantly impacts education quality. Instructional leadership focuses on the teaching and learning process and aims to enhance teacher performance by fostering professionalism, improving instructional materials, and creating a conducive learning environment. This study explores how instructional leadership contributes to the enhancement of teacher learning services.

The study adopts a literature reviews approach, drawing comparisons across various relevant sources and study. By promoting teacher professionalism, enriching the quality of instructional materials, and fostering a positive learning atmosphere, instructional leadership effectively enhances teacher performance. The primary aim of this study is to further investigate the role of instructional leadership in improving teacher learning services. It also examines how this leadership approach supports teachers in developing innovative and creative skills while inspiring and motivating their students.

METHODS

This study employs a literature reviews or library study method, which involves reviewing relevant sources to gather the required data, as suggested by Arikunto (2013). According to Danandjaja in Noviani & Sa'adah (2023), literature study involves utilizing scientifically designed references, encompassing the collection of materials related to study objectives, data collection techniques based on library resources, and the integration and presentation of data. This method relies on a compilation of information and data derived from documents, books, articles, magazines, news, and other sources. The articles referenced in this study primarily focus on education financing and the quality of education. The main characteristics of library studies, as described by Zed (2014), include: 1) Direct engagement with textual or numerical data; 2) Ready availability of library data; 3) Dependence on secondary sources; and 4) Freedom from spatial and temporal constraints. The steps involved in conducting library study, as outlined by Sari & Asmendri (2020), are: 1) Selecting a broad topic related to the study theme; 2) Gathering information relevant to the theme; 3) Defining the core focus of the study; 3) Identifying and categorizing the necessary reading materials; 4) Understanding the materials and making detailed study notes; 5) Reviewing and supplementing the reading materials; and 6) Reorganizing the materials and initiating the writing process.

The data analysis technique used in this study is content analysis. The analysis process begins by examining study findings that are categorized as most relevant, moderately relevant, or less relevant. The studies are reviewed chronologically, starting with the most recent and progressing to older works.

RESULTS

3.1 Principal Instructional Leadership

Leadership, as defined by Syahril (2019), is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group to establish and achieve specific goals. It involves a leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and mobilize subordinates to execute tasks aligned with predetermined

organizational objectives. Instructional leadership derives from the word "lead", which originated in the 13th century from the Anglo-Saxon term meaning the path a ship takes to guide sailors. Bush describes a leader as someone who sets goals motivates subordinates, and takes action to ensure their objectives are met. A leader also empowers teachers and school staff, represents the school, directs initiatives, and inspires subordinates. School instructional leadership emphasizes encouraging academic services that address students' needs and integrity. Instructional leadership, as explained by Sukmawati & Herawan (2016), involves principals prioritizing learning by guiding, directing, and influencing teachers in their teaching and learning activities to deliver quality education to students. Similarly, Aslam et al (2022) note that instructional leadership or learning leadership represents actions taken by principals to influence and encourage teachers to establish a productive work environment conducive to effective student learning. This environment encompasses various elements, such as curriculum, teaching and learning processes, evaluation systems, and teacher development programs. According to Rathana & Sutarsih (2015), instructional leadership involves defining and communicating school goals, monitoring and evaluating lessons, coordinating instructional efforts, fostering teacher development, safeguarding instructional time, and motivating both students and teachers. Desfiyanti et al (2021) further highlight key outcomes of effective instructional leadership: 1) Providing professional support for teachers to deliver quality learning; 2) Implementing innovative learning management systems to adapt to new educational requirements; and 3) Inspiring and motivating school members to maintain optimism in achieving shared goals. Additionally, principals must possess the ability to convince stakeholders of the necessity of change to achieve better results. They facilitate the change process, help resolve problems, and build strong relationships with all parties involved. Southworth identified two strategies for effective instructional leadership based on qualitative study involving primary school principals in England and Wales: 1) Teacher modeling (Principals demonstrate exemplary practices for teachers to emulate); and 2) Teacher monitoring (Principals observe classroom teaching to evaluate and improve teacher performance).

Since various instructional leadership models have been proposed by experts, no single model fits all scenarios. Effective principals monitor teaching progress, observe classroom activities, and provide constructive feedback. This contrasts with ineffective principals, who often rely on assumptions like, "My teachers are professionals; I let them work independently in the classroom". Principals must understand evaluation theories and be capable of conducting teacher observations and assessments effectively. Rutherford (2023) adds that good principals assist teachers positively and supportively, such as by rewarding outstanding work or providing curriculum guidance. They also offer immediate support when teaching challenges arise, rather than delaying interventions. Honesty in leadership builds trust among subordinates, which is essential in emergency or critical situations. Leaders may assume formal or informal roles; formal leaders are appointed officially through decrees, while informal leaders are chosen by their groups without official documentation. In instructional leadership, principals must supervise all school staff while facilitating opportunities for professional development through education and training programs, both internal and external to the school. Huber & West (2002) describes instructional leadership as synonymous with terms such as educational leadership, school leadership, vision leadership, learning leadership, and supervisory leadership. This form of leadership focuses on improving student learning outcomes through the professional

empowerment of teachers. Hallinger, as cited by Wardani & Indriayu (2015), outlines the characteristics of effective instructional leadership as follows: 1) Understanding and promoting the school's vision by engaging the school community and ensuring its effective implementation; 2) Involving stakeholders in participatory school management; 3) Providing support for teaching and learning processes; 4) Monitoring classroom activities to gain insights into the school's instructional practices; and 5) Facilitating the resolution of learning challenges and assisting teachers in overcoming obstacles.

Based on these perspectives, the instructional leadership model can be seen as a leadership approach that prioritizes academic outcomes by enhancing teacher performance in delivering instruction. While instructional leadership is a critical component of effective leadership, it is equally important to recognize that teachers play a significant role in shaping student learning outcomes, highlighting the interconnected nature of their responsibilities within an educational organization.

3.2 Learning Services

Learning services are processes designed to actively engage students in a meaningful learning environment, encouraging them to explore, discover, and master educational materials. These services aim to foster students' desire to learn while instilling positive learning attitudes and habits. Shobayar (2017), defines learning services as the quality of educational support received by students, encompassing teacher competence, smooth service delivery, feedback, daily interactions, classroom comfort, and learning outcomes. Assessing the quality of learning services is essential to ensure that they are optimal, efficient, and effective. In alignment with this perspective, Islam & Padang (2022) assert that educators must adapt their teaching methods to support the growth and development of students according to their age and needs. Additionally, learning services must consider situational factors, such as limited face-to-face interaction, which may require alternative approaches. Learning services include guidance and counseling designed to help students (or clients) develop appropriate learning attitudes, adapt to tailored materials, and address specific challenges within their educational journey.

Sanjaya, as cited in Novembli et al (2015), emphasizes that teachers play an indispensable role in the learning process. Despite advances in technology, teachers remain essential as resources, mentors, facilitators, managers, demonstrators, motivators, and evaluators. With their expanding professional responsibilities, teachers are expected to ensure student learning, contribute to curriculum development, enhance their professional growth, provide guidance, identify educational challenges, and assess student progress.

This aligns with Nurdin (2016), who notes that societal growth and the increasing demand for quality education require an equivalent improvement in the educational services provided by teachers. To address this need, the government has established Minimum Service Standards (SPM) for schools, ranging from primary to tertiary education levels. These standards outline the technical requirements for school activities, particularly in primary and secondary education. The Ministry of National Education has set these standards for elementary schools, detailing the legal framework, educational objectives, competency standards, curriculum, student requirements, staffing, facilities, and school management. Key regulations include Republic of Indonesia Law No. 2/1989 concerning the National Education System, updated through Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20/2003; Government Regulation No. 29 on Secondary Education; and the Minister of Education

and Culture Decree 055/U/94 concerning teacher requirements. For elementary schools, the objectives include enabling students to develop reading, writing, arithmetic skills, and foundational knowledge appropriate to their developmental stage, while preparing them to transition to junior high school. The competency standards for elementary school students are: 1) Exhibiting morality and noble character; 2) Demonstrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes aligned with curriculum demands; 3) Developing intelligence, cognitive abilities, and fundamental skills; and 4) Achieving overall capability by educational goals.

Based on these definitions, teacher learning services can be seen as a blend of guidance and counseling that supports students in cultivating productive learning habits, adapting to learning materials suited to their pace and challenges, and achieving broader educational goals. Teachers facilitate students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor growth while imparting knowledge, values, morals, manners, and serving as role models throughout the learning process. The ultimate goal of learning services is to enhance the performance of teachers and school staff, ensuring that students receive the best possible support. This approach enables schools to track student achievements systematically every semester, contributing to the continuous improvement of educational outcomes.

3.3 Contribution of Instructional Leadership in Improving Teacher Learning Services

Instructional leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher learning services by enabling teachers to design learning materials that align with students' learning paces and challenges. It also enhances teachers' skills and competencies, contributing to their professional growth and improved teaching quality. Consequently, instructional leadership allows teachers to deliver better instruction, which ultimately leads to improved student achievement. Moreover, instructional leadership helps teachers navigate the potential negative impacts of technology by fostering a positive and supportive learning environment. It encourages teachers to be more creative and innovative, inspiring students to think critically and embrace new ideas. Thus, instructional leadership is essential for improving teacher learning services, increasing student success, and enhancing the overall quality of education. The professional competency of teachers is a fundamental aspect of improving school quality and boosting student achievement. School principals, as instructional leaders, play a pivotal role in this process. To lead effectively, principals must possess the ability and readiness to direct, guide, and manage others toward achieving shared goals. The principal's actions in formulating and communicating school objectives, monitoring and supporting teaching efforts, building a positive academic climate, and facilitating effective communication between students and teachers exemplify instructional leadership. This type of leadership can occur both directly and indirectly. Direct instructional leadership involves principals actively supporting and encouraging teachers and staff to develop professionally, make collaborative decisions, and align the school's vision and values with quality education goals.

Fatonah (2022), identifies five key components of school administration that contribute to improving teacher performance through instructional leadership: 1) Focusing on learning as the central objective; 2) Fostering collaboration among school staff; 3) Analyzing student achievement data for informed decision-making; 4) Supporting teacher development through training and mentoring; and 5) Adjusting curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessments to meet current needs. At its core, instructional leadership

refers to the actions taken by school principals to cultivate a school environment conducive to continuous improvement in management and teaching processes. This leadership style aims to create a learning environment that stimulates students to achieve their best potential. Effective instructional leaders address both learning and curricular challenges, both of which significantly influence student outcomes. According to Eggen & Kauchak (2012), instructional leadership involves creating a productive work environment that enhances teacher performance, thereby enabling better learning conditions for students.

The impact of instructional leadership on the quality of elementary school teachers' learning is substantial. By adopting instructional leadership practices, teachers find it easier to develop and enhance their skills to fulfill their roles as educators. Instructional leaders create a supportive school environment tailored to the professional development needs of teachers. Therefore, this study emphasizes that school principals must possess and apply instructional leadership skills to transform teacher performance and achieve meaningful improvements in school education quality.

CONCLUSIONS

Effective instructional leadership is essential in creating an environment conducive to quality learning. A school principal who actively engages in the learning process can encourage teachers to adopt more creative and effective teaching approaches. With continuous support and guidance from instructional leadership, teachers can enhance their professional capacity. This includes aspects such as planning and implementing lessons, evaluating student learning outcomes, and fostering collaboration and professional training among teachers. Such efforts enable teachers to share best practices and receive constructive feedback, which is crucial for ongoing improvement. Ultimately, with proper support and supervision from the principal, effective instructional leadership has a direct impact on improving the quality of student learning. With this support, teachers can focus more effectively on addressing students' needs, applying innovative teaching methods, and creating a supportive learning environment that fosters both academic and personal growth for students. In conclusion, instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of student learning.

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