



The Role of Principals' Instructional Leadership in Effectiveness of Teaching at Secondary Level

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Abstract

Principals in secondary schools are instructional leaders of schools. The study investigated the role of principals' instructional leadership in effectiveness of teaching at secondary level. Study's objectives were to; find out the current instructional leadership practices of secondary schools' principals, identify the effectiveness of teaching and investigate the relationship of principals' instructional leadership with effectiveness of teaching. Study used quantitative correlational design. Its population was 137 principals in district Swat KP. The sample 102 principals was selected with simple random procedure. Instrument for collecting data was questionnaire that was developed, validated and piloted. Data were gathered through self-visits and analyzed using mean scores, standard deviation, and chi-square test and Pearson correlation. The study found that principals provide clear vision for instructions, observe teaching lessons, encourage teachers' collaboration for teaching and focus on students' achievement. Teaching in secondary schools was based on students' learning outcomes, instruction was differentiated, critical thinking and problem solving skills developed, formative assessment was lacking and students were not involved in teachers' evaluation. Recommendations were principals' professional development in instructional leadership and use of formative assessment for effective feedback of students.

Key words: Role, Principals' Instructional Leadership, Effectiveness, Teaching Learning Process, Secondary Level

Introduction

Principals' instructional leadership at secondary level encompasses the formulation of schools' vision, arrangement of the teaching activities and the development of conducive school culture for students' learning. These elements serve as foundation for the effective teaching learning process in secondary schools that ultimately have significant contribution in the students' achievement. In current times, principals' role in secondary schools have become much more dynamic that not only includes administration of the overall school but a greater focus on students' achieving learning outcomes through effective teaching (Hallinger, 2011). For ensuring effective teaching in secondary schools, instructional leadership among principals enable them to integrate the curricula, teaching and assessment for achieving the mission of the school. The idea of principal

as an instructional leader gained popularity in the last quarter of the twentieth century and research studies established it as a key factor for effectiveness of schools (Robinson et al., 2008). Leithwood et al. (2008), elaborated the concept of instructional leadership through inclusion of transformational leadership qualities like collaboration, delegation of power and building of capacity. Instructional leadership in these days is regarded as a support for teaching learning, teaching effectiveness and making informed decisions on the basis of data. In the context of Pakistan, secondary education sector is faced with the issues of low quality in teaching mainly due to the absence of instructional leadership among principals in secondary schools. This is due to the challenges of principals with lack of in-service professional development, insufficient resource allocations, centralization of powers and lack of authority in governance of the schools (Rehman et al., 2015). Principals are recruited on the criterion of promotion from among the teachers of the education department with little or no skills of instructional leadership for effective administrations of the schools at secondary level. The situation becomes much more worst as majority of principals are more focused on the administration of secondary schools instead of giving priority to the teaching learning process (Shah, 2006). Moreover, the lack of clear cut instructional leadership roles and policies, bureaucratic control of educational officials and little autonomy hinder the principals for playing vibrant roles in instructional leadership of secondary schools (Bajwa & Shah, 2018). Leithwood et al. (2020) advocated the inclusion of instructional leadership, financial management and self-learning for the preparation of principals in secondary schools. In the context of Pakistan, on the contrary, programs for the leadership development of principals at secondary level are missing and if there are any they are more focused on the managerial roles of principals in secondary schools with little or no focus on effective instructional leadership roles of principals (Khan & Iqbal, 2012).

Literature Review

Principals' instructional leadership in secondary schools is a complex phenomenon, comprising monitoring the instruction, guide teachers' professional development, assess teachers' performance, provide resources for teaching and school environment that is focused on the maximum learning of students. Research studies have identified that secondary schools' principals who have regular observations of the classrooms, provide constructive and timely feedback significantly improve the quality of teaching and students' academic achievement (Rigby, 2014). Principals as instructional leaders set ideal targets for students and teachers through constructive interactions in the teaching learning process that assists in the achievement of schools' academic goals (Marzano et al., 2005). Hallinger and Heck (2010) highlighted the role of principals' instructional leadership in provision of platform for school based professional development of teachers, collaboration and mentorship which enable the teachers to enjoy collegiality and focus on making their teaching more effective. Effective teaching learning process is one of the key elements of successful secondary schools, as students in such schools develop their skills and prepare themselves for entry into various disciplines of higher or tertiary education. Effective instruction at the level of secondary schools, affect students' learning outcomes and determine the way for their success or failure in life to come (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Effective teaching is the combination of proper planning, its delivery, assessment of teaching strategies and ensuring of students' involvement in the teaching for better achievement and the realization of learning outcomes (Stronge, 2018). It further includes clarity of instructional objectives, adjustable method of teaching, instruction with differentiation and constructive feedback for supporting all the students. In the context of effective teaching learning is not only focused on the delivery of narrow content areas but the development of students' critical thinking and interpersonal skills at the level of secondary schools (Hattie, 2009). The effectiveness of the teaching is based on principals'

instructional leadership and there is the need of agreement between the objectives of curriculum, strategies of instruction, needs of students and assessment strategies (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Effective teaching is based on constructivism where students are more responsible for their learning, experiential learning, problem solving and formative assessment (Slavin, 2019). Such teaching ensures students' active involvement in the teaching learning process, peer collaboration and therefore, at secondary level, teachers are required to go beyond superficial reading and writing to the world of reality with problem solving and critical thinking (Means et al., 2013). Effective teaching makes use of activities, portfolios, peer assessment, constructive feedback and students' centered approaches to help students realize the achievement of desired learning outcomes (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, ensuring effective teaching learning process at secondary level is difficult due to the absence of instructional leadership among secondary school principals. Due to it the teaching pedagogies are outdated, teachers' training is inadequate and the assessment mechanism is faulty (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, the situation in the rural and far-flung hilly areas is much more worst with little focus on the fulfillment of basic requirements for secondary schools (Rehman et al., 2015). The lack of teachers' motivation, absence of regularity and punctuality and non-provision of the professional development opportunities for secondary school teachers make impossible the realization of effective teaching at this level (Barber, 2010). For ensuring effective teaching there have been initiatives in the country and in this connection the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan give special attention to the significance of in-service training for teachers at secondary level that may ensure the active participation of students in the teaching and may properly develop the knowledge, skills and values of students at this level (Government of Pakistan, 2009). Principals' instructional leadership in secondary schools is vital for the effectiveness of the teaching. Principals with instructional leadership positively engage in the teaching, provide healthy school environment, guide teachers for effective teaching and serve as mentors for teachers' professional development (Hallinger, 2011). In the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, where the sector of secondary education is characterized with low quality of teaching, the principal can provide significant contributions in the development of effective teaching at this level with instructional leadership (Bajwa & Shah, 2018). Leithwood et al. (2004) found that principals ensure quality teaching through making positive interventions in provision of resources and guidance for the teachers at secondary level. Moreover, research studies at the global level have identified a significant relationship between principals' instructional leadership and schools' teaching effectiveness (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Principals with regular classrooms' observation, effective feedback help significantly in the development of effective teaching in secondary schools (Rigby, 2014). Instructional leadership of principals set standards for the teaching performance of teachers and they strive hard for achieving excellence in their teaching (Marzano et al., 2005). Principals who collaborate with teachers encourage teachers to have involvement of students in the teaching that improves the achievement of students (Louis et al., 2010). Majority of secondary school principal are more focused on the administrative side of their schools at secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and have little or no care for the instructional leadership in their schools which results in the poor quality of teaching in these schools (Bajwa & Shah, 2018). Shah (2006) found that in the context of the province, principals have absence of professional development and more specifically in the area of professional development which makes them blank for supervision of teachers and secondary schools have low quality of teaching. This situation becomes much more worst with lack of sufficient resources and the availability of properly trained teachers (Rehman et al., 2015). This scenario speaks for the urgent capacity building of secondary schools' principals in instructional leadership to help improve the quality of teaching (Khan & Iqbal, 2012). Research recommend the provision of professional development for secondary school principals in

supervision of the teaching, assessment and mentoring of teachers (Desimone, 2009). Through instructional leadership principals directs the teaching of teachers that may provide differentiated instruction to students and assist them in making effective achievement (Marzano et al., 2005).

In the current times, instructional leadership among principals at secondary level has become a vital component of the school administration for ensuring effective teaching (Hallinger, 2011). The research literature in the global context establishes that principals influence classroom teaching with their leadership and help in the development of effective teaching learning process at secondary level (Leithwood et al., 2020). Principals with effective instructional leadership provides environment of effective teaching (Robinson et al., 2008). However, in the context of Pakistan, little attention is provided to the instructional leadership of principals at secondary level due to which there are enormous challenges in the teaching quality of secondary schools. In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, there is lack of guidance for teaching, weak teachers' training mechanism that hinders effective teaching (Rehman et al., 2015). Though the policies speak for the development of strong instructional leadership in secondary schools but there is lack of governmental will which hinders the development of such qualities among principals and ultimately results in the poor quality of teaching at secondary level (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training [MoFEPT], 2021). Moreover, principals serves administrative head than instructional leaders for the development of the teaching learning process (Bajwa & Shah, 2018). Research studies have mostly focused on the administrative functions of principals in secondary schools (Shah, 2006; Khan & Iqbal, 2012), there is the need of empirical research on instructional leadership of principals the way they affect the effectiveness of teaching in secondary schools. Moreover, majority of the research studies are focused on the context of urban regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This gap is significant for understanding the instructional leadership role of principals in secondary schools and the ensuring of the effective teaching learning process. Therefore, the study investigated the role of principals' instructional leadership in effective teaching at secondary level to find the current principals' instructional leadership practices and suggest measures for improving instructional leadership among secondary schools' principals to help improve teaching effectiveness in secondary schools.

Methodology

The design of the study was quantitative correlational. Correlational design is appropriate for the establishment of relationship between two quantitative variables (Mills and Gay, 2012). The population of the study was 137 public sector male secondary school principals in district Swat KP, Pakistan (District Educational Management Information System (DEMIS) District Swat, 2024). A sample size of 102 respondent principals was determined with Raosoft online calculator for determining samples. The sample was selected with simple random procedure making use of the table containing random numbers. A questionnaire containing the demographic information, principals' instructional leadership practices and effective teaching was developed with the assistance of literature review and discussions with secondary schools' principals. The tool was validated with expert opinion of doctoral faculty of the center and expert principals from district Swat. The validated tool was pilot tested with collecting data from secondary school principals. After analyses of the piloting data, the Cronbach alpha value of the tool was 0.837. As the tool was reliable for producing consistent data, therefore; the researchers themselves administered it for the collection of data. Data were analyzed using mean scores, standard deviation, chi-square test and Pearson correlation. Ethical principles for informed consent, confidentiality of information and publication of the research were observed.

Results

The data were analyzed using the statistical package for the social sciences, arranged in tables, analyzed and interpreted with descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1 Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ^2	P
Provision of clear vision for instruction	102	3.54	.45	22.02	.000
Observance of teaching lessons	102	4.02	.73	37.55	.000
Provision of constructive feedback	102	2.78	.91	56.21	.000
Mentorship for professional development	102	2.69	.57	49.35	.000
Encouragement for collaborative teaching	102	4.19	.19	33.69	.000
Assistance in innovative teaching	102	3.92	.11	78.71	.000
Supervision of curriculum implementation	102	3.56	.27	21.34	.000
Provision of ICTs for teaching lessons	102	2.94	.34	72.45	.000
Focus on instruction for students' achievement	102	3.83	.09	38.88	.000
Motivation of teachers for excellence	102	2.07	.56	67.91	.000

Table number 1 demonstrates the principals' instructional leadership practices in secondary schools. The mean scores 3.54 and 4.02 identifies that respondents agreed that principals provide clear vision for instructions in secondary schools and observe the teaching of lessons. Similarly, the mean scores of 2.78 and 2.69 highlights that respondents disagreed that principals provide constructive feedback on teachers' teaching and provide mentorship for professional development of teachers. Further, the mean scores 4.19 and 3.92 establish that that respondents agreed that principals encourage collaboration among teachers for teaching and provides assistance for innovative teaching. Moreover, mean score 3.56 confirm that that respondents agreed that principals supervise the implementation of curriculum. In connection to the provision of ICTs, mean score 2.94 shows that respondents disagreed that principals provide ICTs for teaching lessons. Likewise, mean score 3.83 forwards that respondents agreed that principals focus on instruction for the achievement of students. Similarly, the mean score 2.07 determines that respondents disagreed that principals motivate teachers for excellence in teaching. Using chi-square test findings were significant.

Table 2 Effectiveness of Teaching Learning Process

Statements	Number	Mean	S. D	χ^2	P
Teaching is based on students' learning outcomes	102	3.77	.43	31.19	.000
Differentiated instruction is provided	102	3.91	.69	27.47	.000
Formative assessment for improving teaching	102	2.89	.77	43.83	.000
Students are involved in teaching lessons	102	3.64	.53	86.97	.000
ICTs are utilized for teaching	102	2.47	.27	19.05	.000
Students think critically	102	3.82	.39	26.85	.000
Problem solving skills are developed	102	3.74	.37	32.42	.000
Students' questions are encouraged	102	4.07	.85	47.74	.000
Teachers strive for improvement in teaching	102	3.66	.70	55.36	.000
Students are involved in teachers' evaluation	102	2.07	.91	79.27	.000

Table number 2 highlights the effective teaching learning process in secondary schools. The mean scores 3.77 and 3.91 demonstrates that respondents agree that teaching in secondary schools is based on students' learning outcomes and students are provided with differentiated instructions.

The mean score 2.89 establishes that respondents disagreed that formative assessment is made during teaching. Similarly, the mean scores 3.64 brings forward that respondents agreed that students are involved in teaching lessons. The mean score 2.47 identifies that respondents disagreed that ICTs are utilized for teaching. Likewise, the mean scores of 3.84, 3.74, 4.07 and 3.66 demonstrates that respondents agreed that development of critical thinking and problem solving skills among students are encouraged, students' questions are encouraged during teaching and teachers strive for the improvement in teaching. However, the mean score 2.07 presents that respondents disagreed that students are involved in teachers' evaluation. On analyses of the chi-square test findings are significant.

Table 3 Role of Principals' Instructional Leadership in Effective Teaching

Variables	Mean	S. D	r	P-value
Principals' Instructional Leadership	33.21	7.12	0.53	0.000
Effective Teaching process	35.47	6.45		

Table number 3 demonstrates the correlation of principals' instructional leadership with the effective teaching learning process at secondary level. The value of correlation ($r = 0.53$, $p = 0.000$) which shows a moderate correlation between the instructional leadership of principals and effective teaching learning process at secondary level. This result is significant at .05 level of significance. This shows that principals' instructional leadership ensures effective teaching learning process at secondary level.

Discussions

The study found that the current instructional leadership of principals at secondary level are provision of clear vision for instructions, observance of teaching lessons, encouraging collaboration among teachers for teaching, provision of assistance for innovative teaching, supervising the implementation of curriculum and focusing on instruction for the achievement of students. Findings are in line with (2011) who found that principals' instructional leadership at secondary level encompasses the formulation of schools' vision, arrangement of the instructional activities and the development of conducive school culture for students' learning. Similarly, Robinson et al. (2008) reported that in secondary schools, instructional leadership among principals enable them to integrate the curricula, teaching and assessment for achieving the mission of the school. Like the findings of the study, Robinson et al. (2008) demonstrated that at the global level, studies have identified a positive relation of principals' instructional leadership and effective teaching in schools. Principals with regular classrooms' observation, effective feedback help significantly in the development of effective teaching in secondary schools. Similarly, Marzano et al. (2005) found that instructional leadership of principals set standards for the teaching performance of teaches and they strive hard for achieving excellence in their teaching Principals who collaborate with teachers encourage teachers to have involvement of students in the teaching that improves the achievement of students. Similarly, Hallinger (2011) found that in the current times, instructional leadership among principals at secondary level has become a vital component of the school administration for ensuring effective teaching. They study is having significant practical and theoretical and practical implication for as it found the absence of constructive feedback, mentorship, provision of ICTs and motivation of teachers for excellence in teaching as missing components in instructional leadership. The findings have significance theoretical and practical implications for development of instructional leadership among secondary schools' Principals.

The study highlighted the effective teaching learning process in secondary schools as teaching is based on students' learning outcomes, students are provided with differentiated instructions, students are involved in teaching lessons, encouraged to think critically, problem solving skills are developed in students, students' questions are encouraged during teaching and teachers strive for the improvement in teaching. Like the findings of the study, Robinson et al. (2008) demonstrated that at the global level studies have identified a positive relation of instruction and principals' leadership. Principals with regular classrooms' observation, effective feedback help significantly in the development of effective teaching learning process in secondary schools. Similarly, Marzano et al. (2005) found that instructional leadership of principals set standards for the teaching performance of teachers and they strive hard for achieving excellence in their teaching. Principals who collaborate with teachers encourage teachers to have involvement of students in the teaching that improves the achievement of students. Similarly, Hallinger (2011) found that in the current times, instructional leadership among principals at secondary level has become a vital component of the school administration for ensuring effective teaching. The study is having significant practical and theoretical and practical implication for the study also highlighted the lack of formative assessment for improvement of teaching, use of ICTs for teaching lessons and involvement of students in evaluation of teachers. The findings are having significant theoretical and practical implications for the provision of constructive feedback on teaching of teachers, use of formative assessment in teaching, provision of ICTs during teaching and the involvement of students in evaluation of teachers for effectiveness of teaching at secondary level. The study found moderate positive correlation between principals' instructional leadership ensures effective teaching learning process at secondary level. In a similar vein, Rigby (2014) also found that principals' instructional leadership in secondary schools is a complex phenomenon, comprising monitoring the instruction, guide teachers' professional development, assess teachers' performance, provide resources for teaching and school environment that is focused on the maximum learning of students. In a similar fashion Marzano et al. (2005) identified that principals as instructional leaders for teaching and achievement of schools' academic goals. Like the findings of the study, Leithwood et al. (2004) found that principals ensure quality teaching through making positive interventions in provision of resources and guidance for the teachers at secondary level. The findings have theoretical implications for development of instructional leadership among secondary school principals and effectiveness of teaching.

Conclusion

On the basis of objectives and findings of the study, the following conclusion was drawn:

The current instructional leadership of principals at secondary level are provision of clear vision for instructions, observance of teaching lessons, encouraging collaboration among teachers for teaching, provision of assistance for innovative teaching, supervising the implementation of curriculum and focusing on instruction for the achievement of students. However, there was absence of constructive feedback, mentorship, provision of ICTs and motivation of teachers for excellence in teaching as missing components in instructional leadership of principals at secondary level.

The study identified the effectiveness teaching learning process in secondary schools as teaching is based on students' learning outcomes, students are provided with differentiated instructions, students are involved in teaching lessons, encouraged to think critically, problem solving skills are developed in students, students' questions are encouraged during teaching and teachers strive for the improvement in teaching. However, it also identified the lack of formative assessment for improvement of teaching, use of ICTs for teaching lessons and involvement of students in

evaluation of teachers. The study further found moderate positive correlation between principals' instructional leadership ensures effective teaching learning process at secondary level.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were forwarded on the basis of objectives and findings of the study:

1. There may be professional development training in principals' instructional leadership for principals of secondary schools by the education department in areas of providing constructive feedback for teaching, provision of mentorship for teaching of teachers and school based professional development of teachers in teaching.
2. Principals need to encourage teachers and make them use formative assessment strategies during the teaching learning process to enhance teaching effectiveness in schools.
3. The policy makers and educational authorities need to provide ICTs for use in teaching in secondary schools. Further, the principals need to make teachers use these tools for effectiveness of teaching in secondary schools.
4. The principals in secondary schools may involve students in evaluation of teaching effectiveness among teachers in secondary schools as they are the best judges of their teachers.
5. Similar studies may be conducted on the instructional leadership of principals for professional development of teachers, teachers' collegiality and students' academic success.

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