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**RESEARCH PAPER**

## The Role of Principal as Instructional Leader: Effects on Teaching and Learning Practices and Activities on Students' Achievement at Institutes of Sukkur IBA University

<sup>1</sup> Zubair Mughal\* <sup>2</sup>Dr. Jam Muhammad Zafar and <sup>3</sup>Dr. Naeem Ullah

1. Ph.D. Scholar (Education), Department of Education, Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan Punjab, Pakistan

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\*Corresponding Author: [zubair.mughal@iba-suk.edu.pk](mailto:zubair.mughal@iba-suk.edu.pk)

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### ABSTRACT

This research explores how the instructional leadership practices of IBA community college principals impact the academic success of students. The research utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach and was conducted at five IBA community colleges affiliated with Sukkur IBA University in Sindh Province, Pakistan. These colleges had previously faced disadvantages but achieved high Grade 12 results. The study specifically focused on gathering insights from three individuals per college who had direct experience with the phenomenon: the principal, Vice principal, and Section Head. The findings highlighted various essential aspects of instructional leadership that affect students' academic performance, including improving student academic performance, inspiration and constructive impact of leadership, management instructions, promoting a favorable environment for teaching and learning, and adaptable application of distinct leadership approaches.

**KEYWORDS** Academic Success, Community Colleges, Instructional Leadership, Principal

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### Introduction

This study delves into the impact of instructional leadership practices by principals at IBA community colleges on student academic success. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research centered on five IBA-affiliated colleges in Sindh Province, Pakistan. Despite past disadvantages, these colleges achieved remarkable Grade 12 results. Focused on gathering insights from key figures—principals, Vice principals, and Section Heads—the findings uncovered crucial facets of instructional leadership influencing academic performance. Highlighted were areas such as enhancing student outcomes, the transformative influence of leadership, effective instructional management, fostering conducive learning environments, and the adaptable application of diverse leadership strategies.

### Literature Review

Within the field of education, school principals play a vital role as leaders and administrators who possess substantial authority in shaping the educational atmosphere within their institutions. Their influence on the teaching and learning environment has been well-documented in the research of Clarke (2012) and the study conducted by Naidu and colleagues (2008).

Agasisti and his colleagues (2012) investigated the potential impact of college principals' managerial characteristics on student performance, uncovering various traits that play a role in this occurrence. Principals are entrusted with the responsibility of establishing distinct objectives, visions, and missions for their colleges, as well as orchestrating and steering activities toward the achievement of these goals. They are also expected to respect the school community's input and promote a collaborative leadership style. Effective school leadership entails networking, timely communication, consulting stakeholders, openness to fresh ideas, and the promotion of teamwork to drive positive changes in teaching and learning. Encouraging colleagues and nurturing leadership skills are also essential aspects of their role in improving educational outcomes, as emphasized by Agasisti et al. (2012) and Farah (2013).

Furthermore, college administrators' management styles, participation in administration, teacher behaviour, evaluation procedures, and parental involvement, in addition to their managerial qualities, all support the accomplishment of instructional programmes meant to raise students' academic progress. These elements support what Steyn (2005) found in his investigation of how educational leadership affects classrooms. Both studies emphasize how crucial it is for leaders to have an apparent image, cultivate a supportive college ethos, and motivate teachers to improve their effectiveness. Consistent with the findings of Agasisti et al. (2012) and Steyn (2005), collaboration and dedication among teachers also appear as significant factors contributing to excellent student academic accomplishment. According to the research by Waweru and colleagues (2013), findings from a study on the determinants of academic achievement in community colleges underscore the significance of the instructional leadership practices of college principals as a fundamental factor in shaping students' academic success. In addition, previous studies have also identified various factors that positively impact student outcomes, including alignment with the school's educational vision and mission, the maintenance of a safe and organized college environment, the establishment of high expectations for student success, effective time management for academic tasks, regular monitoring of student progress, and the cultivation of positive relationships between the college and students' homes. Scholars such as Clarke (2012), Marishane and collaborators (2011), and Waweru et al. (2013) have all emphasized the synergistic effect of these factors in enhancing students' academic performance.

Underlying these results are further observations indicating that the principal, in his capacity as the instructional leader, plays a crucial role in creating the learning environment that instructors and students should adhere to to achieve the desired academic outcomes (Mthiyane et al., 2014). According to O'Donnell and White (2005), principals should foster healthy relationships to promote favourable student outcomes and lay a solid foundation for effective operation. As they shape this learning environment, they also have an obligation to provide efficient lines of communication with all parties involved to resolve issues pertaining to teachers' effectiveness in their instructional strategies, in accordance with LeFevre and Robinson's (2015) findings.

According to research findings, a few factors influence students' academic progress in addition to college administrators' role in instructional leadership (Farrington et al., 2012). According to Farrington et al. (2012), these variables include students' motivation, perseverance, mindsets, learning strategies, and social skills in addition to their involvement with the learning environment. Moreover, there seems to be a favourable correlation between the tenure of principals and the academic performance of their students. According to Swearingen (2014), administrators with greater experience are better able to manage and lead their schools, which improves

student results. It is believed that all of these tactics and elements are essential to providing teaching in an efficient manner.

Nzoka and Orodho (2014) found that critical elements in achieving improved student results included financial issues addressed by students, uniformity in learner evaluation techniques, and consistent curriculum monitoring. Notably, a study by Tatlal et al. (2014) exposed divergent opinions, with teachers believing that good leadership behaviour had little effect on student results and school principals believing the opposite. Different interpretations of the concept of instructional leadership have emerged in certain circumstances, with educators emphasising the personal attributes of administrators in their conception of the role. Instructors emphasised how crucial it is to have principal support. Conversely, the principals delineated the concept of instructional leadership by considering the diverse duties associated with teaching and learning activities, as well as creating a culture that fosters these pursuits (Gedifew, 2014).

Bush and Heystek (2006) pointed out that some principals, who frequently concentrate on staffing concerns, financial management, and governing body duties, have yet to completely grasp their position as leaders in curriculum creation. In light of this context, the study found that more research on these factors was necessary. According to the research, principals shouldn't take a one-dimensional approach that focuses only on teaching and learning because effective instructional leadership and delivery are influenced by a variety of other aspects as well. Multiple components that have a favourable impact on students' academic progress are involved in the proper implementation of teaching and learning activities.

The researcher feels that leadership has a special function in this situation, even though different research findings have different interpretations of the factors impacting students' academic progress. The underlying assumption of this essay is that student outcomes may or may not be directly impacted by the leadership styles of principals. This idea is supported by the finding that students perform poorly in certain schools led by principals who appear to be effective. Others, on the other hand, who seem to have less successful principles succeed academically. Furthermore, there are times when the academic accomplishments of both the principal and their students are praiseworthy. It's interesting to note that, despite differences in the resources at their disposal, some underfunded schools perform better than their apparent well-resourced counterparts. It was decided that it would be suitable to undertake study in historically underprivileged schools that exhibit strong academic achievement considering these observations and the researcher's viewpoints. The objective is to identify the elements impacting positive student achievement by interacting with different stakeholders and extracting and comprehending the successful practices of these schools. The purpose of this study is to ascertain if instructional leadership – specifically, that of principals or other pertinent factors – contributes to positive student outcomes.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Design of the Research Study**

The study used an ontological perspective in terms of research philosophy, which addresses the nature of reality and the idea of "being," as described by Furlong and Marsh (2010). According to Furlong and Marsh (2010), this philosophical position acknowledges the presence of different realities that can be investigated and recreated by interactions with research participants. This article's main goal was to identify these various realities by conducting interviews with pertinent parties to learn about their differing perspectives on the topic of study. The study used a qualitative technique within the

context of an interpretive paradigm, which made it possible to extract diverse perspectives and viewpoints from different members of the school community. The study followed Denzin and Lincoln's (2008) recommendations and used a descriptive phenomenological research methodology to fully explore the complexity of participants' lived experiences about the effect of instructional leadership on student academic achievement. Principals, vice principals, and section heads were among the people the researcher spoke with to obtain a thorough understanding of the reality of this problem. These interviews, which followed Giorgi's (2012) methodology, gave rise to a deep comprehension of the main topic of this investigation.

### **Population and Sample**

The research design involved several key components, including the collection of the investigated population, sampling methods, and data collection procedures, following the guidelines outlined by Creswell (2014). The study's participants were chosen from the IBA Community Colleges in the Sindh Province of Pakistan, a predominantly rural area known for historically achieving less favorable Grade 12 annual Board Examination results.

Colleges were chosen on the basis of their outstanding academic records and principals' consent to take part in the research. Despite past setbacks, these colleges routinely placed among the top five in their respective circuits for board performance. Five vice principals, five section heads, and five principals of IBA community colleges were chosen as a sample for the study, and their data was gathered.

To establish the unit of analysis, the study also made use of data from earlier investigations. In the framework of this study, colleges that have continuously produced good board scores over a three-year period (2019–2021) were chosen on the grounds that high Grade 12 student performance was a sign of effective instructional leadership. Prior to this, underprivileged universities had gotten more financing to enhance their capabilities and academic performance.. The research focused on these high-performing schools within disadvantaged communities to identify successful instructional leadership practices and other factors contributing to their superior performance compared to schools with less favorable results.

Qualitative research does not adhere to a fixed sample size, and it depends on the research design. The chosen sample size was considered adequate to derive essential findings related to instructional leadership for the study.

Additionally, the college principals played a role in the snowball sampling process, helping identify and connect with section heads, who were presumed to provide valuable data. While this approach could potentially introduce bias by having principals identify individuals who align with their views, it was considered a means to generate reliable findings compared to the other two groups of participants.

The semi-structured phenomenological method has been selected for data collection for interviews through a qualitative method approach. These interviews were designed to be descriptive and narrative. Throughout the interview process, the researcher utilized techniques such as paraphrasing, seeking clarification, summarizing, and reflecting on participants' emotions (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). This approach aimed to elicit rich and detailed information regarding the participants' ideas, learning, thoughts, motives, and feelings concerning the phenomenon under investigation.

The semi-structured interviews were tailored to provide a profound understanding of the participants' perspectives. It was essential to ensure that the interviews focused on the genuine experiences of the participants without imposing the researcher's interpretations.

To maintain data integrity, verbatim transcripts of the participants' responses and reactions were meticulously recorded, aiming to capture the participants' voices and perspectives as accurately as possible (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

### **Data Analysis**

The integrity and trustworthiness of collected data can be compromised if it is susceptible to manipulation, distortion, or bias during the data processing stage. To mitigate this concern, the researcher should approach data analysis without preconceived notions, as suggested by a prior study (2007). In alignment with the guidance provided by Polit and Beck (2010), the researcher in this investigation followed established protocols for processing phenomenological data. This process included a validation step, wherein participants were contacted for feedback to confirm the accuracy of the findings.

In the phenomenological data analysis, the researcher applied the technique of horizontalization to identify common themes and fundamental elements within the collected data. This method entails a comprehensive exploration of the data to uncover its underlying meanings, shedding light on what was explicitly expressed as well as aspects that might have been overlooked in the interview responses. The process also involved a thorough examination of the textual and structural aspects of the data, in line with the approach outlined by Padilla-Diaz (2015). Additionally, the researcher delved into the context of each participant, their textual contributions, and relevant information as required by phenomenological data analysis, following the principles outlined by Wolcott (2009). This included analysing the participants' individual experiences, identifying key statements relevant to the research, clarifying key components, and offering in-depth accounts of the participant's interactions with the phenomenon and secondary school principals' instructional leadership strategies. As suggested by Creswell (2013), composite descriptions of the phenomenon were also examined and analysed.

The triangulation technique was adapted to find out the validity and reliability of research data. According to Denscombe (2014), interviews served as the main method of data collection in this study, which is in line with the traditional phenomenological research design methodology. A researcher is involved in peer debriefing with colleagues who have unbiased points of view on the research findings. Peer review comments were essential in highlighting potential areas of over- or under-emphasis, imprecise descriptions, general errors in the data analysis, and different assumptions that would have compromised the validity and trustworthiness of the conclusions, as suggested by Fouché (2002). An external reviewer also conducted an external audit of the study in accordance with Creswell's (2008) principles and provided an evaluation of the research's benefits and drawbacks.

### **Results and Discussion**

The study participants emphasized a range of critical factors, such as improving student academic performance, inspiration and constructive impact of leadership, management instructions, promoting a favorable environment for teaching and learning, and adoptable application of distinct leadership approaches.

### **Improvement of student academic performance**

Interviews were conducted to verify the impact of instructional leadership on college students' academic achievement from the selected participants. Finding out how they felt about how instructional leadership influenced students' academic performance was the main goal. Among these participants, the general belief was that college principals are accountable for their students' academic performance. Principals should actively promote and facilitate teaching and learning by providing essential educational resources, with a particular emphasis on improving students' academic performance. Within the scope of this study, principals were inclined to assess student performance on a term-by-term basis, with the overarching aim of enhancing final academic results. This periodic assessment of term-based results aimed to identify areas where knowledge gaps existed and to offer remedial interventions. A few participants' responses emphasized this perspective, as exemplified by the following quotes: "The principal plays a role in improving academic performance and allocates funds for learning materials that contribute to enhancing students' academic achievement" (Vice Principal 5). Additionally, "We regularly assess students' term performance, identifying those who excel on a quarterly basis" (Principal 1).

### **Inspiration and constructive impact of instructional leaders**

Motivation becomes apparent as an ultimate component of the instructional leadership role undertaken by college principals. The study demonstrated that the motivational levels and positive impact of these instructional leaders significantly contributed to shaping favorable academic outcomes for students. It became evident that this motivation and support extended not only to teachers but also to students through various initiatives such as organizing motivational sessions and acknowledging exceptional performance. These efforts played a significant role in boosting enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Importantly, these motivational endeavors were directed at both high-achieving individuals and those who faced academic challenges. For high achievers, it served as reinforcement to maintain their positive practices, while for those with less satisfactory performance, it served as an encouragement to improve and meet the probable standards in their responsibilities as educators and students.

Principals were likely to employ effective communication methods to avoid demoralizing high-performing individuals in their instructional leadership roles, fostering a sense of empathy, and understanding when needed to ensure a consistently high level of commitment. The positive influence and motivation stemming from instructional leaders resulted in increased job satisfaction among both staff and students. This, in turn, cultivated a sense of mutual respect among all stakeholders, amplifying their dedication to their teaching and learning roles. Research participants stressed the pivotal role of job satisfaction resulting from the positive influence on educators and students in enhancing students' academic performance. The following statements provide insights into their practices in this context:

1. "I also organize ongoing motivational sessions for students, and whenever possible, involve alumni who can relate to the students' environment, having been in the same classrooms and under the same teachers. They provide valuable support to our grade 12 students." (Principal-22)

2. "My influence ensures that students are highly motivated, fostering a strong desire to achieve more." (Principal-4)

3. "It's crucial to understand that motivation should target both teachers and students." (Section Head 3)

4. "My position is to impact the educators because they bear the responsibility for the results. If college teachers are not executing, and if college children are not fulfilling their responsibilities, the college success as a principal may be compromised." (Principal-5)

### **Management of instruction**

The research participants' replies together highlighted how important instructional management is to improving students' academic success. There was discussion on a number of instructional management topics, including efficient planning to support the delivery of a top-notch curriculum. This included the teachers' and students' observation of class attendance, the encouragement of cooperative learning among teachers, the significance of lesson planning, the fulfilment of task deadlines, and the application of written assessment instruments and control mechanisms.

Furthermore, the participants highlighted that a well-managed core curriculum within the college had the prospective to support high-quality teaching and learning activities. A well-structured curriculum allows educators to ensure comprehensive coverage of the syllabus and the administration of high-quality assessment tasks to students. Through effective instructional management, principals could oversee the proper administration, grading, and timely feedback on assessment tasks, enabling students to address their weaknesses and areas for improvement. The study suggests that this approach allowed principals to uphold the quality of assessments through pre- and post-moderation processes, ensuring their accuracy and fairness.

When problems surfaced during the quality assurance process, different departments within the college curriculum and subject committees could collaborate to create interference strategies that addressed the problems and encouraged improvements in students' academic performance in a variety of subjects.

Participants provided insights into how instructional management was implemented in their contexts, as demonstrated by the following statements:

1. "You oversee everything, including class attendance. We have period attendance registers that are used by the student representative (Principal-5)

2. "From an instructional perspective, we emphasize the importance of punctuality in class every day; otherwise, teachers will need to provide valid reasons." (Principal-1)

3. "We also invite the class representative to document the time when the teacher leaves the classroom, which can serve as evidence in case of disputes." (Section Head 5).

### **Promoting a favorable educational environment for teaching and learning**

One issue that kept coming up at every research site related to student academic performance was the making of a teaching and knowledge culture, especially on the part of college principals. These difficulties took many forms, such as incorporating all relevant parties into the curriculum development procedures of their individual schools, cultivating a culture that values hard work and devotion, and encouraging a healthy feeling of rivalry among staff members. Remarkably, a participant shared that their

administrator did not think it was their job to foster this kind of teaching and learning environment in the school.

All the participants came to the same conclusion: school principals are in charge of establishing expectations, defining goals, and creating a vision that unambiguously directs all activities and specifies what behavior is expected of teachers and students when it comes to implementing the curriculum. The focus on creating a supportive environment for instruction and learning is indicative of the participants' worries about the possible instability brought on by frequent changes in school administration. It is believed that a well-established school culture has a greater chance of enduring over time and that curriculum-related modifications made gradually tend to have a more favorable effect than abrupt, disruptive changes that solely alter procedures and protocols. The participants responded that a steady evolution in the context of curriculum delivery within an atmosphere with a strong instructional culture fosters stability and commitment among stakeholders and has the potential to improve student academic achievements. These feelings are captured in the participant comments that follow:

1. My role is to establish a lasting culture, a positive culture for learning that endures even after my departure... ensure that plan for the students so that they can perform effectively. (Principal-2)

2. If the principal has well-defined programs that are transparent to everyone, indicating our current achievements and aspirations, I think that will be effective. (Section Head 2)

3. To guide the teachers, especially to motivate them to attend classes... teachers who do not attend classes will be noticed. He reported at 0830, and we were there by 0230. He was working efficiently, and we understood our roles. (Vice Principal 2)

### **The adaptable application of distinct leadership approaches**

The research findings strongly advocated for school principals to adopt a situational leadership style. Participants expressed a range of opinions suggesting that, in their roles as instructional leaders, principals should refrain from relying on a single, unchanging leadership style when overseeing and managing curriculum delivery across different levels. Instead, they emphasized the importance of principals entrusting responsibilities to their staff as part of a comprehensive instructional approach. According to their viewpoint, this approach would ultimately contribute to the development of well-rounded students who excel academically. The use of varied leadership styles in instructional leadership implied that principals should possess an understanding of these styles and the ability to apply them judiciously. It was also noted that principals should exhibit strong interpersonal and people skills, as these attributes significantly influence the appropriate leadership style to employ in different situations.

Participants highlighted that merely knowing about different leadership styles without a deep understanding of their staff would yield limited benefits. Principals were expected to demonstrate emotional intelligence, situational intelligence, and flexibility, enabling them to be assertive and effectively wield the authority vested in their positions to achieve their objectives. A combination of these attributes was considered an essential toolkit for principals to excel in their instructional leadership roles and ultimately enhance the quality of student outcomes.

The following statements from the participants exemplify these sentiments:



1. "As a principal, you need to take responsibility and work closely with the Senior Management Team so that they can support you in managing." (Principal-5)

2. "It starts by building relationships because when you make someone your friend, they tend to follow your lead, and you achieve your objectives. I believe the dictatorial approach worked for me, and it worked for him because now the system is functioning, school child outcome is progressing, and we are content with the outcome." (Section Head 4)

3. "When doing things effectively, there are times when you need to negotiate and guide them, but, when necessary, you must issue instructions. You should also hold those who do not follow the instructions accountable." (Principal-3)

## **Discussion**

This study explores the impact that instructional leadership from college principals has on the academic achievement of students in the IBA Community Colleges at Sindh province. It investigates the opinions of section heads, vice principals, and community college principals on how their principals' instructional leadership affects student results. The results indicate that principals have the main responsibility for establishing an environment that supports the achievement of the intended academic outcomes in teaching and learning as part of their duties as instructional leaders.

This study highlights the critical significance of creating a teaching and learning culture within instructional leadership practices, which is consistent with earlier studies on instructional leadership and student performance. Additionally, it lists parental participation, support for educators and learners, positive influence, instructional management, teacher and student motivation, and the adaptable application of different leadership styles as essential elements of instructional leadership. This investigation reveals fresh characteristics in addition to similarities to earlier studies. Previous research has shown that principals, in their capacity as instructional leaders, have a major impact on students' academic progress by inspiring teachers to provide quality education. The research conducted by Adeyemi and The ideas that principals are more likely to support practices that improve student academic performance once they are aware of their critical role as instructional leaders are supported by Bolarinwa (2013), Elliott and Clifford (2014), Mulford and Silins (2003), Nyagaka and Odongo (2013), Tatlah et al. (2014), and Swearingen (2014).

The findings in this paper suggest that principals have a duty to inspire teachers and motivate students. These results are consistent with those of the researchers who were previously discussed and who highlighted the important role that instructional leaders play in encouraging teachers and students to improve the processes of teaching and learning. Principals should recognise and celebrate the accomplishments of both educators and students to promote efficient curriculum implementation in a variety of educational settings. Poor academic performance can occur when there is insufficient motivation and direction within the learning community. Therefore, it suggests that instructional leaders oversee making sure students are always motivated.

This study also revealed something else that emphasises how important good instructional management is in influencing student achievement. This result supports the findings of Francera and Bliss (2011), who support the role of principals in mastery experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional support in addition to instructional management. Additionally, according to Neumerski (2012), instructional leaders need to come to an agreement on what really qualifies as effective instructional management.

According to the researcher in this article, principals are crucial in all curriculum-related decisions made inside their schools because they oversee the curriculum. In order to effectively manage instruction in the school, the study also acknowledges the significance of instructional leaders in investigating the varied topic knowledge and instructional experience of instructors. This viewpoint is based on the understanding that principals might not be subject matter experts in every subject taught at the school. By employing this strategy, principals can assist in developing the skills of their employees, cultivate trust, and encourage a willingness to carry out educational duties within the school. This willingness on the side of teachers could improve students' academic performance.

The study's conclusions support Nettles and Herrington's (2007) assertion that school administrators have a critical duty to establish a teaching and learning culture. Participants in the survey expected principals to set up a classroom that was secure, organised, and encouraged effective teaching and learning. Previous research indicates that successful principals foster a culture and environment in the classroom that encourage lifelong learning (Hallinger and Lee, 2014). Mandell (2012) asserts that in these kinds of learning environments, there is a significant possibility for real transformation in the academic life of students.

This academic environment, according to the researcher, is one in which all members of the school community take a communal approach to forming the school's culture. According to the study, the principal's involvement in instructional leadership is vital for improving student results, as perceived by all stakeholders. Even while the schools in issue had high student achievement, other participants expressed some concerns about the way their principal's guided instruction. Department heads and vice principals said they expected more from their principals, and principals themselves said they needed more help from their staff. While acknowledging the achievements of their teaching staff, some principals were also aware of their own failings as leaders. Because every school has a different community setting, school cultures naturally differ from one another, yet strong student results are always the same. Different viewpoints from different stakeholders don't seem to have a negative effect on student outcomes when standard practices are in place.

An additional noteworthy finding in this research emphasises how crucial it is for school principals to offer children customised support. This support encompasses several elements, including teachers showing a sincere interest in their students, planning team-building activities for educators to improve student support, providing students with individualised attention, bringing in subject matter experts to address learning gaps, and assuming a leadership role in matters pertaining to teaching and learning. The researcher points out that previous ideas on instructional leadership frequently disregarded learner support, which was not thought to be a necessary element. The researcher thinks that these early viewpoints were constrained because they left out important aspects of teaching and learning. The researcher agrees with Hornig and Loeb (2010) that a more thorough understanding of the needs for instructional leadership in schools is necessary. Calik et al. (2012), who contend that powerful instructional leaders foster an atmosphere that is favourable to successful teaching and learning and ultimately steer their institutions towards an ideal position, also support this point of view. The results of this study support the belief held by the researcher and Calik et al. (2012) that a focus on all facets of the school community is necessary to achieve successful curriculum outcomes.

The study's findings pertain to parental expectations regarding their engagement in their children's schooling. These outcomes are in line with the findings of Averill et al.

(2016), who found that parental involvement in their kids' education results in positive student achievement. This involvement, according to Goodall and Montgomery (2014), entails activities like parent-led discussions and exchanges centered on children's learning and parents engaging with the school. Parental participation can take many different forms, including decision-making, parenting, at-home learning, volunteering, and working with the community (Epstein et al., 2011; LaRocque et al., 2011; Mutch and Collins, 2012). The development of partnerships between all stakeholders in the school is highly valued by the leadership. The main reason the researcher concurs with these results is because parents are very important to their kids' education. As vital members of the school community, parents' ought to be actively involved in all aspects pertaining to their children's education. They can effectively communicate with the school about any difficulties their kids may be having at home and offer any support the school might need in relation to their kids.

This study highlights that the principal of the school, who acts as the instructional leader, has a major role in ensuring that students achieve academically. Principals of schools need to understand their duties and responsibilities in uniting the entire school community to work towards improving student performance. They must understand that no single stakeholder can raise student achievement on their own. Principals may foster a culture and environment that inspires pride and confidence in teaching and learning, enabling students to learn in an atmosphere where they may reach their full potential. This can be done by exercising smart leadership. It seems that the principal's skills and upbeat demeanor can bring the school community together to collaborate on a common goal. On the other hand, ineffective principals might undermine education's main goal of providing a well-rounded curriculum. Through conversations with many stakeholders, the researcher found that although educational resources can improve teaching and learning, successful educational initiatives can nevertheless succeed even in the lack of them.

In addition to intentional instructional leadership, a well-managed curriculum that is closely monitored, covers syllabi thoroughly, includes high-quality student assessments, and gives useful feedback to curriculum clients (parents and students) is essential for raising academic achievement even in the absence of an abundance of educational resources. Principals, despite their busy schedules, bear a great deal of responsibility for developing their subordinates' capacity for coaching and instructional leadership through task delegation. Staff members who may strive to surpass expectations can develop a culture of teamwork, dedication, and healthy competitiveness because of this delegation of curriculum responsibilities. Establishing a cooperative working connection with parents of students has the potential to improve performance for all parties involved. The researcher highlights how important it is for principals of schools to be aware of the various socioeconomic backgrounds that their kids come from. By doing this, teachers will have a deeper understanding of the significance of inspiring, influencing, and motivating their pupils to achieve more in a variety of methods. On the other side, to facilitate their teaching roles, teachers need principals who have a supportive and motivating personality. Thus, to increase student academic achievement, principals' primary duty continues to be serving as a unifying force among all parties involved in the school.

## **Conclusion**

This study underscores the pivotal role of instructional leadership in shaping the academic success of students within IBA Community Colleges in Sindh province. Principals emerged as crucial figures in establishing an environment conducive to

achieving academic goals. Their influence extends across various domains: inspiring teachers, fostering a conducive learning environment, and adapting leadership styles to cater to diverse needs.

Notably, effective instructional leadership encompasses elements beyond mere management; it involves cultivating a culture of learning, motivating both educators and students and fostering collaborative relationships with parents and the wider school community.

Acknowledging the multifaceted responsibilities of principals, this research reiterates the significance of their guidance in curriculum implementation, resource management, and, crucially, personalized support for students from diverse backgrounds.

While recognizing the challenges and varied perspectives among stakeholders, the study highlights the consensus on the critical role of principals in driving academic excellence. Principals stand as the linchpin, unifying diverse stakeholders towards a shared vision of enhanced student achievement.

Ultimately, the findings underscore the profound impact that strategic and empathetic instructional leadership can have on the educational landscape, emphasizing the imperative for principals to embody, inspire, and foster a culture of learning, thereby paving the way for sustained academic success.

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