



RESEARCH PAPER

Teachers' Perception regarding Principals' Instructional Leadership Style at Higher Secondary Level

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership i.e., formatting educational objectives, developing learning environment, protecting instructional time and supervising & monitoring progress in public sector higher secondary institutions. Instructional leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the educational environment, teachers' performance and influencing student outcomes. Understanding how teachers perceive their principals' leadership can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of these styles. A quantitative, descriptive research approach was adopted, with a survey method used for data collection. The population included 100 higher secondary institutions in Lahore, and a sample of 480 teachers from 40 institutions was selected using a two-stage proportionate sampling technique. The first stage involved selecting 25 female and 15 male institutions, and the second stage involved conveniently selecting 12 teachers per institution. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire, adapted from Khan (2012), was used as the data collection instrument. SPSS version 22.0 was used for data analysis. The results showed that principals were positively perceived by teachers especially in developing learning environments. It is recommended that future research focus on gender-based comparisons and alignment between teachers' and principals' perspectives to enhance leadership practices.

KEYWORDS Instructional Leadership, Principals, Style, Teachers

Introduction

The one who takes the initiative, convinces others to follow, and motivates others to act is the one who is a leader. The notion of leadership is complex and important, and it has received a lot of attention from both academic and practical circles (Hallinger, 2020). The phrase "instructional leadership" describes the leaders of the organizations' operations and initiatives related to the main objectives of the organization, which include learning and education, as well as the instruments that support the accomplishment of those goals (Khan, 2012; Sezgin, 2020; Bush, 2021). Memon (1999) lists the responsibilities of an instructional leader or principal as including Formulating Educational Objectives, developing a Learning Environment, protecting instructional time, and supervising and monitoring progress to enhance the professional development of teachers. Teachers must enhance their professional development to impart education, information, and skills to students (Tredway, 2022). In other words, it helps teachers become better teachers. The principal's role and the role of instructional leadership is to provide the teachers with the guidance, support, and aid they need to improve their performance. Teachers' knowledge, behavior, comprehension, and attitude must all change as a result of professional development (Khan, 2012; Wang, 2023; Sebastian, 2022). To begin with, the Formulating Educational Objectives is an integral part of

instructional leadership. Protecting instructional time emerges as another crucial component of instructional leadership that directly affects teachers' professional development. The development of learning environments, as indicated by Hattie (2009), not only aids student achievement but also promotes teacher well-being and development. Supervising and monitoring progress by principals, as outlined by Blase and Blase (1999), offers opportunities for feedback and tailored support, which are integral to teachers' ongoing professional development (Menon, 2022; Lambert, 2023). The current research study explored the Teachers' perceptions of Principals' Instructional Leadership Style at the Higher Secondary Level. This study explores teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership at the higher secondary level, as it directly impacts teaching quality and student outcomes. Understanding these perceptions can provide valuable insights for improving leadership practices in institutions.

Literature Review

"Instructional leadership" encompasses all leadership styles that either directly or indirectly affect the way teachers teach and how students learn, including scheduling procedures and organizational culture. These might be seen as traits of a leader that influence the caliber of instruction and curriculum provided to teachers and students (David, 2019). Although teaching and learning are important components of instructional leadership, their growth as subject matter experts in education is directly affected (Khan, 2012; Leithwood & Azah, 2021).

Since the 1980s, the field of instructional leadership has made considerable progress. For over thirty years, instructional leadership has been the focus of research, and in order to further our knowledge, the field must always be expanded. In terms of both teaching and learning, the interactions between teachers and students serve as the central focus of instructional leadership. Stated differently, it facilitates teachers' advancement in their professional growth and helps them become more effective teachers. Giving teachers the guidance, assistance, and support they require to improve their skills and performance is the aim of instructional leadership (Urick, 2020; Bouchamma, 2023; Quinn, 2024).

The responsibilities of an instructional leader encompass overseeing all policies and the teaching-learning process, expertly managing resources, providing constructive criticism, devising teacher training initiatives, implementing state-of-the-art programs and technology and successfully carrying them out, and maintaining a productive and supportive work environment. Creating a roadmap, monitoring policies, presenting opportunities, requesting feedback, delivering assistance, promoting career growth, and applauding the teaching and learning process are just a few of the duties associated with instructional leadership (Taneiji, 2021; Adams, 2022). This research study dealt with following leadership styles and teachers' perceptions of them.

- Formulating Educational Objectives
- Developing Learning Environment
- Protecting instructional time
- Supervising and monitoring progress

Formulating Educational Objectives

The formation of educational objectives is the first step in any academic or administrative undertaking. Leadership literature refers to an institution's principal as a

significant person in the organization. Principal goes on to state that qualities of exceptional institutions include competent, collaborative leaders, clearly defined goals, efficient education, and a significant amount of instructional time. Principals convert their goals for their establishments and standards for their personnel into how they want their institutions to function (Menon, 2022; Lambert, 2023). As stated by Leithwood and Hallinger (1996). They operate as the driving forces behind increased self-esteem and help teachers recognize the challenges associated with achieving the goals set out by the instructional leader (Oplatka, 2018; Wang, 2019; Bowers, 2020). By calling meetings, setting up seminars, and bringing outside speakers, the institution's leader was able to explain his vision to the teachers. He favored more self-awareness among teachers (Hallinger & Heck, 2014). According to Brewer (1993), the leadership principle of the organization influences teachers by pushing them to meet their learning goals and to be professionally developed (Spillane, 2009; David, 2019).

Developing learning environment

One of the most important aspects of instructional leadership is developing a learning environment in the classroom that is favorable to teaching and learning. The actions of instructional leadership have a major effect on the functioning core of institutions (Sebastian, 2019). Studies reveal that principals who demonstrate a higher number of behaviors linked to instructional leadership increase teachers', and students' success and satisfaction while simultaneously cultivating an environment that encourages confidence, taking chances, and collaboration (Heck, 2014; Bellibas, 2019; Adams, 2022). A key element of instructional leadership is establishing lines of communication with teachers that will influence changes in the way they teach. A welcoming, transparent, and inclusive learning environment is created by principals. Khan (2009) defines a principal as a leader in education who works to ensure that the personnel, administration, and facilities are managed in a way that promotes a secure, productive learning environment for teachers to promote their professional development (Taneiji, 2021).

Protecting instructional time

The time a teacher spends working with students in class is known as instructional time, this style deals with enough productive time for the teaching and learning process, as it affects students' ability to learn and makes them feel exhausted also provides teachers sufficient time to enhance their professional development. Murphy & Hallinger (1985) state that if announcements, tardy students, and office requests frequently disrupt class, teachers are not using their full potential as teachers and classroom managers. If a principal can put rules in place that restrict disruptions during class, it could help teachers and students to enhance their productivity (Heck, 2014; Allensworth, 2019; Printy, 2019).

Supervising and monitoring progress

An important leadership style of a principal is Supervising and monitoring teaching progress which fastened teachers' learning growth and professional development. This point of view sees supervision as a classroom activity where teachers engage in regular, in-depth conversations on instructing and acquiring (Hallinger & Wang, 2019). As instructional leaders who assist in the development of teachers, principals play a critical role in this process (Menon, 2022; Gonzales, 2023). It entails getting hands-on experience with both the method and the result. Supervision enhances the development of teachers. Heck, Larsen, and Marcoulides (1990) discovered that

direct observation of instructional methods was one of the principals' most typical actions in testing teachers' abilities (Heck, 2014; Bellibas, 2019).

The principals' instructional leadership style plays a pivotal role in shaping the professional development of teachers in terms of their performance within educational institutions. The present study intended to explore prevailing principals' instructional leadership styles (Formulating Educational Objectives, Developing Learning Environment, Protecting instructional time, Supervising and monitoring progress) exhibited by principals in higher secondary level and teachers' perceptions of it. The study also intended to explore the more effective instructional leadership style to promote professional development of teachers.

Material and Methods

The research study was quantitative and a descriptive approach was selected to conduct the study. To conduct the study all the higher secondary institutions of Lahore were considered as the population of study. The two-stage sampling technique was adopted to select the sample of the study. In the first stage, the researcher selected 40 (40%) of higher secondary institutions by following the Proportionate sampling technique. Thus 25 females and 15 male institutions were selected as a Sample. In the second stage, 12 teachers per higher secondary institute were selected Conveniently. Thus, the sample size for the study comprised 40 higher secondary institutions and 480 teachers. The adapted questionnaire was used as an instrument of the study which was developed by (Khan, 2012). The questionnaire was validated by experts and to test the reliability pilot testing was conducted. The sample of 48 participants from 6 higher secondary institutions (8 teachers per institute) were included in the pilot testing. The questionnaire showed excellent reliability with the value of Cronbach alpha .94. The study was conducted by following all the ethical considerations, teachers who participated in this study were aware of the confidentiality data during the research process. Data was analyzed through SPSS by using descriptive analysis techniques.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Mean and Standard Deviation results of Formulating Educational Objectives

Statements	M	SD
Principal calls staff meetings to set academic targets.	3.09	1.07
Principal assigns duties to teachers in accordance with the educational objectives of the institute.	3.16	1.02
Principal makes the plan for improving the educational standard of the institute.	3.31	1.05
Principal consults teachers on subject interests for planning the institute timetable.	3.60	.97
Principal holds discussions about the academic progress of students in the staff meeting.	3.56	1.02
Principal develops a collective vision for the institute by involving staff members.	3.65	.99

Table 1 presents an overview of teachers' perceptions regarding principals' instructional leadership styles in formatting educational objectives. The mean values of all items indicate that principals are generally perceived positively by teachers in formatting educational objectives for teachers based on moderate to high mean values. However, the results were less inconsistent except for the two items which include "principals consulted teachers on subject interests for timetable planning" and "principals developed a collective vision with staff" which were found consistent in results.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation Results of Developing Learning Environment

Statements	M	SD
Principal gives enough autonomy to teachers in instructional work.	3.66	1.07
Principal develops positive working relationships among teachers.	3.70	1.01
Principal honors teachers' opinions and ideas.	3.61	1.12
Principal encourages teachers for their innovative approaches to teaching.	3.75	.97
Principal appreciates teachers for their work related to student engagement.	3.75	.99
Principal helps teachers to solve their teaching problems.	3.47	1.01

Table 2 presents an overview of teachers' perceptions regarding principals' instructional leadership styles in developing learning environment. The mean values of all items indicate that principals are generally perceived positively by teachers in fostering a conducive learning environment based on high mean values. However, the results were less inconsistent except for the two items which include "principals actively encourage teachers for their innovative teaching approaches" and "principals appreciate teachers for their work related to student engagement" which were found consistent in results.

Table 3
Mean and Standard Deviation Results of Protecting instructional time

Statements	M	SD
Principal do not interrupt teachers while they are engaged in teaching.	3.69	.88
Principal makes an alternative arrangement for class when a teacher is late/or on leave.	3.45	1.04
Principal implements institute rules for the effective use of time allocated to instruction.	3.54	1.02
Principal discusses classroom activities with teachers.	3.23	1.11
Principal is readily available to teachers for discussing matters dealing with instruction.	3.14	1.04
Principal limits the interruption of extra and co-curricular activities on instructional time.	3.27	1.11

Table 3 presents an overview of teachers' perceptions regarding principals' instructional leadership styles in protecting instructional time. The mean values of all items indicate that principals are generally perceived positively by teachers in aspects of protecting instructional time for teachers based on moderate to high mean values. However, the results were less inconsistent except for one item "principals to not frequently interrupt teachers during teaching" which was found consistent in results.

Table 4
Mean and Standard Deviation Results of Supervising and Monitoring Progress

Statements	M	SD
Principal evaluates the teaching according to the syllabus break up.	3.53	1.14
Principal visits classrooms to monitor the teaching-learning process.	3.65	1.03
Principal provides feedback to teachers after classroom observation.	3.58	1.04
Principal shares teaching strategies with teachers for the improvement of instruction.	3.52	.95
Principal observes teachers' lesson planning and use of Audio-Visual Aids.	3.47	.94
Principal checks the test results of students for their learning outcomes.	3.52	.98

Table 4 presents an overview of teachers' perceptions regarding principals' instructional leadership styles in supervising & Monitoring teaching Progress. The mean values of all items indicate that principals are generally perceived positively by teachers in their supervision and monitorization based on high mean values. However, the results were less inconsistent except for the three items which include "principal somewhat observe teachers' lesson planning and use of Audio-Visual Aids", "principal share teaching strategies for instruction improvement" and "principals check test results for student learning outcomes" which were found consistent in results.

Table 5
Mean and Standard Deviation of Most Common Principals' Leadership Style

Styles	Mean	SD
Formatting Educational Objectives	3.34	0.61
Developing Learning Environment	3.66	0.72
Protecting instructional time	3.39	0.55
Supervising and Monetizing Progress	3.49	0.63

Table 5 provides the most common principals' instructional leadership style for teachers' professional development across various dimensions. The result of the perceptions of the teachers was found that the "Developing learning environment" was the most common leadership style ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.72$), of their principals rather than other styles i.e., "Formatting Educational Objectives", "Protecting Instructional Time" and "Supervising & Monitoring Progress".

Conclusion

The study aimed to examine teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership styles in public sector higher secondary institutions, focusing on four styles: Formulating Educational Objectives, Developing Learning Environment, Protecting Instructional Time, and Supervising & Monitoring Progress. From the analysis it is concluded that principals were generally perceived positively across all styles. However, inconsistencies were noted in certain areas. For instance, principals were seen as more effective in consulting teachers on subject interests for planning and developing a collective vision, as well as encouraging innovative teaching approaches and appreciating teachers' efforts in student engagement. Similarly, principals were seen as consistent in not interrupting teachers during instructional time, and in supervising classroom activities and providing feedback. However, there was less consistency in areas such as lesson planning and using Audio-Visual aids. It is also resulted that among the four styles, Developing Learning Environment emerged as the most common instructional leadership styles on the basis of teachers' perceptions.

Recommendations

- A gender-based comparative analysis of instructional leadership styles could provide valuable insights into potential variations in leadership styles between male and female leaders.
- Researchers may compare the perceptions of instructional leaders and teachers regarding leadership styles could reveal any disparities or alignments in their perspectives.
- Future studies could investigate instructional leadership practices that affect the overall educational ecosystem, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

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