



The Role of School Principal as Instructional Leader: The Case of Type 2 and Type 3 Schools in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: The school leader has a greater responsibility to students, teachers, parents as well as school community. Instructional leadership is a model of school leadership in which a principal works together with teachers to provide support and guidance in establishing best practices in teaching. The purpose of this study was to examine the practices of school principal's role as instructional leader: The case of Type 2 and Type 3 School. The objectives of the study were to find out what are the practices of principal's role as instructional leader at Type 2 and Type 3 School? How does principal fulfill his/her instructional leadership role? And which activities do principals as instructional leaders engage in promoting the education of students and upgrading the pedagogy of teachers in Type 2 and Type 3 schools. The study was guided by qualitative multiple case study in order to examine the issue. Accordingly, Semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, observation and document analyses were used as data collecting tools. As the study sample four principals, two sectional heads and four teachers were selected using purposive sampling for interviews and group discussion. The finding of the study revealed that the general administrative roles took much of principals' time and attention rather than instructional leadership roles. Also the study found that irrespective of school type principals pay much attention on provision of instructional materials and incentives for teaching and learning, protection of instructional and maintaining high visibility. However, it was further revealed that principals pay less attention on instructional supervision and evaluation, teacher training and professional development, monitoring students progress and coordinating curriculum. The study further revealed that the opportunities available for principals to acquire leadership training at an appropriate stage in their career are limited. For school to be successful, the principals need to balance both administrative roles and instructional leadership roles. Therefore it is recommended that the principals need to be trained in school management and leadership in order to be competent as instructional leaders in different categories of schools.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership roles, Type 2 Schools, Type 3 Schools, Perception, Motivation.

Introduction

According to UNESCO (2005) the major tasks of the school principal as instructional leader include: determining school goals, curriculum coordination, organizing diverse programs particularly for professional development of teachers, engaging in school supervision and evaluation, monitor students' progress, taking remedial actions, and creating a conducive school climate. Similarly,

Teole (2013) emphasized instructional leaders' role as setting clear school goals, providing incentives and resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, monitoring and evaluating instructions and providing feedback for teachers. In order to fulfill all these instructional leadership roles school principals need to have the theoretical knowledge, practical skill, experiences and adequate trainings on school leadership and management (Kumari 2020, 2021). The researchers stated that principal's leadership role is critical to the effectiveness of the school toward educating its students. School principals must be effective instructional leaders and be able to provide support, guidance and mentoring to teachers to bring about improvement in school performance and student learning achievements. Also, it has been found that the main purpose of engaging in instructional leadership role is to support teachers to improve their pedagogical skills which directly benefit students' high level of educational performance (Bush 2008, Kumari 2022a, 2022b). There are widespread beliefs that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes. Leithwood et al., (2008) found that all school members and other stakeholders are influenced by leadership of higher-achieving schools to a significantly greater degree than that of lower achieving schools. Mulford et al.,(2003) carried out a study to identify the effects of leadership on student learning and found that there are two main factors that affect to improve student outcomes. According to Waters et al., (2004) and Pillegedara et al (2021) effective leadership of school principals can significantly enhance pupil achievement. As mentioned by them when principals engage in instructional leadership roles such as monitoring the teaching learning process, holding post observation conferences and providing feedback and support, providing incentives and resources on time, coordinating curriculum, evaluate students progress, protect instructional time, provide incentives for teaching and learning will directly affect improving the quality of the teaching learning process. Similarly, Quinn (2002) shows that the leadership role of the principal is important in creating a happy working environment and thereby achieves exceptional educational outcomes. Southworth, (2004) carried out a research focusing on leading small, medium and large sized schools in England and emphasized the importance of learning centered leadership in schools. According to him efficient and effective leaders exercise both direct and indirect influence in implementing reforms and improving students' levels of achievement. Researchers found that classroom observation is one of the most common ways of reflecting on pedagogical practices which can help teachers evaluate their strengths and weaknesses (Farrell 2011, Kumari 2022c, 2022d).

The success of the school is mostly dependent on the principal's ability to engage in instructional leadership roles and work as a team to improve the quality of classroom instruction. (Blasé, Blasé & Philips, 2010; Smylie, 2010, Kumari 2014, 2019). Anderson et al., (2008) and Kumari (2022e) recognized instructional leadership of the principal as one of the most important tools that can be used in building effective professional development of teachers. They further emphasized that there is a direct relationship between instructional leadership and the professional development of teachers. These references are very cogent for the current study which focuses on instructional leadership roles of principals in different categories of secondary schools in Sri Lanka and critically explore the extent to which more effective adoption of instructional leadership practices by principals enhance learning and teaching performance. In this connection school principals can use instructional leadership as an effective tool or leadership model in terms of enhancing the school success. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the role of instructional leadership of principals working in Type 2 and Type 3 schools in Sri Lanka. This study looks at the instructional leadership role by school principals on the pedagogical practices and professional development of teachers in Type 2 and Type 3 schools in Sri Lanka.

Statement of the Problem

Instructional leadership focuses on the teaching learning process that takes place in the classroom and the principal's influence is aimed at improving student learning and teacher motivation (Blasé & Blasé 2010, Kumari 2021a, 2021b, 2022e). In this manner all school leadership tasks should be aimed at improving school performance results. Instructional leadership roles of school principals has been identified as one of the most important roles and also a key factor in terms of the

professional development of teachers and their motivation. In this sense it is clear that the main purpose of instructional leadership is to support teachers to improve their pedagogical skills which directly benefit students' high level of educational performance. Also, it has been found that there is a direct relationship between instructional leadership roles played by principals and the professional development of teachers. Researchers believe that principals as instructional leaders in the school be supposed to engage in the role of instructional leadership (Sothworth 2004, Bush 2008, Hallinger & Murphy 1986, Kumari 2019, 2020, Malkanthi 2021, wickramanayake 2022a, 2022b). Therefore, the principal as an instructional leader of the school should engage in instructional leadership roles such as supervision of instruction, holding post observational conferences and providing the feedback necessary for teachers to enhance skills with regard to classroom teaching, providing incentives, coordinating the curriculum and protecting instructional time.

It was expected to give more power to the school with the introduction of Programme for School Improvement (PSI) by the Sri Lankan ministry of education in year 2006. With this new initiation it was also expected to achieve improvement in student achievement through improvement of the quality of instructional process and the transformation of the school into a motivational and child-friendly learning environment. In order to achieve this expectation the school principals are expected to work as instructional leaders on establishing clear school goals and communicating them with the staff, coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction and support professional development of teachers, monitoring students' progress, provide resources for teaching and learning, protect instructional time, maintain high visibility and working with the school community toward school improvement and creating conducive teaching and learning environment in the school. However, there is a growing concern about the little attention to instructional leadership roles by principals working in different categories of secondary schools in Sri Lanka. To my knowledge there was dearth of research conducted on practices of Type 2 and Type 3 school principals' role as instructional leader. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the role of instructional leadership of principals working in Type 2 and Type 3 schools in Sri Lanka.

Purpose and objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the practices of school principal's role as instructional leader: The case of Type 2 and Type 3 Schools. Therefore the specific research questions of the study were built as follows.

1. What are the practices of principal's role as instructional leader at Type 2 and Type 3 School?
2. How does principal fulfill his/her instructional leadership role? And
3. Which activities do principals as instructional leaders engage in promoting the education of students and upgrading the pedagogy of teachers in Type 2 and Type 3 schools.

Methodology

Research Method

The qualitative case study approach was used in the current study. The qualitative research discovers attitudes and behavior, experience through multiple forms of data such as interviews, observation and documents as it doesn't rely on a single data source. As stated by Bogdan et,al (2007) in qualitative research the data are collected in verbal form rather than numerical, data are analyzed inductively and researchers are concerned with the entire process. A case study is thus appropriate for the current study as it attempts to describe a particular situation Sampling Method

It is important to select a study sample as it is difficult to include the whole population in a study. As explained by Cohen et al.,(2013) the quality of any research depends on careful sampling Therefore, researchers need to ensure the size of the sample and also its accessibility, as the accuracy of data needed is determined by the sample selected. Therefore, considerable attention needs to be given to selecting a reliable study sample. As explained by Cohen et al., (2013) careful and effective sampling helps researchers in order to overcome challenges in terms of time, resources and also access. They further stated that the size of the sample depends on purpose and the nature of

the research. In particular the nature of the research can be quantitative, qualitative or mixed method. Therefore, according to them there are no clear cut rules for correct sample size. However, Cohen et al., emphasize the importance of considering methods of sampling when choosing an appropriate sample for a study. As mentioned by them under the purposive sampling method sampling is deliberate, depending on the needs of the researcher and the purpose and scope of the study. As Cohen et al., describe the central aim of qualitative studies is not generalization. However, qualitative studies direct themselves to engage in more in-depth analysis of the phenomena pertaining to a particular context. Therefore, purposive sampling method was chosen as the best suitable sampling method for the current study

Study Sample

The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. Therefore, purposive sampling was used as the sampling methodology in the current study. Accordingly, four school principals, two sectional heads and four teachers were selected as the study sample for data collection. The researcher's chosen schools were from different categories in order to see the similarities and differences of instructional leadership roles played by principals among these schools and determine how leadership skills of the principals could be improved and developed through training.

Study Site

According to Cohen et al. it is appropriate to conduct the study in naturalistic settings in qualitative research. Thus, the site for the study was selected as Colombo Education Zone as it has number of Type 2 and Type 3 schools and also has easy access. Accordingly, the current study was limited only to the Colombo Education Zone in the Colombo District, Western province Sri Lanka. In order to conduct the research a letter of permission was sent to two Type 2 schools and two Type 3 School. After I got acceptance to conduct the research the purpose and ethical considerations of the study were clearly explained to respondents. Then, the principals and the teachers signed consent forms to indicate that they were not pressured to take part in the study and that they agreed with all the conditions set by the researcher.

Data collection tools

Interview, observation and document analysis were employed as qualitative data collection tools. Accordingly, interview was conducted with principals, sectional heads and teachers. Sectional heads and teacher were interviewed as they can give adequate information in terms of instructional leadership role of the principal in their school.

Interview as data gathering tool

There are different types of interviews in social science research known as structured, semi structured and unstructured interviews (Numan 2007). In the current study the researcher used semi-structured interview. This is because the researcher wanted to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews. In order to fulfill this, the same guiding questions were asked in each interview schedule. Accordingly, individual interview was conducted with school principal and sectional heads and focus group discussions were held with teachers. The researcher was responsible for no interview took longer than 40 minutes.

Document analysis as data gathering tool

As mentioned by Bogdan (2007) the term document in qualitative research refers to materials such as records, photographs, video films, memos, letters, diaries and souvenirs etc. In this study documents such as; vision and mission of the school, time tables, instructional programs, attendance of teachers' and students', records of supervision and evaluation of instruction, records of students' progress monitoring, programme for school improvements (PSI), remedial actions taken were analyzed.

Observation

As stated by Bogdan (2007) “live” data from “live” situations can be obtained through observation. There are two types of observations; direct and indirect. In the current study the researcher engaged in direct observation as it helps the researcher the opportunity to gather live data and information in terms of availability of instructional materials that supports the instructional process. Accordingly, ICT facilities, text books, play grounds, school building, staff room, sanitary facilities, class room conditions etc were observed.

Data collection procedure

After developing the data collection instruments, invitation letters and information sheets and participants’ consent letters were posted to the selected schools. After one week the researcher visited to schools selected and obtained permission, contact details and a date to hold the initial meeting. Obtaining permission was quite easy as the researcher had posted the invitation letters to the selected school in advance and the principals were made aware of the study when the researcher was visiting the schools. Therefore, once they agreed to participate in this study, the researcher set an appointment with each of them. Before starting the field work the researcher followed certain procedures, mentioned below.

Initial Meeting

After obtaining permission from the principals, an initial meeting was held with the sectional head and teachers to introduce the researcher review the information sheet and discuss about the study in depth. The initial meeting lasted around 45 to 60 minutes. The participants’ consent form was discussed at the initial meeting. In addition, the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. At the end of the meeting all the participants agreed that they understood the aim of the research and agreed to participate by signing the consent form. After a week all the participants without withdrawing their consent confirmed their decision by phone.

Conducting Interviews

It is believed that the success of data collection depends on the extent to which researchers pay attention to implementation of data collection tools. In order to conduct successful interviews there are some basic guidelines identified in the literature. As mentioned by Leary (2001) there are four such guidelines that can be used by interviewers. According to them the first one is making a friendly environment. According to them a good relationship with interviewees can be established through a friendly environment. Also a mutual relationship helps interviewees to respond without any hesitation. The second guideline is, adhering to the interview schedule. In this guideline they require the interviewer to follow the prepared interview schedule without any change. Accordingly it is expected to ask all participants each question in the same manner. The third guideline is stay away from supporting to obtain answers from the interviewees. As explained by Kvale et al., (1996) when interviewers support the interviewee to obtain answers this will lead to interrupt the interviewee’s flow of thought. Therefore they advised interviewers to refrain from supporting to get answers. The last guideline is about organizing interview sections. Under this guideline it is expected that the interviewer will organize the interview questions in a logical manner. In particular they are advised not to begin with sensitive or emotional questions. Following these guidelines, the researcher conducted four interviews with the school principals, two sectional heads and four teachers.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research data analysis involves collecting open ended data provided by respondents. Accordingly, the interviews were conducted in Sinhala which is the working language of the selected education zone and the interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. Once the interview was concluded, each audio file were transcribed and translated to English language. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the main data obtained through different interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing, reporting patterns or themes within data. The transcripts were studied and, in the process, units, categories and themes were identified. After that the interpretations of the results were done. The data collected from different

interviews were closely examined so that organizes into categories on the basis of themes and similar features. In this process the researcher first listened to the recordings of each interview. Then the transcripts were read several times to get general idea of the interview, identify categories and units of meanings. Accordingly, similar categories were then grouped together and arranged into themes. Grouping related categories that show interrelationships helped reduced themes. Most of the themes that emerged from the interviews matched with the literature available for instructional leadership roles. Accordingly, five themes such as; principal role in framing and communicating the school vision and mission, principal's involvement in managing of curriculum and instructional programs, principal's role in organizing professional development programmes for staff, principal's role in creating positive climate for teaching and learning; and principals' training. The themes that have been identified were discussed and supported with relevant quotations from the interviews.

Validity and Reliability

Cohen et al., (2007) show the importance of validity and reliability in research. They stated that an invalid research is worthless. According to Basit, (2010) issues of validity in research can be addressed. Validity in qualitative study has to do with being truthful. It refers to the bridge between a construct and the data. Therefore researcher in this study used triangulation strategy and thick descriptions to address validity concerns. Reliability in qualitative research deals with the consistency and dependability of the research findings. Dependability will be obtained through triangulation as well as a detailed report on the processes followed in the study so that future researchers may repeat the work. The taped interviews and transcription of the interviews will be stored and kept safely for verification purposes. Accordingly the issue of validity and reliability in qualitative research may be addressed through honesty, richness and scope of the data achieved. Accordingly it is clear that the validity and reliability of a research depend on several factors. They have been identified as the ability of the researcher to obtain real data and the extent to which the research explains the phenomenon. Further, the generalizability in terms of usefulness is also important. Hence, the researcher tried to enhance validity and reliability in her study through various aspects such as exploring the issue in detail and triangulating data.

Ethical Consideration

This section focuses on the ethical issues that related to the current study. Obtaining informed consent from the participants is a one of the basic requirements of any research. Accordingly, the researcher prepared a straightforward consent form for the participants including important information with regard to the current research. Each participant signed the consent form before the researcher started the data collection. Accordingly, relevant permission was obtained to conduct interviews and observations from principals sectional heads and teachers.

As highlighted by Rubin and Rubin (2011) it is vital for every researcher to be careful about what the respondent says or provides. It is therefore the researchers' responsibility to protect their participants. In order to protect participants' identities Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest researchers use pseudonyms in their research reports. The individuals who participated in a research also have moral and legal rights to receive privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. In particular if the participants do not feel secure and comfortable they will not fully contribute to providing accurate information. Therefore the quality of the research findings on the one hand depends on the level of security and comfort of the research participants. Therefore, in order to avoid any implications on the reputation of the schools and participants the researcher decided not use their real names when writing her report

In any research trustworthiness is one of the key aspects which is frequently questioned. Lincoln and Guba (2004) stated that there are several ways to judge trustworthiness of a research. The first one is achieving the credibility of the research. For this every researcher needs to show that the subject was appropriately identified and described. Due to this, every researcher is required to give a description about every stage of his/her research in order to convince readers. Therefore, in the current study, the researcher provided a complete explanation in order to achieve credibility. According to them the second way of judging trustworthiness is transferability. Transferability is

the researchers' ability to show the usefulness of findings to other similar situations even though every research is different in its nature. They believe that some aspects of a research are applicable to other situations. Therefore, in this current study this was also considered and the necessary effort was made to give sufficient information. The third way of judging trustworthiness is conformability. The conformability shows that the data and their explanation are not creations of the researchers' thoughts. In the current study the researcher provided a detailed description of the procedure of data collection and analysis. Also the current study was further reinforced by audio-recorded data and their transcription.

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Findings

Data analysis from Observation

The discussion of the observations presented as follows:

The school provides the instruction from 7.30am to 1.30 pm in both types' schools. The schools had not enough blocks for class rooms and the classrooms were packed with a large number of students. There were different teaching aids such as, pictures, charts and graphs in the classrooms. However, the most of the classrooms and halls needs proper maintenance. Irrespective of school type four schools had not play grounds and sport fields. There was a library in all four schools with limited number of old books. In all four schools there was a one computer in the Principal's office. The most important information such as students' academic progress, sports achievements of the students were displayed in the office. Overall, the observation result revealed that the instructional resources that support instructional activities were inadequate in both types schools.

Document Analysis:

Under document analysis issues such as schools' vision and mission, timetables, teachers' and students' attendances, lesson plan, yearly plan for curricular and extracurricular activities and school improvement program were analyzed and discussed.

The school had vision and mission statements. The analysis revealed that the vision and mission of all four schools was not revised for several years. In terms of time tables all four schools had displayed instructional dates, exam times and sports days in the office of the principals, staff room and the class rooms. With regard to teachers' and students' attendance Irrespective of school type it was observed that there was a high level of teachers' absenteeism in all the school. This implies that there was wastage of instructional time in the school. It was further observed that the principals in all four schools distributed the responsibilities of monitoring instructional process to the sectional heads in schools. The document analysis revealed that schools had several extra curricula activities organized and implemented in both types schools during last couple of years. This indicates that the implementation of extra-curricular activities in all four schools was satisfactory. The analysis showed that committees related to Programme for School Improvement (PSI) was not functioned well. Particularly School Development Committee (SDC), School Management Committee and School Procumbent Committee were not functioned effectively. This implies that the school principals were less aware about the PSI programme

Interview data

Data obtained from the different interviewees were analyzed and discussed in this section. Accordingly, the main five themes such as principal role in framing and communicating the school vision and mission, principal's involvement in managing of curriculum and instructional programs, principal's role in arranging staff development programmes, principal's role in creating positive teaching and learning atmosphere and the training needs for the principals' were developed. All five themes that have been identified were discussed and supported with relevant quotations from the interviews.

Findings of the Interviews

In this section the researcher presented the following major findings of this study based on the documents analysis, observation and interviews data

1. Principal's role in framing and communicating the school vision and mission.

Irrespective of school type all the respondents stated that vision and mission statements are available in their schools. However, the principal didn't pay much attention in revising the vision and mission statements and regular communication of the vision and missions to teachers, students and the school community. This was supported by teacher I from Type 2 school.

"There is a vision and mission statements in my school and I have read it. But, I feel that it would be much better if school principals make effort in revising the vision and mission statements and making aware of the staff about it.....Teacher (2)

According to Hallinger, P. and Murphy, J. (1985) one of the most important instructional leadership roles is formulating and defining a clear mission, goals and objectives together with the staff members and communicating them to stakeholders to realize effective instructional process.

2. Principal's role in managing and monitoring curriculum and instructional program.

Irrespective of school Type the interviews revealed that the management of curriculum and instructional programs is a shared responsibility of principals, deputy principals and also sectional heads in schools. This view is highlighted by principal 4 from Type 3 School.

"...Principal him or herself cannot take the responsibility of management of curriculum and engage in instructional supervision in schools. They need sectional heads support in managing the curriculum effectively and" Principal 4

Supporting to above quote Teacher 2 from Type 2 School 2 highlighted that,

"...principal, deputy principals, and sectional heads in schools have conducted instructional observation. However, most of the times they failed to give constructive feedback for teachers to identify their strength and the areas that they should further developed....." (Teacher 2)

According to Hallinger et, al (1985) one of the of principal's role as instructional leader is to engage in inatructional supervision and evaluating instruction on a regular basis and ensuring that classroom objectives of teachers are consistent with the stated goals of the school. However, the interviews revealed that the supervisory role of school principal's was not effective as they failed to provide constructive feedback for teachers' professional development

3. Principal's role in staff development program

Irrespective of school type it revealed from the interview that principal as instructional leader did not pay much attention on teachers professional development. As responded by Teacher 1 from Type 2 School 1

"There was no school based teacher training programme or workshops organized within the school. Even though there are some seminars organized by the Zonal Education Office I haven't got any opportunity to participate for such programme during past couple of years....." Teacher (1)

In terms of School Based Teacher Development Programmes (SBTDP) one of the principals highlighted that "...training and workshops require budget ...we haven't sufficient budget to organize and implement trainings workshops within the schools" Principal (I)

According to the above extracts it is clear that the organizing and implementing SBTDP in schools are not possible for principals in both types schools due to prevailing financial issues.

Du Four et, al . (1995) emphasized that the principal as an instructional leader in the school should create opportunities for teachers to obtain professional development and thereby enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, based on the findings of this study the researcher concluded that the professional development of teachers which is the most important aspect of the instructional leadership roles played less attention by school principals.

4. Principals' role in creating positive climate for teaching and learning.

4.1 Principals' role in providing instructional resources:

As emphasized by Andrews et. al. (1994) in order to achieve instructional goals principals as instructional leaders in schools need to provide physical and trained human resources for the effective management of the instructional programs. However the findings of this study revealed that the availability of instructional resources in both types school was not satisfactory. These views were supported by Teacher 3 in Type 3 School 4.

....."There are no adequate trained teachers to teach core subjects such as Science, Mathematics and English in our schools. Moreover, provisions of instructional materials on time were very poor..." Teacher (4)

The above quote was further supported by Sectional Head 1 from Type 2 School 2. ".....Yes, we have lack of instructional resources in their schools. Most of the times we do not receive text books, Teaching Instructional Manuals (TIMS) and other necessary resources on time. Also we don't have enough funds to purchase such materials in our schools....." Sectional Head (1)

It is clear from the findings of this study that the principals as instructional leaders in both Types Schools failed to provide instructional materials on time. This might be happen due to principals' lack of awareness about the power and authority they have related to PSI programme and their lack instructional leadership skills to make links with various stakeholders and generate funds through introducing different fund raising activities.

4.2 Motivating teachers and students

One of other most important roles of instructional leader is to provide rewards for both students and teachers for their best performance and thereby creating a positive school climate. The data obtained from interviews showed that the rewarding of teachers has recently started in both types their schools. Responding to this the Sectional Head 2 stated that

"...We started a reward system for teachers those who performed well in teaching and all other extra-curricular activities and ... Sectional head (2)

In terms of students reward system all of the respondents mentioned that students are rewarded based on their educational achievements and performance exhibits on extra-curricular activities. Accordingly, the findings revealed that principals as instructional leaders motivate teachers and students for successful teaching and learning to take place in their schools.

4.2 Protecting teaching time:

As stated by Hallinger et, al (1985) protecting instructional time is also a one of the most important instructional leadership roles. However, the finding of the study depicted that the instructional time was disrupted due to different reasons. This was evidenced by Teacher 1 from Type 2 School 2 and Teacher 3 from Type 3 School 1 as;

"...Instructional process in our schools is interrupted due to several reasons and it is very difficult to implement the instructional process as planned. Teachers and students were called for meetings and

several other activities and sometimes frequent unexpected incidents happen in schools during the instructions Teacher (2 & 3)

This idea was confirmed by the sectional Head 1 as stated "...the interruption of teaching and learning is a serious problem in our schools and this negatively affect for covering the syllabus of many subject and also for quality teaching and learning process.... Sectional Head (I)

Accordingly it is clear that irrespective of school type the interruption of teaching and learning time was a serious issue which affects the quality of instruction and students' educational achievement.

4.4. Principals visibility and presence for teachers and students:

As stated by many scholars the principal needs to be highly visible on the schools and classrooms we well. According to Hallinger (2009) the principals' high visibility support the continuous improvement of quality of teaching and learning]. The data obtained from respondents showed that although the principals were available in the school they spent most of their time on general administrative roles rather than instructional leadership. This was evidenced by the response of Sectional Head 1

"...Principals are available in their office most of the times but busy with having meetings with staff, students and stakeholders ... sometimes they visit classes and observe instructions. However, I should say that principals in our schools have to fulfil almost all the general administrative roles and" Sectional Head (1)

The above quote was further confirmed by Principal 2 and 1 in Type 3 and Type 2 Schools respectively

"...We don't have time to engage in direct teaching in classrooms as we have to fulfil lots of other administrative work in our schools.Further we have to spent most of our time in solving students' discipline problems, meeting with parents, preparing reports and

It is evident that irrespective of school type principals as instructional leaders in both types schools have to engage in general administrative roles rather than instructional leadership roles.

5. Principals' training needs:

In terms of principal training irrespective of school type all the principals in the sample affirmed that they do not have training opportunities to acquire or update new knowledge or update knowledge pertaining to leadership skills. Lack of training hindered principal's roles as instructional leader in schools. This was supported by the principal 1 interview in the following extracts.

" school leadership is becoming more complicated and competitive and therefore we need on time training on school leadership... However. I didn't get any training on school leadership during past five years of my principal post and this demotivates usandMost of principals lead the schools with their experiences. Principal (I)

Bush (2008) stated that the headship is a expert profession that requires specific training. Similar to this Hallinger (2008) stated that the all school principal should be trained so that they can play instructional leadership roles which supports professional development of teachers and students higher level of educational achievements. From the data obtained through interviews, observation and document analysis it was found that lack of on time training of school principals hinder effective achievement of the vision and missions of the school.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the instructional leadership role is mostly played by principal, deputy principals and sectional heads. However, it was clear from this study that there is a imbalance between administrative roles and instructional roles of the principal's in both types schools as they spent more of their time on general administration roles rather than instructional leadership roles. This implies the needs of principals' engagement in instructional leadership roles to improve the quality of pedagogy in schools.

7. Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions the researcher suggests following recommendations so that principals as instructional leaders could improve the quality of teaching and learning in different categories of secondary schools in Sri Lanka.

1) Building and communicating a clear vision and mission to stakeholders.

In the light of the study findings I would like to recommend that the principals should get support from all concerned bodies such as teachers, students and the community in building vision and mission of the school. Also I recommend principals to renew the vision and mission statements taking into consideration of changing needs of the society. Also the vision and mission need to be communicated among stakeholders so that everyone understands and have commitment toward its' achievement.

2) Managing and monitoring curriculum and instructional program.

The finding of the study revealed that the principal gave less attention for regular instructional supervision and provision of professional development opportunities for teachers. Therefore, I recommended that the principal should practice clinical supervision which helps teachers to identify their strength and also the areas that need further development. Further I suggest principals to monitor students' progress in collaboration with deputy principals, sectional heads and senior teachers in the schools.

3) Staff Development

The study found that there was no school based teacher training programmes in both types schools. Therefore, I recommended that the principals should identify training needs of the staff and prioritize such training needs so that they can plan and organize staff development programs within the school. Further principals as instructional leaders in the school should aware about the power and authority that they have been given under the Programme for School Improvement (PSI) related to fund raising activities and obtaining support from the resource persons and school stakeholders in terms of developing schools..

4) Provision of instructional resources

The research finding further revealed that the provision of text books, Teaching Instructional Manuals and train human resources in both types schools was not satisfactory. Therefore, I recommend that principals as instructional leaders should inform in advance to the relevant authorities about the importance of obtaining essential instructional materials on time so that principals can provide them to teachers and student on time.

5) Creating positive climate for teaching and learning.

One of the most important roles of instructional leadership is to create a positive climate for teaching and learning. However, the research finding revealed that interruption of instructional time and deterioration of the quality of instructional process is a serious issue in both types schools. Therefore, I recommend that the principal should protect instructional time through introducing an appropriate code of conduct for both staff and students and introduce effective strategies to protect instructional time. In addition to this principals should avoid from holding meetings with teachers and student during instructional time.

6) Principal training.

It was revealed from this research that the principals do not have adequate training opportunities to acquire or update new knowledge pertaining to leadership skills and lack of training hindered principal's roles as instructional leader in schools. Therefore I recommend Faculties and Department of Education and relevant authorities to plan and implement new leadership training programmes so that principals should be competent enough to lead the schools effectively.

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