

The Role of K-12 Educational Leadership Practices to Promote Effective Teaching and Learning

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[Abstract] One of the main pillars of society is education, and the quality of education is impacted by the quality of educational leadership. Principals and other school administrators are examples of educational leaders who impact and change learning environments. This study aims to clarify how effective leadership can improve teaching and learning, encourage student engagement and well-being, and eventually result in better learning outcomes. This study employed a systematic review of the secondary data on educational leadership practices. The findings demonstrated that improved teaching performance was significantly predictable given a transformational leadership and a positive school culture. The findings also provide insight into ways to enhance school culture and educational leadership to put policies into place that will improve student outcomes. These results give school administrators important new information about how important school culture is to attaining teaching excellence.

[Keywords] educational leadership, effective teaching and learning, instructional leadership

Introduction

In a variety of industries, including education, transformational leadership has become a vital component in promoting successful organizational change and performance (Alzoraiki et al., 2023). Visionary change agents are transformational leaders who motivate followers, cultivate a common goal, and enable others to put the organization's needs ahead of their own (Kartika, 2024). Better student outcomes, teacher dedication and motivation, and school culture have all been linked to transformational leadership. But even with the increasing amount of research on transformational leadership in education, there is still much to learn about how school administrators implement this style of leadership in developing nations, especially those that are dealing with serious sociopolitical issues (Milhem et al., 2024).

According to Yao et al. (2024), transformational leadership encourages followers to prioritize task outcomes and satisfies their basic needs, which leads them to prioritize the organization's interests over their own. As a result, principals are essential to the growth of their schools because they evaluate student performance, set high expectations, identify areas for improvement, and encourage staff members to share knowledge and pursue continuous professional and career development (Fraihat et al., 2024).

Research on educational leadership appears to generally agree that certain general sets of leadership techniques are beneficial or even required for effective school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2020). However, despite the growing awareness in recent decades that principals must modify their leadership according to local contexts, the impact of different contextual conditions on leadership has not been as thoroughly studied (Bush, 2018). Setting the tone for the educational experience and forming the learning environment are crucial tasks for educational leaders. They

oversee defining the school's or educational institution's mission and fostering an environment that encourages learning and development for all students. Through their leadership, they create efficient policies, set clear expectations, and offer staff and teachers direction. To guarantee that teachers have the resources and tools they need to provide high-quality instruction, they also encourage cooperation and professional development opportunities. According to Brauckmann, Pashiardis, and Ärlestig (2023), educational leaders also encourage a secure and supportive atmosphere where students feel appreciated, encouraged, and inspired to learn. Synthesis occurs on a secondary (review) level when a field of study expands in terms of the quantity of primary studies. A certain amount of decontextualization is unavoidable when synthesizing the findings of multiple primary studies in any field of study. There is rarely a more thorough discussion of the ecological validity of synthesized results, which can make it challenging for policy and practice to apply the findings in their local contexts.

Hallinger (2018) addresses this issue by urging us to examine how effective leadership reacts and adjusts to various contexts and to bring context out of the shadows. Like this, Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz and Pashiardis (2022) contend that the contextual conditions that underlie effective leadership practices must be considered because different situations can either support or undermine generally successful leadership practices.

The wide range of contexts in which school leadership is practiced worldwide adds to the wide variations in leadership approaches. Hallinger (2018) provides an example of how the framework for principals' work and leadership practices is determined by the diverse political governance and economic circumstances in various nations. Hallinger goes on to explain the importance of institutional and community contexts as well as how a principal's leadership is influenced and moulded by these elements in relation to the local school's developmental stage on a school improvement trajectory. Pursuing inclusivity and equal learning opportunities has become a key tenet in the rapidly evolving field of education. School leaders, whose responsibilities go beyond administrative duties to include influencing the educational culture and practices in K–12 institutions, are at the vanguard of this revolutionary endeavour. According to research, school administrators are crucial in assisting teachers in managing practice changes or successfully implementing new teaching techniques (Nedzinskaitė-Mačiūnienė et al., 2022).

Teachers' motivation, contentment, self-assurance, and sense of security are all enhanced by the school principal's leadership in the classroom (Grillo, 2021). Given their considerable influence over the educational environment, policies, and practices, school leaders' participation in UDL implementation in K–12 institutions are crucial. They oversee establishing a common vision for the school's UDL implementation and modelling UDL instruction (Novak, Woodlock, 2021).

Education is a vital component of society, and the quality of educational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experience for students. Principals, administrators, and instructional leaders are examples of educational leaders who possess the duty of directing and motivating teachers and students toward both academic success and personal development. The educational environment and the results that students attain are significantly impacted by effective educational leadership. Educational leaders establish an atmosphere that promotes learning, supports student accomplishment, and raises the standard of education overall by offering strategic direction, cultivating a positive school culture, and putting instructional best practices into practice

(Johnson & Fournillier, 2023). The influence that effective educational leadership has on students' success and achievement is one of its main advantages. Effective leadership has been repeatedly linked to better student outcomes, such as increased test scores, graduation rates, and college readiness, according to research. Educational leaders can greatly improve the learning environment and foster academic progress by setting clear objectives, keeping track of progress, and assisting teachers in providing high-quality instruction (Sellami et al., 2022). Additionally, the general standard of students' educational experiences is influenced by educational leadership. A welcoming and inclusive school environment where students feel appreciated, safe, and inspired to learn is created by effective leaders. Educational leaders improve the entire educational experience by establishing a culture that values diversity, encourages student participation, and encourages teamwork. This results in higher student satisfaction and a more purposeful and comprehensive learning path (Eadens & Ceballos, 2023).

Purpose of the Practice as Related to the Education Context and Setting

This study aimed to investigate how educational leadership can enhance students' educational experiences. The study specifically investigated how good leadership practices affect student engagement, learning environment quality, and student achievement. It aimed to clarify the importance of educational leadership in improving the learning process through a thorough review of the body of existing literature. With that, it sought to shed light on leadership behaviours, tactics, and methods that enhance student performance and foster a happy, encouraging learning environment. The purpose of this study sought to add to the corpus of knowledge already available on educational leadership and how it affects the educational process. The study's conclusions can help stakeholders, legislators, and educational leaders in their attempts to advance leadership development initiatives, improve instructional strategies, and establish settings that promote the best possible learning and development.

Description of the Practice/Policy

From straightforward, individual leadership styles, like the autocratic or managerial style to the complexity of more recent theories, which distribute multiple sub-groups or layers of school leadership types concurrently along with the two dimensions of instructional and transformational leadership. The concepts of school leadership and management have changed over the past three decades of research into K-12 educational leadership (Day et al., 2016). Although the role of teachers acts as a mediator, it has been demonstrated that school leadership has a positive relationship with measures of school effectiveness (Heck and Hallinger, 2009). Notably, leadership has drawn attention as a determinant of student outcome (Tan et al., 2022) and is the school factor most capable of influencing student achievement, second only to classroom conditions (i.e., teaching practices) (Leithwood et al., 2004). Along with the ideas of transformational, transactional, and distributed leadership, instructional leadership is a key concept in the literature on leadership styles versus types (Boyce and Bowers, 2018).

Related Literature

A variety of traits and actions that support the efficient administration and direction of educational institutions define effective educational leadership. Visionary leadership is a crucial quality that

entails establishing an inspiring and distinct vision for the school or educational institution. A compelling mission and goals are communicated by effective leaders, giving all stakeholders a feeling of direction and purpose. Additionally, they are adept communicators who interact with faculty, students, parents, and the community at large to establish rapport and promote a common vision (Gardner-McTaggart, 2022). Instructional leadership, in which educational leaders actively support and promote effective teaching and learning practices, is another crucial quality. They work together with educators to improve teaching methods and student outcomes by offering advice, materials, and chances for professional growth. They place a high priority on improving instruction and foster an environment where students and teachers can learn and develop continuously.

Strong organizational management abilities are another trait of successful educational leaders. Another essential trait is instructional leadership, in which educational leaders actively encourage and support successful teaching and learning strategies. By providing guidance, resources, and opportunities for professional development, they collaborate with educators to enhance teaching strategies and student outcomes. Enhancing instruction is a top priority for them, and they create an atmosphere where both teachers and students can keep learning and growing. Effective educational leaders also possess strong organizational management skills. systems and procedures, encouraging responsibility and optimizing resource utilization for the benefit of students (Bush, 2020).

Effective educational leaders also promote a welcoming and positive school climate. They foster an atmosphere that values individual differences, celebrates diversity, and advances equity and inclusivity. They put the welfare of their students first and establish secure environments where they feel encouraged, appreciated, and equipped to realize their greatest potential. They actively engage with parents, staff, and students to foster a positive school climate that fosters a sense of belonging and fosters positive relationships. Finally, successful educational leaders are flexible and sensitive to shift. They anticipate new trends and difficulties and negotiate challenging educational environments. To improve teaching methods and satisfy the changing needs of students and the community, they welcome innovation and promote experimentation (Bush, Middlewood & Bell, 2019).

The Effects of Instructional Leadership on Teaching and Learning

Student outcomes are significantly impacted by instructional leadership, which is crucial in forming teaching and learning strategies. Principals and other school administrators are examples of instructional leaders who oversee fostering an environment where teaching is valued and assisting educators in providing top-notch instruction. There are several important ways to view how instructional leadership affects teaching and learning. First and foremost, instructional leaders give teachers direction and set clear expectations. They communicate these expectations to the teaching staff and establish high standards for instructional practices. Instructional leaders establish a framework for excellence and assist teachers in coordinating their teaching strategies with the objectives of the school by defining a common vision for teaching and learning (Al-Kubaisi and Shahbal, 2021). Secondly, instructional leaders help teachers take advantage of professional development opportunities. They pinpoint the unique requirements of educators and offer them specialized workshops, training, and materials to improve their pedagogical abilities.

Instructional leaders enable teachers to hone their teaching strategies, incorporate cutting-edge teaching approaches, and remain abreast of best practices by making investments in their ongoing professional development. This in turn directly affects the calibre of instruction in the classroom and has a positive effect on student learning outcomes. Additionally, instructional leaders help teachers create a cooperative and encouraging learning environment (Lambrecht et al., 2022). They promote teamwork and give educators the chance to participate in professional learning communities, exchange knowledge, and work together to develop curricula and enhance instruction. The teaching and learning process is improved overall when instructional leaders work together to foster a culture of knowledge sharing and group development (Liu, Li, & Huang, 2022).

Observing and evaluating instructional practices is another critical function of instructional leaders. They participate in thoughtful discussions with teachers, observe classroom instruction on a regular basis, and offer constructive criticism. Instructional leaders help teachers improve their methods, address areas for growth, and increase student engagement and achievement by providing timely, focused feedback. Improved student outcomes demonstrate how instructional leadership affects teaching and learning. According to studies, educational institutions with strong instructional leadership see improvements in overall academic performance, graduation rates, and student achievement. An atmosphere that encourages student participation, develops critical thinking abilities, and improves student learning experiences is produced by instructional leaders who place a high priority on and support excellent instruction (Eadens and Ceballos, 2023).

To sum up, teaching and learning are greatly impacted by instructional leadership. Instructional leaders improve the standard of instruction in schools by setting clear expectations, offering professional development, encouraging teamwork, and keeping an eye on instructional practices. By providing direction and assistance, instructional leaders help students achieve better results and make learning enjoyable and fulfilling for all.

Methods of Organizational Management for Establishing a Positive Learning Environment

In educational institutions, organizational management techniques are essential to establishing a favourable learning environment. These tactics cover a range of topics, including decision-making, resource allocation, planning, and fostering a supportive school climate. Educational leaders can create an environment that promotes student learning, engagement, and general well-being by putting into practice efficient organizational management techniques. Strategic planning is a crucial organizational management tactic. In addition to developing a clear vision and mission for the school or educational institution, educational leaders must practice strategic thinking. This entails establishing priorities, establishing goals, and coordinating efforts and resources to help achieve those goals. Educational leaders can guarantee that the organization has a clear direction and a focused approach to providing a conducive learning environment for students by implementing strategic planning (Çetiner & Mızrak, 2021). Allocating resources is yet another crucial component of managing an organization.

To support teaching and learning, educational leaders must effectively distribute resources, such as funds, personnel, and supplies. They must evaluate the school's needs and allocate resources in accordance with those needs. Educational leaders can give teachers and students the resources they need to improve the learning process by making sure that resources are used efficiently (Ma & Li, 2021). Making wise decisions is also crucial to establishing a supportive

learning environment. Educational leaders need to make prompt, well-informed decisions that benefit the company. They ought to incorporate stakeholders in decision-making procedures, considering a range of viewpoints and encouraging cooperation and a sense of ownership. Educational leaders foster an environment that supports educational excellence by making decisions based on research, best practices, and student needs (Tierney, 2023).

Making the school culture positive is another important organizational management tactic. Leaders in education must create a culture that values inclusivity, respect, and a feeling of community for all employees and students. This entails encouraging candid communication, cultivating wholesome connections, and putting laws and procedures in place that guarantee justice and equity. Educational leaders foster a supportive environment where students feel safe, appreciated, and inspired to learn by fostering a positive school culture (Sanchez, Paul & Thornton, 2022). Furthermore, establishing solid alliances with families and the larger community is a key component of efficient organizational management. Parents, guardians, and community members should all be actively involved in the educational process, according to educational leaders. Educational leaders can develop a seamless learning experience that integrates community resources and expertise and transcends the classroom by cultivating collaborative relationships.

Developing a Positive School Climate That Encourages Participation and Well-Being by Students

Fostering student engagement and wellbeing requires promoting a positive school culture. Students feel safe, supported, and inspired to learn in an atmosphere that is fostered by a positive school culture. It includes beliefs, dispositions, and actions that promote cooperation, deference, and inclusivity among students, faculty, and the larger school community. Educational leaders can improve student engagement, foster wellbeing, and establish a supportive learning environment by placing a high priority on a positive school culture (Nehez & Blossing, 2022). Fostering a sense of belonging is a crucial component of creating a positive school culture. Educational leaders ought to put policies and programs into place that guarantee each student feels appreciated and included. Activities that foster peer relationships and teamwork, mentorship opportunities, and orientation programs can all help achieve this. Students who feel a sense of belonging are more engaged and have a more positive attitude toward learning because they feel a connection to their school community (Engels et al., 2008).

Encouraging respectful communication and healthy relationships is another essential component. Leaders in education should promote courteous and candid communication between staff, instructors, and students. Students feel heard and respected when positive communication is modelled and reinforced, and conflicts are settled in a constructive manner. Establishing a mutually respectful culture improves relationships and creates a supportive learning environment, which boosts engagement and wellbeing (Dinsdale, 2017). Additionally, encouraging student empowerment and agency helps to create a positive school climate. Leaders in education should give students a voice and allow them to participate in decision-making. Student councils, leadership initiatives, and student participation in the creation of school policies and projects are some ways to achieve this. Giving students the freedom to take charge of their education fosters engagement and a sense of responsibility, which improves their general wellbeing.

It is also critical to put programs and initiatives that put students' wellbeing first into action. Leaders in education should establish a nurturing atmosphere that attends to students' social and emotional needs. This may entail putting in place mental health programs, counselling services, and tactics for encouraging a positive work-life balance. Educational leaders cultivate a positive school culture that values students' holistic development by placing a high priority on their well-being (Aldila & Rini, 2023). Finally, fostering inclusivity and celebrating diversity are essential to developing a positive school culture. All students should feel included, respected, and represented, according to educational leaders. This may entail actively combating prejudice and discrimination, encouraging cultural awareness and appreciation, and introducing a variety of viewpoints into the curriculum. Educational leaders increase student engagement and general well-being by embracing diversity and advancing inclusivity, which cultivates a sense of acceptance, respect, and belonging (Engels et al., 2008).

In summary, encouraging a positive school culture is essential to raising student wellbeing and engagement. Educational leaders establish an environment that supports students' growth and success by encouraging a sense of belonging, fostering positive relationships, empowering students, putting their well-being first, and embracing diversity and inclusivity. Educational leaders foster students' engagement and well-being by fostering a positive school culture, which supports their academic success and general growth.

Techniques and Approaches for Enhancing the Educational process via Leadership in Education

By putting different tactics and practices into practice, educational leadership plays a critical role in enhancing the educational experience for students. Promoting collaborative learning environments, where educational leaders encourage student collaboration and teamwork, is one important tactic. Students' comprehension and engagement with the subject matter are improved when collaboration is encouraged because they learn how to cooperate, share ideas, and gain from different viewpoints. Educational leaders can also encourage active learning strategies like inquiry-based learning and project-based learning, which allow students to actively participate in the learning process and hone their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Differentiated instruction, in which educational leaders make sure that teaching strategies and resources are adapted to students' various needs and learning preferences, is another successful practice. This method promotes personalized development and lets students learn at their own speed. Additionally, educational leaders can use digital tools and resources to improve learning experiences and offer chances for interactive, multimedia-based learning by embracing technology in the classroom. By integrating technology effectively, educational leaders create dynamic and engaging learning environments (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). Educational leaders can greatly improve the learning process, encourage student participation, and cultivate a culture of ongoing learning and development by putting these tactics and practices into practice.

Important Elements and Tactics for Achieving Successful Learning Outcomes via Leadership

To achieve favourable learning outcomes and create a nurturing and stimulating learning environment, effective educational leadership is essential. Educational leaders can steer their

institutions toward improved student achievement, engagement, and overall success by identifying critical elements and tactics. Establishing a clear vision and goal-setting procedure is one important component. A compelling vision that reflects the needs and goals of stakeholders, teachers, and students must be expressed by educational leaders. This vision establishes the institution's direction and goals, acting as a compass. Leaders can further hone the vision and offer a road map for attaining favourable learning outcomes by establishing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals (Smart) as recommended by Sellami et al., (2022).

Instructional leadership is another important component. Proficient leaders exhibit a thorough comprehension of instructional strategies. They promote a culture of constant improvement, set high standards for instruction and learning, and aid in teachers' professional growth. Through instructional leadership, leaders support and encourage creative teaching methods, engage in instructional supervision and feedback to enhance classroom practice, and advocate for research-based instructional strategies (Walker & Qian, 2022).

Positive learning outcomes can also be attained through cooperation between teachers and students through shared decision-making. An atmosphere that encourages ownership and dedication is produced by leaders who cultivate a collaborative culture and include stakeholders in decision-making procedures. Teachers, students, and other staff members are empowered to share their perspectives and expertise by promoting collaborative problem-solving, team building, and shared decision-making Brauckmann, Pashiardis, and Ärlestig (2023). More inclusive and successful solutions that cater to the various needs of the learning community result from this inclusive approach to decision-making. Additionally, attaining favourable learning outcomes depends on fostering an inclusive and upbeat school culture. For every student to feel appreciated, respected, and included, educational leaders must establish a secure and encouraging environment. This entails putting diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies into practice, encouraging good student-teacher relationships, and offering socioemotional support. According to Lambrecht et al. (2022), a positive school culture fosters student engagement, builds the groundwork for meaningful learning experiences, and improves general wellbeing.

In conclusion, it is critical for educational leaders to identify critical elements and tactics for utilizing leadership to achieve favourable learning outcomes. By putting instructional leadership first and creating a clear vision and goal-setting process, encourages students to achieve their educational goals. By working together, making decisions together, and encouraging a positive school climate, leaders can foster an atmosphere that supports student achievement. Educational leaders can steer their institutions toward improved student achievement, engagement, and general positive learning outcomes by putting these strategies into practice.

Conclusion

In this article, examining the results of a study of existing research revealed main elements and tactics for attaining favourable learning outcomes through efficient educational leadership. The review of the research findings in the presented literature showed important insights about how leadership affects the learning process. Educational leadership is central to a successful educational system which has enormous social significance. It is the duty of educational leaders, such as principals, administrators, and instructors, to mould the educational process for pupils. Their direction and leadership are essential aspects for encouraging both academic success and personal

development. These leaders use instructional best practices, foster a welcoming and inclusive school climate, and offer strategic direction through effective educational leadership. By doing this, they improve student achievement, foster learning, and raise the standard of education. Effective educational leadership has a profound effect that goes beyond the classroom to affect the entire educational system and the lives of innumerable students.

Recommendations

Three key recommendations are derived from the examined literature findings and examined literature conclusions:

- (1) To improve learning outcomes and instructional leadership practices, prioritize teamwork, communication, and a growth mindset under the direction of school heads.
- (2) To implement regular performance monitoring and conduct customized coaching and mentoring sessions.
- (3) To prioritize professional development programs that emphasize time management, technology adoption, and innovative teaching methods while promoting a culture of continuous learning and offering continuous support to encourage staff engagement with new educational technologies.
- (4) Simplified administrative procedures should be offered focused professional development opportunities for coaching and feedback skills, as well as a culture of continuous improvement, to better support educators and enhance learning outcomes in educational institutions.
- (5) An all-encompassing approach that emphasizes autonomy, technical support, cooperation, trust-building, support, and cultivating an innovative culture should be improved and modified. To improve teacher and student performance, school heads should further review their current leadership practices; Orient and re-orient teachers to their roles and responsibilities; and Review the Department of Education's core values. It is recommended that future researchers investigate different methods for this study and carry out related research.

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