Instructional Leadership of School Principals and Their Schools' National Achievement Test Performance: A Search of Relationship

Suyitno

STIE Indonesia Malang

Jl. Mega Mendung No. 9 Malang, Indonesia

Email: drsuyitno@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

This descriptive research has its goal of obtaining instructional leadership profile of school heads along four leadership roles such as resource providers, instructional resource, communicator and visible presence. Further, the study investigated the relationship between the school heads' instructional leadership performance and their school' National Achievement Test (NAT) performance. As an offshoot of the investigation, an instructional leadership training program was developed. The study concluded that the school heads are ready to handle the responsibilities and perform their managerial functions; possess the ability to manage time and resources, utilize existing material resources and mobilize human resources in planning for innovations surpassed. In terms of students' achievement, data revealed that the students have not fully mastered the competencies included in the NAT. results of the correlation analyses disclosed that school heads' gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, position and years of service are not predictors of instructional leadership performance along the four leadership roles although it was revealed that their civil status affects their roles as communicators, In addition, the school heads' instructional leadership performance does not affect their schools' NAT performance.

Keywords: *Instructional Leadership, Performance, School Achievement, Training, School Principal*

Introduction

Management expertise is the capacity to handle capital accurately and efficiently through organizing, coordinating and controlling. The purpose of this analysis is to assess the managerial ability of the principal in order to plan, execute and motivate the staff leaders to increase staff results (Bush, et al, 2018; Derrington & Campbell, 2018; Jones, 2018; Ng, 2017). Good school administrators take great care of the performance of pupils and understand that test scores are not the only indicator of quality training. Bringing into all facets of the school system, members track day-to-day events and evolving problems. No day is the same because of the varied duties of the work. You may have what it takes to fulfill the position of a school director comfortably, if you are a visionary leader with effective communication skills and a passion to provide diverse students with an outstanding education.

Principals, whose occupations are gradually reframed as educational, act as an important link between the standard-based program and its effective execution at school level. State government mandated uniform overhaul or change standards greatly affect teaching and learning. While the school leader has a vital role to play in introducing standard-based change, work on how principal students perceive their position and how these understandings are actually used to produce success for students is minimal. Productive leaders respect quality expectations, strategic integrity, and consistency in true professional affairs, to introduce and preserve curriculum improvements and enhance student growth and efficiency. Responding to the fact that the pendulum still reverberates (i.e., old concepts relating to curricula and schooling inevitably resurface once more as new), one school leader with whom I have had the privilege of debating improvements in schools focuses his teachers in a clear, distinct common philosophy: "Our pendulum just moves in one direction.

In the Ministry of Education, reform focused on the quality of instruction and on supervision in schools. Behind this move is the idea that the quality of education is greatly affected by the quality of school leadership. As Player et al, (2017) claimed, schools operated by principals who were perceived by their teachers to be strong instructional leaders exhibited achievement than those schools operated by leader who had average instructional leadership. Other studies conveyed that schools managed by principals who were perceived by their teachers to be strong instructional leaders exhibited greater achievement than those schools operated by leaders who had average instructional leadership (Aburizaizah et al, 2016; Liu et al, 2016; Max et al, 2020).

School heads should possess the necessary managerial skills, supervisory strategies and instructional competence to effect change in the school system. Training providers like the Southeast Asian Ministers of Educational Organization –Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEMEAO INNOTECH) outsourced by the Ministry of Education have provided trainings on instructional leadership, even integrating it as a core content in the management training program. Through the years, the roles of school heads have evolved. In the 80's and mi 90's there was a paradigm shift from school principalship to school management. In the early 80's there was a shift of school heads from mangers or administrators to instructional leaders. School principals planned activities undertaken by the teachers whose main responsibility was facilitating learning. However, in the early part of 2000, there was also another shift on the role of school managers as instructional leaders the shift was influenced by research which revealed that strong and effective schools are usually led by school heads who ewer instructional leaders (Arokiasamy, et al, 2016; Daniëls, Hondeghem, &Dochy, 2019; Hancock et al, 2019; Kim, Do Kim & Lee, 2020). In the mid 90's, instructional leadership of school heads gave way to school-based management and facilitative leadership (Aburizaizah, et al, 2016, Wills, 2016). The study also looked into the impact of school heads' training to their students' achievement, the findings of the study and the proposed instructional training program aims to ultimately increase the National Achievement Test (NAT) results.

Principal Instructional Leadership Effectiveness

Leading educator figures have been among the key guiding forces in increasing school performance in recent decades (Blasé & Blase', 1999; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006; Printy, 2008; Robinsón, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). Today it is important to establish and maintain those organizational conditions that promote instructional leadership in the context of schools, despite the increasing awareness of primary education leadership through a significant body of international research (Hallinger, 2003; Gumus, Bulut & Bellibas, 2013; Ham & Kim, 2013; Southworth, 2002). Academic leadership research show that oversight by the supervisors is troublesome because it does not play an significant part in the personal lives of teachers and instead acts as a ritual. The key fields in which the principal leadership is affected are classroom teaching activity that is perceived as belonging to the field of the professional autonomy of the individual teachers. The efficacy of primary leadership will rely strongly on encouraging the teachers and creating trustful relationships within schools (Cansoy, et al, 2020; Chen & Guo, 2020; Gurley et al, 2016; Li, Hallinger & Ko, 2016; Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016; Sebastian, et al, 2016). Many of the so-called popular schools of today tend to be collaborative research groups in which teachers share leadership. In fact, experiments have shown that school workers as group members exchange expertise, skills and decision-making in the area of teaching and learning, but simply to address instructional challenges in productive schools (Aas & Paulsten, 2019; The principal will engage as a member of the group in informal interactions as this form of communication between the head and teachers is an integral aspect of the success of successful schools. Efficient primary leadership also inspires teachers to pursue their technical education and to take positive chances (Hutton 2018; Shulhan 2018; Zepeda et al 2017). Good teacher mentors help to create a learning environment by giving teachers helpful input or answering critical questions about their teaching experience. Successful directors foster collaboration among teachers and build a shared culture of education to increase the

success of schools. Leaders of education play an significant part of promoting and supporting professional growth of teachers (Youngs & King, 2002). Successful professional development often includes cooperation between teachers (Fielding, 1999; Meirink et al, 2010). Then we should logically infer that the key education leadership is related to enhancing teacher cooperation. Nevertheless, there is still little work into the impact of primary education leadership on teacher cooperation. A central aim of this research is to investigate main pedagogical leadership, which in turn aims to enhance the willingness of schools to make concerted efforts to improve the quality of education (Senge, 2012). Therefore, as it is recognized that leadership is a relational process between and within association members (Northouse, 2004), it is clear that one-to one relationships between the principal (leader) and individual teachers (followers) mostly define the successful management at the school. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) reported: 'leadership in a school is a principle of shared leadership studied and experienced,' and suggested that leadership approaches that share power with faculty members provide greater opportunities, greater trust, a sense of collaboration and competitiveness between their members.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the instructional leadership performance of the school heads along the four instructional leadership roles. Further, the study investigated the relationship between the school heads' instructional leadership performance and their schools' NAT performance. As an offshoot of the investigation, an instructional leadership training program was developed. The study specifically aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the profile of the school heads in terms of their; gender; age; civil status; educational attainment; position; and number of years as School Head?
- 2) What is the instructional leadership performance of school heads along the indicated instructional leadership roles?
- 3) Is there a significant difference on the school heads' instructional leadership performance along the four leadership roles when they are grouped according to their profile variables?
- 4) Is there a marked variation on the assessment of the two groups of respondents on the school heads' instructional leadership performance along the four leadership roles?
- 5) What is the profile of the school heads relative to their schools' performance?
- 6) Is there a significant relationship between the school heads' instructional leadership performance and their schools' NAT performance?

Methods

Research Design

The descriptive research design was utilized since the study focused its investigation not only on gathering facts about the instructional leadership of school heads and the students' NAT performance but also on determining the impact of the NEAP Training on the school heads' leadership performance and on students' NAT performance. Further, the study would also determine in which respect these variables can be improved.

Respondents of the Study

The study considered a random sample of teachers and the population of school heads in Malang City and its respondents. Respondents were affiliated to the Department of Education and Culture of Malang, East Java Province, Indonesia. The school heads taken as respondents were those passed the 2018 Qualifying Examination for Principals. For the teacher respondents, only those with permanent status were considered. Respondents were selected on the basis of purposive sampling techniques.

Instrumentation

To gather information on the instructional leadership performance of school heads, the researchers used a rubric-based structured questionnaire. This questionnaire included items to assess school heads along the

four roles of instructional leadership. This questionnaire was developed and validated by the NEAP planners and implementers to be used as a national standardized tool to evaluate the instructional leadership performance heads. An interview with the respondents was done to validate and to supplement the data obtained from the questionnaires. The data on the students' NAT performance were obtained through documentary analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

To facilitate the data gathering process, the following procedures was undertaken by the researcher. First, the researcher sought permission and approval from the authorities for conduct of the study. Second, after obtaining permission from the authorities mentioned, the researcher personally visited the respondent-schools' sought permission from the school heads and administered the questionnaire personally to the respondents. To clarify the data gathered in the study, an unstructured interview was done by the researcher. Finally, obtained data were tabulated, organized and subjected to appropriate statistical analysis. Form the obtained results, the researcher developed an instructional leadership enhancement training program for school heads.

Data Analysis

The descriptive data analysis tools were used to present the profile of the respondents. The frequency and percentage distribution were utilized to obtain the profile of the respondents when grouped according to sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, position, and number of years as school head. The weighted mean was used to determine the instructional leadership performance of school heads and the NAT performance of the schools. To interpret the weighted means on the instructional leadership performance and NAT performance, scales were used. The rank was also utilized to analyse the data that required order of arrangements. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including rate percentage and frequency.

Results

Profile of the School Heads

Majority or 57.14% of the school heads are female. Most or 31.43% of the school heads are within the age range 41-45, almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of them fall within the age range 51-55. Very few of them are within the age range 35-40, 46-50, 56-60 and 61-65. Majority or 82.86% of the school heads are married, 5 or 14.28% are single and 1 is widowed. More than half or 51.43% of the school heads are master's degree holders, 22.86% have finished some doctoral units, 17.15% earned their doctorate degree and 8.7% have earned master's units. Most or 42.86% of the school heads are designed as secondary school principals, followed by those who were designated as school head teachers (40%). Very few were designed as officer, teacher-in-charge, or vocational school administrator. Most of 45.72% of the school heads served as head o schools for at most 5 years, followed by 28.57% who served for 6 to 10 years. Very few of them served as heads for more than 10 years.

Instructional Leadership of School Heads

The school heads "exceeded the standards" expected of them in performing their roles as resource provider, instructional resource and communicator. Along their visible presence role, the school heads assessed themselves as "exceptional and impressive" while the teachers assessed the school heads to have "exceeded standards". In general, the school heads' instructional leadership performance "exceeded the standards" expected for them.

Comparative Analysis of School Heads' Performance Role

There is no significant difference that exit in the school heads' instructional leadership performance when they are grouped according to gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, position, and the number of years in service. However, as communicator, the school heads' leadership performance varies significantly when they are grouped according to civil status.

Significance Difference on the School Heads' Instructional Leadership Performance

There is no significant difference in the assessment of the two groups of respondents on the instructional leadership of school heads as to their roles as resource provider, instructional resource and visible presence. However, there is a significant difference in the assessment of the two groups of assessors on the instructional leadership performance of school heads as communicate.

Schools' Achievement Test Performance

The schools' NAT performance for the past three consecutive school years is within the average mastery level. With respect to the subjects tested, the schools obtained average mastery in all subjects.

Significant Relationships on School Heads' Performance and Schools' NAT Performance.

There is no significant relationship that exists between the instructional leadership performance of school heads and the NAT performance of their respective schools.

Discussion

A body of literature indicates an ability to lead to improved educational excellence and greater accountability for student learning through collective interventions and practices through principals (Bush, et al, 2018; De Nobile, 2018; Gawlik, 2018; Hallinger, 2018; Ingersoll, et al, 2017; Mei Kin, et al, 2018; Ni, Yan, & Pounder, 2018). In our research, has its goal of obtaining instructional leadership profile of school heads along four leadership roles such as resource providers, instructional resource, communicator and visible presence. Further, the study investigated the relationship between the school heads' instructional leadership performance and their school' NAT performance. As an offshoot of the investigation, an instructional leadership training program was developed. The study concluded that the school heads are ready to handle the responsibilities and perform their managerial functions; possess the ability to manage time and resources, utilize existing material resources and mobilize human resources in planning for innovations surpassed. In terms of students' achievement, data revealed that the students have not fully mastered the competencies included in the NAT. Results of the correlation analyses disclosed that school heads' gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, position and years of service are not predictors of instructional leadership performance along the four leadership roles although it was revealed that their civil status affects their roles as communicators. In addition, the school heads' instructional leadership performance does not affect their schools' NAT performance. This conduct reflects, in particular, on how a principal offers explanation of how his or her staff members will pursue his or her approach to other staff members and their relationships with them (Valentine & Prater, 2011). Participatory decision-making relates to the actions of the managers to encourage staff engagement and to enable the sharing of leadership to employees (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997). The principal is likely to establish common definitions and principles among staff members through the implementation of participatory decision-making, which can improve the school's organizational culture (norms, standards, beliefs and assumptions). The customized help aspect is related to the way a leader handles his followers, including how the leader handles his followers differently depending on his desires and skills. This aspect is contingent on how the leader is supportive of others and has good coaching and mentoring skills. The element of mental stimulus refers to the leader who inspires his followers to reconsider their thoughts, to criticize current circumstances and to reframe problems.

The most significant aspect affecting student performance is leadership. Leadership influences the standard and the success of pupils very dramatically' (Leithwood et al., 2006). There is also convincing evidence that certain leadership activities are more likely to encourage student success. The research indicates that it has a significant impact on student success has promoted transition leadership for more than 20 years. Based on seven longitudinal analyses, Leithwood (1994) concluded that' transforming leadership styles, considered a hybrid structure, has a substantial direct and indirect impact on the success

of school transformation programs and student performance viewed by teachers.' He also found that transformational school leadership has a strongly beneficial impact on the participation of pupils (Leithwood et al., 2006). Consequently, Robinson's (2007) meta-analysis of leadership studies indicates that there is likely to be a greater effect on student performance where direct leaders are active in oversight and engagement in curricular preparation and scheduling, technical learning and advancement. "The more closely directing the central sector of teaching and studying, the more likely it is for students to make a difference. This prompted Robinson et al. (2009) to believe that educational leadership in the advancement of student learning is better than transformative leadership. According to him, the impact of pedagogical (instructional) leadership is three to four times that of transformational leadership. The reason for this is that transformational leadership is focused on the relationships between leader and follower rather than on the educational work of the school.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the following conclusions were derived: (1) The school heads are ready to handle the responsibilities and to perform their managerial functions in their respective schools; (2) The school heads' ability to manage time and resources, to utilize existing material resources and mobilize human resources in planning for innovations surpassed the standard expected of a school leader as a resource provider; (3) The school heads excellently perform their roles as instructional resource as that possess impressive skills in evaluating current instructional teaching practices, in innovating and reinforcing appropriate instructional approaches, in utilizing useful information for planning appropriate instructional interventions, and in monitoring and supervising staff members to improve instructional processes; (4) The school heads serve as very impressive communicators as they maintain open communication in the school organization, resolve school conflict, and promote cooperation among members in the school organization; (5) The school heads' visible presence is greatly felt in the school as they periodically follow up the school operations and processes and promptly address day to day school concerns; (6) The students have not fully mastered the competencies included in the NAT; (7) Gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, position and years of service are not predictors of instructional leadership performance along the four leadership roles. (8) School heads' civil status affects their leadership roles as communicators; whereas gender, age, educational attainment, position and years of service do not influence their performance in this leadership role.; (9) Age, gender, educational attainment, civil status, position and years of service do not affect the school heads' leadership performance as instructional resource, resource provider and visible presence; (10) School heads have a better perception of their performance as communicators than that of their teachers; and (11) School heads' instructional leadership performance does not affect schools' NAT performance.

Recommendation

In the light of the foregoing finding and conclusions, the following are hereby recommended: (1) The findings of this study should be presented authorities for them to sustain the development of the instructional leadership of school heads through the Instructional Leadership Enhancement Training Program; (2) The findings of the study should be disseminated to all the school heads in the different secondary schools in the Division in order to make them aware of their instructional leadership performance, thus, may serve as baseline information for them to sustain and further improve their leadership skills; (3) The schools heads/administrators should include the improvement of students' NAT performance, in their School Improvement Plan (SIP); (4) More initiatives and strategies shall be implemented in order to let students master the competencies expected of them to eventually improve the schools' NAT performance; (5) The Division and Regional Offices should plan a mechanism for the periodic performance evaluation and monitoring of school heads; (6) The proposed instructional leadership training program should be implemented to enable the school head to further improve their instructional leadership competencies; (7) Similar studies shall be conducted to include other tools in measuring instructional leadership performance and other variables related to instructional leadership.; (8) A study

shall be conducted to look into the unique characteristics of the married schools heads which make them better communicators than their single counterparts.

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