

AN ANALYSIS OF HEADS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES OF TEACHERS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The current study explored at how heads' instructional leadership influences teachers' professional practices in primary level schools in Punjab, Pakistan. The study included all principals and primary school teachers (PSTs) from Punjab's public primary and elementary schools. However, because to time and financial limitations, the accessible population encompassed the Sargodha district. Two questionnaires were developed for this aim, one for teachers and one for principals. The instructional leadership of school administrators obtained an overall high mean score. This shows that instructional leadership techniques are commonly noticed, underlining the significance of building strong leadership skills in school leaders in order to foster a positive teaching and learning environment. It is highly regarded as an instructional resource provider by teachers and administrators alike. This shows that such leadership approaches are common in the schools surveyed. These high scores demonstrate a strong commitment to providing instructors with the resources and support they require to fulfill their educational responsibilities successfully. It was suggested that principals should give additional opportunities for model classroom instruction, peer mentorship, and collaboration among teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The instructor represents one of their most critical influences on how effectively children learn. As a result, boosting teacher competency is necessary to improve student accomplishment. Although its effectiveness is contested, instructional monitoring remains the major method for increasing teacher competency. The educational system's reliability must be ensured in order to provide instruction efficiently. The only approach to increase the dependability of the educational system is via oversight (Ullah et al., 2021).

Each school is unique in certain ways. Administrators may be among the most significant contributors to the development of this distinctiveness in schools.

Instructional leaders have affected organizations. School principals may do more to improve teaching and learning than solve the physical requirements of schools and handle administrative responsibilities. They must act as role models for both teachers and students.

School principals' instructional leadership exerts a substantial influence on teacher performance because it creates an organized structure for effective teaching and curriculum implementation. Aligning engagement types among instructors fosters a collaborative and inspired teaching environment, resulting in higher overall work performance. Teachers use their competences to design, administer,

and evaluate outcomes for learning (Kempa & Herenz, 2016).

Despite universal awareness of its significance, the exact methods by which instructional leadership effects teaching practices are understudied, particularly in primary schools. This research vacuum is significant since primary education faces specific issues, such as individualized instruction, basic reading and numeracy development, and the incorporation of social-emotional learning into academic instruction.

Understanding how instructional leaders manage these problems by influencing teachers' professional practices is critical for creating focused leadership development programs and enhancing educational results. The purpose of this study is to contribute to this knowledge by investigating the links between various instructional leadership behaviors and changes in primary teachers' classroom practices, professional engagement, and instructional effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study examined the manner in which heads' instructional leadership effects teachers' professional conduct in Punjab's elementary schools. The concept of instructional leadership is not going away, since it has been a research topic for several decades (Hallinger, 2005). The critical role of school leaders who practice instructional leadership in promoting efficient curriculum implementation and instruction, which has a direct impact on student outcomes, cannot be overstated (Aron, Y., & Amos, 2024).

Hallinger and Murphy (2013) define instructional leadership as an approach through which leaders build a school's vision, motivate employees, and bring together administrative and instructional strategies that enhance the quality of education. Effective instructional leaders devote the bulk of their effort on curriculum implementation and instructional difficulties. They like working with both professors and students and are constantly visible to them. To increase teacher success and deliver better education, heads must routinely check and review their teaching approaches (Akpalu, R et al., 2025).

Instructional leadership styles are associated with improved student accomplishment. They underline

the significance of a conducive school atmosphere that prioritizes motivating teaching methods, collaborating, and teacher development of competencies (Parveen et al. 2023). According to study, many principals have weak instructional leadership practices, needing specialized training programs to improve their abilities and practices (Berku, D. W, 2024).

According to Andriani, D. E. et al. (2022), educational leadership consists of three dimensions: setting the school's objectives, managing the curriculum, and offering an enjoyable learning atmosphere. To ensure both teacher and student success, administrators must continuously prioritize the intangible aspects of the school environment in their planning. As a result, the head of the school is critical to fostering a positive educational environment (Kalkan et al., 2020).

Ahmad and Hamid (2025) define a head as the institution's leader, the central point around which other parts of the school revolve, and the person in control of all areas of the school's operation, whether academic or administrative. In contrast to the traditional role of leaders, instructional heads are more involved in curriculum creation, implementation, instruction, and assessment.

Manaseh (2016) indicates that by doing classroom assessments and updating curriculum, head teachers may increase both student learning and classroom instruction. Supervision is recognized as one of the most significant instruments that school administrators may use to assess and assist their teachers' professional growth and then figure out the level of their instruction in classes.

As stated by Whitworth and Chiu (2015), one technique for improving teachers' professional development by encouraging them to be engaged in their learning. This learning can take many forms, such as observing other instructors, receiving feedback, engaging in conversations, and incorporating new material into class preparations.

The paper describes many frequent problems that school leaders confront while implementing instructional leadership, including resource constraints and opposition to change. A variety of environmental factors contribute to these issues, limiting effective leadership. Schools lack sufficient resources, particularly financial resources, which limit

their ability to successfully implement instructional programs (Cansoy, R., et al. 2025). In a nutshell, the study sought to investigate how frequently principals at elementary schools carry out instructional leadership behaviors, according to reports by administrators and teachers, and whether this frequency varied based on key personal characteristics. Instructional leadership refers to school leaders' efforts to promote good teaching and curriculum implementation, which have a direct impact on student accomplishment (Aron, Y., & Amos, O., 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey-based approach to investigate the impact of principals' instructional leadership on elementary school teachers' professional practices. The quantitative surveys were

designed to establish the depth and breadth of links between teacher results and leadership techniques. The target demographic consisted of all elementary school principals as well as Primary School Teachers/Elementary School Educators (PSTs) from all public sector primary and elementary schools in Punjab province.

Due to time and resource restrictions, the available population in Sargodha comprised both male and female heads, as well as Primary School Teachers/Elementary School Educators (PSTs/ESEs). The heads and two teachers from each designated marakiz were chosen. The questionnaire was derived from Akram et al. (2016), and 'Teachers' Professional Practices' was developed after a thorough examination of the literature.

The values of Cronbach's alpha for overall questionnaire (37 items) were as under:

Variables	N	α value
1. Teachers' Questionnaire	560	0.845
2. Heads Questionnaire	280	0.918

Values (0.845 and 0.918) in the above mentioned table showed that the questionnaires were highly reliable.

The researcher personally acquired the information by visiting the target schools, and in order to develop rapport with the respondents, the study's purpose and the various components of the research equipment

were addressed before the study began. Data from the two surveys were entered and coded into SPSS software, and inferential and descriptive statistics were used to assess the survey findings. The core ethical standards were followed throughout the investigation, and all ethical considerations were carefully considered while conducting the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Perceptions of Heads' Instructional Leadership

Table 4.1: Analysis of Teachers' perceptions regarding Instructional Leadership and its all dimensions
Teachers' overall perceived level of their heads' 'Instructional Leadership'.

No	Description	SD %	D %	(SD+D) %	U %	A %	SA%	(A+SA) %	Mean	Level
1	Instructional Resource Provider	1.4	12.8	14.2	15.2	45.9	24.7	68.2	3.80	High

2	Maintain Visible Presence	0.8	12.6	13.5	12.9	36.4	37.2	73.6	3.96	High
3	Professional Development	3.3	18.3	21.1	15.8	36.3	26.2	62.5	3.65	Moderate
4	Maximize Instructional Time	1.65	11.2	12.9	16.3	35.9	34.9	70.8	3.91	High
5	Monitoring Students' Progress	0.4	3.5	3.9	11.7	60.0	24.5	84.5	4.05	High
6	Curriculum Implementation	3.8	21.9	25.7	0.8	71.1	2.6	73.6	3.47	Moderate
Overall average Percentages and Mean scores		2.8	21.8	24.5	2.5	57.5	15.5	73.0	3.62	Moderate

N=560 Levels range from low (between 1.00 and 2.33), moderate (between 2.34 and 3.67), and high (between 3.68 and 5.00). (Idrus & Abdullah, 2018).

According to Table 4.1, teachers in primary public schools in the Sargodha District reported an average mean score (3.62) for Instructional Leadership. The existing level for its four dimensions 'Instructional Resource Provider (3.80), Maintain Visible Presence (3.96), Maximize Instructional Time (3.91)', and

'Monitoring Students' Progress (4.05)' was reported at a high level of mean score, whereas the mean scores for its two dimensions Professional Development (3.65) and Curriculum Implementation (3.47) were reported at a moderate level.

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

4.2: Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions Regarding 'Teachers' Professional Practices' and its all dimensions.
Teachers' overall perceived level of their professional practices.

No	Description	SD %	D %	(SD+D) %	U %	A %	SA%	(A+SA) %	Mean	Level
1	Cognitive Engagement	2.5	13.8	16.3	7.2	63.1	13.4	76.5	3.71	High
2	Classroom Environment & Relationships	1.5	16.6	18.1	14.5	46.1	20.9	67.0	3.77	High
3	Assessment and reporting	0.4	3.1	3.5	11.2	58.3	27.0	85.3	4.09	High
4	Professional Growth	0.1	3.5	3.7	9.9	63.1	23.4	86.5	4.06	High
Overall average Percentages and Mean scores		1.1	9.3	10.4	10.7	57.7	21.2	78.8	3.91	High

Table 4.2 shows that the level of 'Teachers' professional practices' as regarded by teachers of elementary level public schools in the Sargodha

District was reported at a high mean score (3.91). The current level for all four categories 'Cognitive Engagement (3.71) Classroom Environment &

Relationships (3.77), Assessment and Reporting (4.09), and Professional Growth (4.06)' was recorded

with a high level of mean score.

HEADS' PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Table 4.3: Analysis of Heads' perceptions regarding *Instructional Leadership* and its all dimensions

Heads' perceived Level of their overall 'Instructional Leadership'.

No	Description	SD %	D %	(SD+D) %	U %	A %	SA%	(A+SA) %	Mean	Level
1	Instructional Resource Provider	3.2	13.0	16.3	11.8	42.7	29.1	71.8	3.81	High
2	Maintain Visible Presence	2.0	20.3	22.3	3.3	54.1	20.4	74.5	3.71	High
3	Professional Development	1.2	11.6	12.2	12.8	41.7	32.7	74.3	3.93	High
4	Maximize Instructional Time	1.7	12.3	13.9	16.6	35.6	32.8	68.4	3.88	High
5	Monitoring Students' Progress	0.4	3.1	3.5	11.2	58.3	27.0	85.3	4.09	High
6	Curriculum Implementation	0.9	18.3	19.2	1.9	55.8	23.1	78.9	3.82	High
Overall average Percentages and Mean scores		1.6	13.1	14.6	9.6	48.0	27.5	75.5	3.87	High

Table 4.3 shows that the level of 'Instructional Leadership' perceived by heads of elementary level public schools in the Sargodha District was 'on the whole' at a high level of mean score (3.87). The current level of mean score for all six dimensions 'Instructional Resource Provider (3.81) Maintain Visible Presence (3.71), Professional Development (3.93), and Maximize Instructional Time (3.88)', 'Monitoring Students' Progress (4.09), and Curriculum Implementation (3.82)' was reported to be high.

HEADS PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

4.4: Analysis of Heads' Perceptions Regarding 'Teachers' Professional Practices' and its all dimensions.

Heads' overall perceived level of their 'Teachers' professional practices.

No	Description	SD %	D %	(SD+D) %	U %	A %	SA%	(A+SA) %	Mean	Level
1	Cognitive Engagement Classroom	2.5	13.8	16.3	7.2	63.1	13.4	76.5	3.71	High
2	Environment Relationships &	1.5	16.6	18.1	14.5	46.1	20.9	67.0	3.77	High
3	Assessment reporting and	0.4	3.1	3.5	11.2	58.3	27.0	85.3	4.09	High

4	Professional Growth	0.1	3.5	3.7	9.9	63.1	23.4	86.5	4.06	High
Overall average										
Percentages and Mean scores		1.1	9.3	10.4	10.7	57.7	21.2	78.8	3.91	High

Table 4.4 shows that the degree of 'Heads' professional practices' as regarded by elementary level public school teachers in the Sargodha District was reported at a high level of mean score (3.91). The current level for its four characteristics, 'Cognitive Engagement (3.71) Classroom Environment & Relationships (3.77), Assessment and reporting (4.09), and Professional Growth (4.06)' was recorded with a high level of mean score.

DISCUSSION

The current study investigates how head teachers' instructional leadership roles influence teachers' professional practices. Exploration of the data revealed numerous fascinating elements. It was discovered that heads played an essential role in promoting teacher development by monitoring, making suggestions, and scheduling appropriate training sessions. They also provided teachers with educational materials and conducted regular assessments of students' progress.

The study concluded that head teachers' principal job is supervision, which has a substantial influence on teacher performance and overall professional practices. Respondents said that their heads carry out instructional activities on a regular basis, both formally and informally, which helps them improve their classroom approaches by emphasizing strengths and flaws.

The data study also demonstrated how instructional leadership could be quite strong and effective, contingent upon how often it is done and how ordered and focused the entire procedure is. This finding is consistent with Manaseh (2016), who said that head teachers are accountable for overseeing classroom instruction by regular direct observation.

The findings are also consistent with Alhassan (2015), who discovered that successful schools have an excellent monitoring mechanism for evaluating instructors. Without this approach, teachers may not give adequate service levels. Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014) found that heads had both direct and indirect

effect on teachers' professional practices and competencies.

Quantitative research demonstrated that heads have an important role in implementing, altering, and reviewing courses. The majority of participants indicated that heads helped them with curriculum modifications, recommending adjustments and executing appropriate changes to satisfy students' needs. The findings contradict Manaseh's (2016) study, which discovered that heads do not review curricular materials with instructors, which teachers consider a problem. Effective instructional leaders must be resource providers. Heads must not just grasp their faculty's strengths and shortcomings, but also appreciate that instructors want to be recognized and rewarded for their achievements. Effective instructional leaders must have resources. Teachers rely on administrators to keep up with current trends and successful teaching approaches.

The majority of participants stated that heads assisted them via appraisal and observation, which is similar with the findings of Bhengu, T. T., and Mkhize, B. N. (2013), who observed that heads play an important role in predicting learning attainment.

CONCLUSIONS

This study's major purpose was to assess the impact of heads' instructional leadership on the professional behaviors of the government-employed teachers in elementary level schools in Sargodha. The instructional leadership of school administrators obtained an overall high mean score. This shows that instructional leadership techniques are commonly noticed, underlining the significance of building strong leadership skills in school leaders with the aim to nurture a positive teaching as well as learning environment.

It is also reasonable to assume that instructional leadership of heads is highly valued by both teachers and heads as instructional resource providers. This shows that such leadership approaches are common in the schools surveyed. These high scores

demonstrate a strong commitment to providing teachers with the resources and support they require to carry out their tasks effectively. It is also established that school principals provide instructional leadership in a variety of areas, including resource allocation, visibility, professional development, time management, student achievement monitoring, and curriculum implementation. The slightly higher mean scores in all areas suggest that the instructional leadership of primary school heads in the Sargodha district had an impact on teachers' professional practices.

It may be stated that, although principals facilitate instructors via instructional leadership techniques, teachers should seek opportunities for professional development to improve their teaching talents and positively affect the school environment. Adopting a growth mindset, aiming for continuous improvement, and participating in mentorship programs may all contribute to the creation of an encouraging environment that promotes various professional practices.

They may successfully execute their responsibilities and foster an excellence culture in educational settings by encouraging instructors to pursue continual professional development. Addressing these realities can enhance leadership and professional practices, resulting in higher educational quality and teacher performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ To improve teachers' professional practices, it is essential that heads offer constructive comments and direction often.
- ❖ Encourage instructors to enhance their skills through in-service workshops and staff development activities.
- ❖ Heads should promote model instruction in the classroom, peer mentorship, and collaboration among teachers.
- ❖ School leaders should offer adequate professional development opportunities for their instructors. The Ministry of Education and other stakeholders should collaborate to increase school leaders' knowledge and capabilities.

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