

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AMONG SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN ASIAN COUNTRIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This review paper mainly elaborates on instructional leadership in Asian countries in terms of its adoption and practices. Unfortunately, most of the existing studies focus mainly on European countries. Therefore, this study aims to examine instructional leadership practices among school principals in Asian countries by reviewing a number of relevant studies. The present study employs the Research Question Development Tool (RQDT) and mainly uses Population, Interest, and Context (PICo) techniques. Our data was extracted from the Web of Science (WoS). The deductive thematic analysis approach focuses on five main themes: school mission and vision, school climate, instructional programs, student achievement, and management of curriculum. These five themes are further subcategorized into fifteen sub-themes. This study found that principals in Asian countries place a greater priority on instructional programs, student achievement, school mission and vision, and school climate than on curriculum management.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, Instructional programs, Student achievement, School mission and vision, Systematic review.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s, a growing body of research into effective schools (Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1984; Purkey & Smith, 1983) mainly kept its focus on policymakers and scholars to understand principal leadership. According to some studies, the role of “Instructional Leadership” was critical to school effectiveness (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Dwyer, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). In the past, many initiatives were aimed at investigating the impact of principal leadership, which contributed to the identification of different components of professional leadership that influence school achievement (Erickson, 1967; Gross & Herriott, 1965). The crucial legacy of the global focus on instructional leadership was the drive to make schools more effective.

Some general observations came to light during a review of the assessment of instructional leadership in terms of how this role was perceived by scholars over the past 25 years. Initially, as research was conducted on “instructionally effective elementary schools” (Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1984; Purkey & Smith, 1983), instructional leadership was considered to be a role performed by principals and institutions (Dwyer, 1985; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1990; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; van de Grift, 1990). Throughout the 1980s, department heads, assistant principals, and teachers were all described as instructional leaders. Instructional leadership as a distributed or shared function received little attention.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a considerable portion of the early research into instructional leadership was based on studies involving urban elementary schools

engaged in working with underprivileged children. These studies focused on principals who were successful in turning their schools around. Their principal leadership styles lean towards exceedingly directive, using leadership as a driving tool to operate the school in a productive manner. Principals who had found a way to overcome challenges were less likely to be considered instructional leaders because the challenges shift principals' focus away from learning and teaching.

Until the early 1990s, school leadership studies focused primarily on the school principal as a leadership source (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). Throughout the 1990s, there was a focus on the term "teacher professionalism," which aimed to draw attention to the teacher's function as a leader in addition to other leadership sources in an educational organization (Barth, 1990; Barth, 2001; Lambert, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003). This is a distributed process, which led towards the clear reconceptualization of school leadership (Gronn, 2002, 2003, 2009; Spillane, 2006).

Instructional leaders are considered to be goal oriented. They motivate others to put their efforts toward achievement and always lead from the front while giving a clear direction for the schools. This direction is primarily focused on improving students' academic outcomes in instructionally effective schools serving underachieving students (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Goldring & Pasternack, 1994; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a; Heck, Larson, & Marcoulides, 1990; Leithwood et al., 1990; Mortimore, 1993). Terms like "vision", "mission", and "goals" became crucial to the vocabulary of school leaders who wanted to flourish in the changing education reform environment (Hallinger & Heck, 2002).

Instructional leaders can determine the academic mission of schools with a plan of action and a strategy. Thus, they are focused not only on managing but on leading as well. The managerial roles of instructional leaders include controlling the curriculum and pupil instruction, coordinating, and supervising (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b). Instructional leadership involves significant collaboration with the technical team and education foundation regarding teaching as well as learning (Andrews & Soder, 1987). Despite broad evidence on instructional leadership practices in general, there is still little information from Asia (Hallinger & Bryant, 2013; Hallinger & Chen, 2014). Many Asian countries are still in the early phases of developing instructional leadership techniques (Harris & Jones, 2015). According to Hallinger, Hosseingholizadeh, Hashemi, and Kouhsari (2018), expertise in instructional leadership is widely established in Western nations.

Furthermore, Hallinger, Gümüş, and Bellibaş (2020) found that a group of countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and countries in continental Europe accounted for 75% of instructional leadership studies published between 1940 and 2018. This indicates that Asia, Africa, and Latin America accounted for 25% of the research on instructional leadership published during that period. Hence, there is a lack of research on this topic in Asian countries. Interested in determining whether there is enough literature to investigate this topic in Asia, the current systematic review intends to investigate instructional leadership in Asian countries. This research strives to understand what practices have become part of instructional leadership between 2012 and the present day.

The present review paper is constructed around the central research question: how are instructional leadership practices adopted by school principals in Asian countries? It is expected that the present study will answer this question through the systematic review of relevant studies, which will allow for a better understanding of the

identification and portrayal of instructional leadership practices among school principals in Asian countries. Data from Malaysia, Singapore, China, Pakistan, Maldives, Indonesia, and Turkey was retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database.

METHODOLOGY

This section is divided into four main sub-sections: the review protocol (PRISMA), the formulation of the research question (PICO), systematic search strategies, and data abstraction along with analysis.

The Review Protocol – PRISMA

To carry out a systematic literature review, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were followed. These guidelines are meant to show review authors what information needs to be included, which helps in evaluating the quality of the review. The emphasis of PRISMA is on systematic reviews of randomized trials but it can also be used for other types of systematic reviews (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009). Sierra-Correa and Cantera Kintz (2015) explained some of the advantages of PRISMA: 1) it identifies clear research questions, 2) it categorizes exclusion as well as inclusion norms, and 3) it can analyze literature from a large database in a limited amount of time. In terms of the Asian principals that form the topic of this study, the PRISMA statement allows for a careful search of terms relating to instructional leadership. This methodology can be utilized to investigate Asian principals' adoption of instructional leadership practices.

Formulation of Research Question

The formulation of the research question for this study was based on PICO. PICO is a tool developed for systematic reviews that guide and supports researchers in the process of developing an appropriate research question. This tool uses three criteria: Population/Problem, Interest, and Context. In terms of this systematic review, the criteria Principals (Population), Instructional leadership (Interest), and Asian countries (Context) guided the authors to the formulation of their research question: how are instructional leadership practices adopted by school principals in Asian countries?

Systematic Search Strategies

The three main stages in the systematic search strategy process are identification, screening, and eligibility.

i) Identification

For the present study, a large number of potentially relevant articles were selected. The selection process involved three stages. The first stage consisted of keyword identification, followed by a search for parallel as well as related terms based on alternative vocabularies and previous studies. The authors used the keywords to produce a complete search string (with help of Boolean operators, phrase searching, truncation, and field code functions) to use with the WoS central database. The WoS is among the world's leading databases because it is well suited for conducting a systematic literature review as it has a multidisciplinary focus and a system for assuring the quality of articles. Using the

search string on the WoS, a database was developed (Table 1) containing articles that used the most relevant keywords. The authors retrieved a total of 837 articles from the WoS database during this first stage of the systematic review process.

Table 1: *The search string*

Database	Search string
WoS	TS= ((instructional leadership OR instructional control OR instructional direction OR instructional guidance OR instructional management OR instructional headship) AND (principals OR headmasters))

ii) Screening

Removing unrelated articles was the purpose screening stage. The first screening criterion was the type of study. The authors focused on research articles published in journals because these types of studies present empirical data and act as primary sources. Therefore, publications such as systematic reviews, meta-analyses, reviews, books, book chapters, book series, and conference proceedings papers were excluded. Furthermore, only articles that were published in English were used in this review. In addition, the current study focused on a ten-year period (2012-2021) in order to locate information on as many Asian countries as possible in the WoS database. Moreover, only studies performed in Asian countries were selected, as they pertain to the subject of this review. Based on these criteria (Table 2), a total of 816 articles was excluded.

Table 2: *The exclusion and inclusion criteria*

Criterion	Eligibility	Exclusion
Type of literature	Journal (research articles)	Journals (review), book, book chapters, book series, conference proceedings.
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline	2012 until 2021	< 2012
Countries	Asian countries	Non-Asian countries

iii) Eligibility

In the third stage, a further selection was made among the remaining 21 studies. To ensure that the articles met the criteria for this present research and to achieve the objective of this study, titles and abstracts along with the articles' main contents were investigated. Seven additional articles were excluded: one was a book chapter, three articles were out of scope and the other three were about non-Asian countries. Those seven articles made it through the screening stage because they had erroneous tags in the WoS database. At the end of the eligibility screening stage, 14 articles were left (Table 3) for analysis (see Figure 1).

Table 3: *Articles retrieved from WoS database*

Articles	Year
Dominance one-roof schools principal excellent leadership in the digital age in Indonesia	2021
The moderating role of school level in the relationship between deputy principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness in public schools in Maldives	2021
Level of school administrators exhibiting instructional supervision behaviors: Teachers' perspectives	2020
Exploring effective leadership practices of private school principals to improve teachers' academic excellence and students' learning achievement	2020
Determining the competencies of educational administrators in Turkish education system and these competency degrees by multi-criteria decision making	2020
Impact of instructional leadership on high school student achievement in China	2019
Examination of the relations between academic achievement and the variables at the levels of school and students in secondary schools: Two-level path analysis	2019
Instructional leadership and teachers' functional competency across the 21 st century learning	2018
Teacher leadership in Singapore: The next wave of effective leadership	2017
Educational leadership on the Chinese mainland: A case study of two secondary schools in Beijing	2017
Teachers' perceptions of relationship between principals' instructional leadership, school culture, and school effectiveness in Pakistan	2017
Middle leadership in international schools: evidence from Malaysia	2017
Exploring principals' instructional leadership practices in Malaysia: insights and implications	2017
Teachers' expectations and school administration: Keys of better communication in schools	2015

Note: Adapted from Adams, Thien, Chin, & Semaadderi (2021)

Data Abstraction and Analysis

An integrative review was performed in this study; a combination of analyses and syntheses using different research designs (quantitative research, qualitative research, and mixed method research) was one of the review techniques used. This can be accomplished by transforming one type of data into another: qualitzing quantitative studies or quantizing qualitative studies (Whittemore & Knaf, 2005). The present study is intended to be a qualitative review of quantitative articles and a qualitative review of qualitative articles.

A deductive thematic analysis approach formed the basis for the development of themes and sub-themes. The first phase of the theme development process was the completion of data. In this phase, the authors carefully analyzed the 14 selected articles to extricate data that could answer the study's research question. Subsequently, the authors sorted the data into groups using a coding method in the second phase, according to the type of data. Thus, in this second phase, raw data were converted into useable data through the identification of themes and concepts.

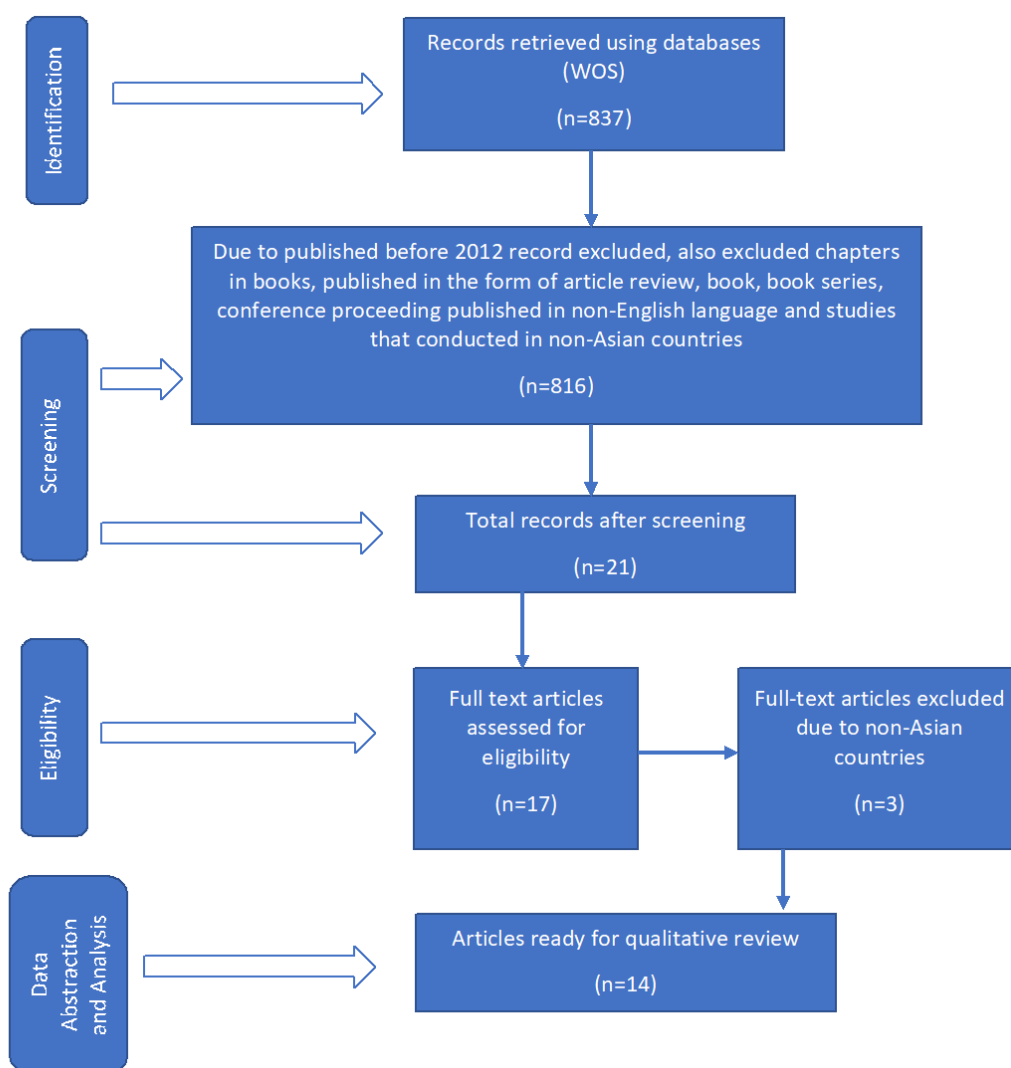


Figure 1: Flow Diagram of the study (Source: Moher et al., 2009)

RESULTS

Background of the Chosen Articles

The analysis produced five themes that were related to instructional leadership:

- School mission and vision
- School climate
- Instructional programs
- Student achievement
- Management of curriculum

Out of the 14 studies selected for this review, one study was from the Maldives (Ismail, Khatibi, & Azam, 2021), one was from Singapore (Hairon, 2017), one was from Pakistan (Ali, 2017), one was from Indonesia (Juharyanto, Arifin, Sultoni, & Adha, 2021), two were from China (Hou, Cui, & Zhang, 2019; Lai, Wang, & Shen, 2017) and four studies were from Malaysia (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020; Harris et al., 2017; Ismail, Don, Husin, & Khalid, 2018; Javadi, Bush, & Ng, 2017). Adams et al. (2021) found that 75% of the studies in Malaysia related to educational leadership and management

were published in the past six years (i.e., since 2014). The other four studies were from Turkey (Aslanargun, 2015; Deniz & Erdener, 2020; Özdemir, 2020; Özdemir & Yalçın, 2019) (see Figure 2).

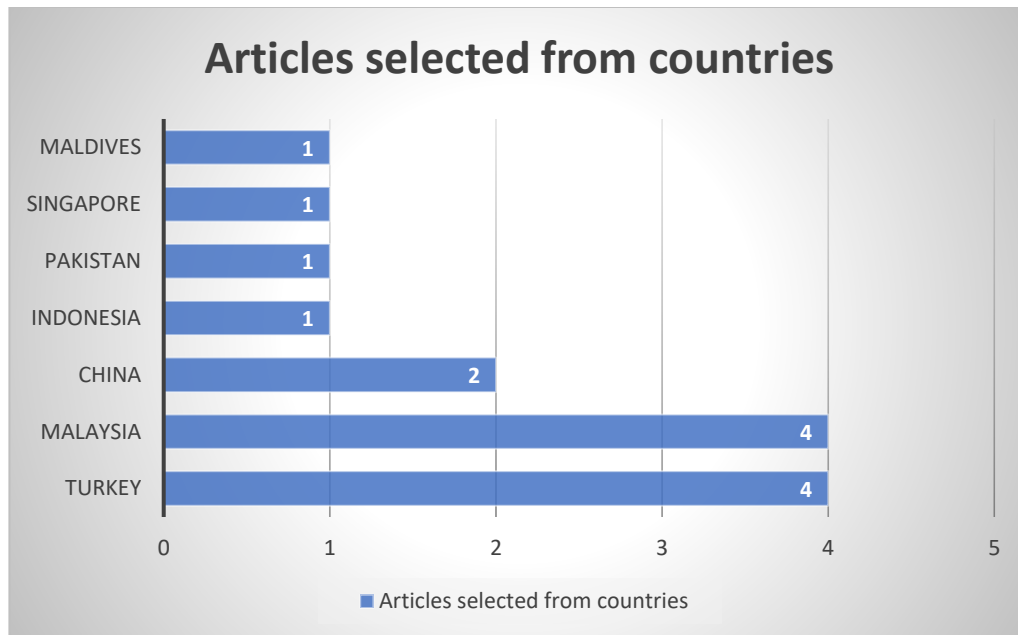


Figure 2: Selected countries from where the studies were conducted

In terms of the year of publication of studies selected for this review, two articles were published in 2021 (Ismail et al., 2021; Juharyanto et al., 2021), three articles were published in 2020 (Deniz & Erdener, 2020; Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020; Özdemir, 2020), two articles were published in 2019 (Hou et al., 2019; Özdemir & Yalçın, 2019). Whereas only one article was published in 2018 (Ismail et al., 2018), five articles were published in 2017 (Ali, 2017; Hairon, 2017; Harris et al., 2017; Javadi et al., 2017; Lai et al., 2017), and one article was published in 2015 (Aslanargun, 2015) (see Figure 3).

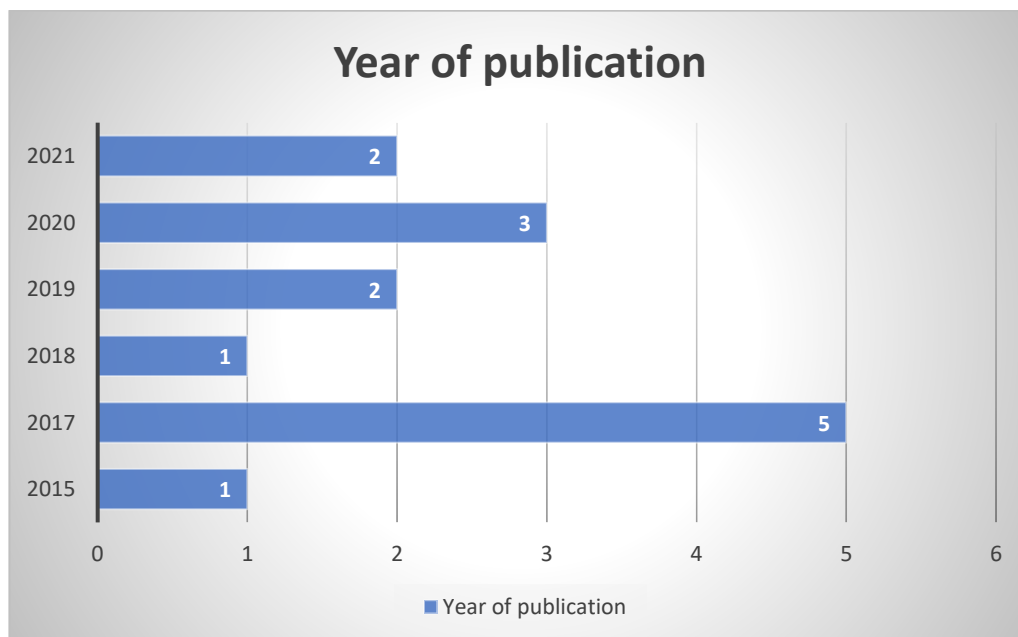


Figure 3: Year of publication

Main Findings

Five main themes are discussed: school mission and vision, school climate, instructional programs, student achievement, and management of curriculum. Fifteen sub-themes are also discussed (Table 4).

1. School Mission and Vision

Williams et al. (2005) stated that school leaders use student data for the purpose of supporting instructional practices and providing guidance to students who are struggling. In this way, leaders are also expected to cultivate the vision of the school. An important responsibility of school leaders is to act as instructional leaders. A total of nine studies was found pertaining to school mission and vision as instructional leadership practices. Further analysis for this theme has resulted in the discovery of three sub-themes: mission (8 studies), vision (5 studies), and goals (5 studies).

i) Mission (M)

The primary pillar in accomplishing national educational ambitions and mission is principal leadership. School administration, under the management of directors, plays a significant part in the determination of a school's organizational excellence. Ismail et al. (2021) explained that by sharing the vision and the mission of the school, school leaders motivate stakeholders to attain desired goals. A study from Indonesia explained that principals' great leadership practice in the digital era is the clarity of mission and vision for the improvement of school (Juharyanto et al., 2021). Ghavifekr and Ramzy (2020) found that mission and strategic planning are two fundamental tasks of instructional leaders that are necessary as the generative foundation for creating a better teaching and learning environment.

Influencing high-grade students as well as defending school mission and goals play a crucial function. The mission must be clearly defined by school leaders. Constructing a stronger school mission could help instructors and students better understand their teaching and learning behaviors by establishing links between educational innovations and teaching execution (Hou et al., 2019). To define the school mission, leaders work with staff and parents to decide on goals to determine which areas are in need of improvement and then set goals for each of these areas (Ismail et al., 2018).

In light of limited resources, schools in Singapore are actively urged to focus on student outcomes that are consistent with their vision, mission, and objectives (Hairon, 2017). Ali (2017) found that as a leader, the principal should take initiative in terms of school mission in order to improve the effectiveness of the school. Malaysian principals are familiar with the importance of school mission and provide guidance accordingly (Harris et al., 2017).

Table 4: The main themes and sub-themes

Authors	School mission and vision				School climate				Instructional programs				Student achievement			Management of curriculum	
	M	V	G		C	CL	ITC	SC	IM	PT	TD	IS	A	MT	TE	ET	
Juharyanto et al. (2021) (Indonesia)	✓	✓											✓				
Ismail et al. (2021) (Maldives)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓			
Deniz and Erdener (2020) (Turkey)	✓									✓	✓	✓					
Ghaffiq and Ramzy (2020) (Malaysia)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓			
Özdemir (2020) (Turkey)	✓				✓	✓				✓	✓			✓		✓	
Hou et al. (2019) (China)	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Özdemir and Yalçın (2019) (Turkey)	✓						✓						✓	✓		✓	
Ismail et al. (2018) (Malaysia)	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Hairon (2017) (Singapore)	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	
Lai et al. (2017) (China)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓					
Ali (2017) (Pakistan)	✓				✓	✓											
Javadi et al. (2017) (Malaysia)	✓													✓			
Harris et al. (2017) (Malaysia)	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓		✓		✓		✓	
Aslanargun (2015) (Turkey)	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					
School mission and vision	School climate				Instructional programs				Students' achievement				Management of curriculum				
M= Mission	C= Communication				IM= Instructional methods and material				A= Activities				TE= Teaching environment				
V= Vision	CL= Culture				PT= Professional training				MT= Monitoring				ET= Evaluation teaching				
G= Goals	ITC= Innovation, Teamwork and Collaboration				TD= Teaching and teacher development												
	S= Security				IS= Instructional supervision												

ii) Vision (V)

One of the most effective aspects of school leadership is sharing the school's vision. As an instructional leader, the principal should have a clear vision of what the school wishes to accomplish (Juharyanto et al., 2021). In the Maldivian education system, deputy principals play the role of instructional leaders in their schools. Ismail et al. (2021) explained that by setting the vision and motivating others, school leaders can achieve their desired goals. The creation of a collaborative environment in which all members may express their views and thoughts results in a shared vision (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020). Hairon (2017) explained that Singaporean schools are actively focused on school vision. The reason for this focus relates to student outcomes. In China, the importance of the teacher–principal connection is the result of the successful execution of shared school visions (Lai et al., 2017).

iii) Goals (G)

To achieve the school's goal, school leaders must empower and motivate teachers. School leaders can shape goals and actions and they motivate others by setting missions, visions, and values (Ismail et al., 2021). In school leadership practices, sharing school goals is among the most effective strategies (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020). Influencing high school students plays a key role in defining school goals. School leaders must define their goals and expectations for the development and improvement of their schools, instructors, curriculums, and students (Hou et al., 2019). The key characteristic of schools deemed to have high potential is their collaborative desire to pursue common goals (Lai et al., 2017).

Harris et al. (2017) showed that as a core part of their leadership responsibility, school leaders set school goals and communicate those goals to all teachers, parents, and students. Communication with the school's teachers gives school leaders insight into what the possibilities are as it acknowledges the vision to grow in that organization as a product of that communication for the improvements of the organization. Hence, a shared vision helps schools focus on a common goal, which generally leads to desirable outcomes (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020).

2. School Climate

School principals' behavior is based on their particular knowledge, morals, experiences, and beliefs. These behaviors are also open to the influence of the school's conceptual factors. The effects of the principal's influence reveal the instructional climate. Student achievement can be increased through direct and indirect effects. Direct effects include school safety as well as instructional climate, whereas indirect effects include student engagement. A number of studies have been conducted regarding this topic, resulting in the formulation of four sub-themes under the school climate theme: communication (4 studies), culture (6 studies), innovation, teamwork, and collaboration (2 studies), and security (3 studies).

i) Communication (C)

In the Turkish education system, it has been documented that one of the competencies of school leaders is to create effective communication between their employees. Principals in the Maldives must create a climate of trust and open communication with deputy principals to allow them the freedom they need to fulfil their instructional leadership responsibilities (Ismail et al., 2021). Özdemir (2020) explained that instructional leaders should respect different opinions among their staff, use effective tools for communication, and create a safe working environment for students and staff. Hairon (2017) found that in Singapore, school leaders are not only managing the instructional programs, but they also participate in additional instructional leadership practices that are promoting the school climate by using effective communication. Another study from Turkey showed that leadership and communication usually shaped the behaviour of principals. The communication skills of principals have been focused on teachers' expectations. Interaction and communication are the best motivational techniques in principals' leadership behaviors (Aslanargun, 2015).

ii) Culture (CL)

A culture built collaboratively by people with diverse demographic, social, and cultural backgrounds will have a favourable impact on employee motivation and performance. In the Maldives, school leaders focus on creating a collaborative school culture that encourages professional development (Ismail et al., 2021). A school culture that is shared by all the stakeholders of the school is beneficial for the achievement of both short-term and long-term goals (Özdemir, 2020). Building a collaborative culture is a strong leadership practice; it provides a social environment in which teachers can learn from one another and collaborate to improve their teaching and learning practices (Hairon, 2017).

A study from Pakistan demonstrated that school cultures created by school leaders can contribute to school development and productivity (Ali, 2017). Effective schools foster a culture that promotes continuous development by focusing consistently on improving teaching and learning in the school (Harris et al., 2017). Aslanargun (2015) found that teachers and school culture are directly influenced by instructional leadership practices.

iii) Innovation, Teamwork, and Collaboration (ITC)

Promoting a culture of innovation, collaboration and teamwork are one of the most effective practices of school leaders to improve school outcomes. Innovation, in terms of the adoption of ICT in teaching and learning, plays an essential role in the transformation of the school. The development of a collaborative culture and teamwork enhance the efficiency, motivation, trust, and effectiveness of school teachers (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020). Collaboration is fighting together in terms of effectiveness for the benefit of the institution. The analysis of a study from Pakistan showed that collaboration on the school's efficiency is a fundamental element (Ali, 2017).

iv) Security (S)

One of the core competencies of school leaders in the Turkish education system is to ensure the security and protection of the school (Özdemir, 2020). Another study from Turkey found that school security affects student achievement (Özdemir & Yalçın, 2019). A third study from Turkey revealed that teachers expect school leaders to provide security in the school so that they feel secure on school premises (Aslanargun, 2015).

3. Instructional Programs

This dimension of instructional leadership concerns the control and coordination of instruction (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). A principal who manages the technical core of the school is concerned with the instructional program (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). The management of instructional programs obliges school leaders and teachers to engage in monitoring, supervising, and enhancing teaching and learning in that organization. A total of ten studies was found to focus on instructional programs relating to instructional leadership practices. The analysis of this theme has resulted in a total of four sub-themes: instructional methods and material (4 studies), professional training (4 studies), teaching and teacher development (4 studies), and instructional supervision (6 studies).

i) Instructional Methods and Material (IM)

Ghavifekr and Ramzy (2020) found that teachers feel more confident in exploring new methods and continuing to grow and learn from peers when they can use various inventive methods in their teaching practices. Furthermore, instructional materials designed for self-managed learning also encourage students towards a more self-directed and self-instructional learning environment. They also assist students in increasing their interaction with other students as well as with teachers.

Ismail et al. (2018) showed that instructional leaders can predict their staff's self-efficacy and teachers' competency through the various instructional methods they are using in their classrooms. In the Singaporean education system, school leaders assist teachers with the use of teaching and learning materials. Providing these types of materials and keeping track of the completion of teaching goals is one of the roles of instructional leaders (Hairon, 2017). School leaders should provide supporting materials because teachers in schools require basic tools such as technology and instructional materials (Aslanargun, 2015).

ii) Professional Training (PT)

To effectively implement and practice instructional leadership in the school, deputy principals must be equipped with the necessary skills and training. School leaders should be selected, trained, and developed in such a way that they gain the necessary skills to function in tough environments (Ismail et al., 2021). Özdemir (2020) emphasized planning and training activities as well as management and development. The development of training programs is a better way to fulfil the goals of an organization. It is a core responsibility of school leaders to plan the instructional programs and activities in their organization, to keep track of their implementation, and do

so in the most efficient way in order to provide a good educational environment (Ministry of National Education Turkey, 2017).

The development of an individual's unique qualities is a difficult task that must be prioritized to attain targeted achievement through training and a continual development program (Ismail et al., 2018). Harris et al. (2017) explained that in Malaysia, teachers are required to attend seven days of professional learning and development to reach KPIs. Doing so is a requirement of service and hence mandatory. Principals might be seen as active instructional leaders in terms of leading professional learning and training. Principals in Malaysia provide instructors with suitable professional learning that benefits them and their students directly (Harris et al., 2017).

iii) Teaching and Teacher Development (TD)

The core responsibility of school leaders in the Maldives is teaching and the professional development of teachers. Teaching and learning improve when school leaders incorporate this practice into their leadership behavior (Ismail et al., 2021). Teaching and teacher development is directly related to instructional supervision and student learning. Student learning can be improved by instructional supervision through the development of teaching (Deniz & Erdener, 2020). When a principal focuses on the quality of learning, teaching, and teacher development, the principal's instructional leadership is more likely to have a beneficial impact on student's academic attainment (Hou et al., 2019). In the Singaporean education system school leaders have adopted many instructional leadership practices, including the promotion of teacher development and learning (Hairon, 2017).

iv) Instructional Supervision (IS)

Deniz and Erdener (2020) found that student learning can be improved by instructional supervision. The instructional supervision activities carried out by school leaders are important for the growth of both teachers and students. The leadership roles and responsibilities of principals include effective supervision of the educational process. As the instructional leader, the principal is responsible for assuring ongoing supervision and inspection of the school's teaching and learning activities (Ghavifekr & Ramzy, 2020). Ismail et al. (2018) found that instructional leaders are responsible for supervising and evaluating classroom instructions.

In China, the District Education Bureau provides rigorous classroom instruction to teaching and research officers as well as frequent instructional supervision, which sends powerful signals that schools should prioritize the retention of teaching quality in the development of schools (Lai et al., 2017). Harris et al. (2017) described Malaysian principals' roles and responsibilities in enhancing instructional leadership practices. They specifically discussed the supervision of teachers and the many ways in which they proactively monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. Principals' basic responsibilities are focusing on school improvement, which includes instructional supervision, and educational-quality based discipline (Aslanargun, 2015).

4. Student Achievement

Different studies endeavored to describe the attitudes that help make principals successful leaders. A total of ten studies focused on the adoption of instructional leadership practices related to student achievement. The present study managed to further categorize this theme into two sub-themes: activities (4 studies) and monitoring (8 studies).

i) Activities (A)

Juharyanto et al. (2021) found that if there are deviations in the implementation of activities that do not lead to the school's vision, the school leader's attitude should be supportive and corrective. Hou et al. (2019) explained that principals coordinate relationships both within and outside of the school, offer resources for supporting activities, and establish an instructional environment to provide an excellent climate for teaching as well as learning. In the Turkish education system, students can participate in social activities while improving their academic performance. The principal should devise activities to foster greater collaboration among school teachers engaged in instructional studies (Özdemir & Yalçın, 2019). Another study in Turkey emphasized that teachers expected school leaders to focus on social activities for improving school-family cooperation (Aslanargun, 2015).

ii) Monitoring (MT)

Monitoring student progress is one of the crucial functions of a school leader for an effective school (Ismail et al., 2021). School authorities in the Turkish education system monitor and assess the studies that are carried out. They develop methods to monitor alumni, which helps develop techniques for the betterment of future students and their achievement (Özdemir, 2020). Furthermore, school leaders oversee and direct instruction through class visits, class evaluations, meetings, and communication with instructors and students (Hou et al., 2019). Another study by Özdemir and Yalçın (2019) found that by monitoring students' development, school leaders can impact their achievement.

School leaders have increasingly focused on managing instructional programs, supervising and evaluating education, and monitoring student achievement (Hairon, 2017; Ismail et al., 2018). Javadi et al. (2017) found that the most powerful characteristics of instructional leadership are instruction and monitoring. In Malaysia, school leaders are highly involved in a variety of routine monitoring and supervision methods. Most Malaysian principals have a vice principal for student affairs as well as subject heads who are in charge of curriculum and student progress monitoring (Harris et al., 2017).

5. Management of Curriculum

The roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders are carried out with various areas of expertise in mind, such as curriculum management and the organization of an effective communication and work environment (Özdemir, 2020). Some studies have focused on this aspect, which led to the emergence of two sub-

themes under the management of curriculum theme: teaching environment (3 studies), and evaluation teaching (2 studies).

i) Teaching Environment (TE)

In Turkey, school leaders prepare a suitable teaching environment for students with special educational needs. Özdemir (2020) revealed eight main competencies for educational administrators' leadership practices, including creating an effective communication and working environment, creating a proper environment for education and training, and creating a safe working environment. Another study found a positive impact of instructional leadership on the teaching environment (Hou et al., 2019). Özdemir and Yalçın (2019) suggested that school administrators prioritize the school climate in their school development efforts since the instructional environment is an essential element in lowering achievement disparities between schools. The principal's influence on the instructional environment, school safety, and student involvement are significant.

ii) Evaluation Teaching (ET)

Instructional leaders in Malaysia are responsible for developing curriculum programs, supervising and evaluating classroom teaching, and making sure that teachers have the confidence to teach effectively by organizing staff development programs and monitoring student behavior (Ismail et al., 2018). Another study from Malaysia found that school leaders monitor and evaluate teaching regularly, as well as the professional development of teachers (Harris et al., 2017).

DISCUSSION

With the help of the literature review, this study discovered various practices of instructional leadership and their effects on school outcomes. This study revealed that principals in Asian countries place a greater priority on instructional programs, student achievement, school mission, vision, and school climate, and less emphasis on curriculum management. It was found that while school principals were expected to play instructional leader roles, they spent most of their time on administrative responsibilities. This literature review showed that personal experiences affect instructional leadership together with leadership practices in the organization and that instructional leadership practices impact final results in the school context. The analysis of the distribution of topics in the Asian instructional leadership literature identifies practices of instructional leadership, including instructional programs, student achievement, school mission and vision, school climate, and management of curriculum.

As instructional leaders, Asian principals adopted instructional programs in their practices most often. Instructional leaders can predict their staff's self-efficacy and teacher competency through the various instructional methods they are using in their classrooms (Ismail et al., 2018). In Malaysia teachers are required to attend seven days of professional learning and development to reach KPIs and doing so is a requirement of service and thus mandatory. Principals in Malaysia engage instructors in suitable professional learning that benefits them and their students directly (Harris et al., 2017). Furthermore, student learning can be improved by instructional supervision

through the development of teaching (Deniz & Erdener, 2020). Turkish and Malaysian school leaders are using this practice in their leadership practices.

The second most followed practice is student achievement. Malaysia and Turkey are focusing more on social and interactive activities for improving school–family cooperation and school leaders are highly involved in a variety of routine monitoring and supervision methods. Most Malaysian principals have a vice principal for student affairs as well as subject heads who are in charge of the curriculum and student progress monitoring.

The third most followed practice in Asian countries is school mission and vision. Most of the school leaders focus on mission under this practice but few studies found that Asian countries are actively focused on school vision and goals. The reason behind this is related to student outcomes. Moreover, school leaders set the school goals and communicate those goals to all teachers, parents, and students as a core part of their leadership responsibility.

The fourth most followed practice is school climate. In Singapore, school leaders not only manage the instructional programs, they have also adopted additional instructional leadership practices that are improving the school climate by using effective communication. In the Maldivian education system, deputy principals practice instructional leadership roles in their schools. It has been observed that the level of instructional leadership and school effectiveness is high in public schools in the Maldives. Their instructional leadership practices involve school goals, managing instructional programs through supervision, evaluation, and coordination, and promoting a positive climate by protecting the instructional, supporting professional development, keeping visibility high, and ensuring high academic and professional standards. In the Pakistani education system, a majority of school leaders did not define their school mission. Curriculum management is the least important aspect of instructional leaders' practices in Asian countries.

In China, the District Education Bureau provides rigorous classroom instruction to teaching and research officers as well as frequent instructional supervision. This practice sends powerful signals that schools should prioritize the retention of teaching quality, the development of student achievement, and the management of curriculum. The Chinese District Education Bureau focuses on student achievement. School leaders in China oversee and direct instruction through class visits, class evaluations, meetings, and communication with instructors and students. By monitoring students' development, school leaders can impact student achievement. In Malaysia, school leaders are highly involved in a variety of routine monitoring and supervision methods. Most Malaysian principals have a vice principal for student affairs as well as subject heads who are in charge of the curriculum and student progress monitoring.

Hallinger and Murphy, (1985)'s Instructional Leadership Theory has been used in many previous studies (Ali, 2017; Hairon, 2017; Harris et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2018). Most Malaysian school leaders are following that theory in their leadership practices. In the instructional leadership framework, there are three (3) dimensions: defining school mission, management of curriculum and instruction, and promotion of the learning climate. Principals' behaviour and practices are involved in several functions in each of the three dimensions. Besides setting the goals of each area, school principals design goals for the school in collaboration with parents and staff, to define the school mission. School principals share the importance of these goals with the

students, their parents, and staff. Thus, through informal and formal communication goals can be achieved. Instructional leadership strategies also can serve to improve teaching and learning for all the students in the school.

The focus of the instructional program is on the synchronization as well as the mechanism of curriculum and instruction. This integrates instructional leadership in terms of instructional methods and material, professional training, teaching and teacher development, and instructional supervision. In previous studies on instructional leadership, a requirement in managing the instructional program is an intense engagement of school leaders in directing, monitoring, and motivating teaching and learning in the organization. These functions demand that principals commit to the improvement of their organization and that they have expertise in teaching and learning.

Encouraging a climate conducive to learning in a school includes several factors, such as endorsing communication, culture, innovation, teamwork and collaboration, and school security. In scope, the school climate is broader. The school culture can lose its strength if school leaders fail to remain focused on the school climate. Although becoming detached from the school culture seems impossible for an instructional leader, because of their busy schedule they may in fact overlook the distinct culture of the school (Ali, 2017). On the other hand, to improve the school, school members should involve themselves in different activities developed by school leaders. Thus, through school culture, instructional leaders always endeavor to achieve the school aims. Therefore, instructional leaders need to focus on instructional programs (e.g., providing high-quality instruction, assuring visibility, increasing instructional time, etc.) on the one hand and understanding of school culture on the other.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recent literature on the instructional leadership of Asian school principals reveals an understanding of how instructional leadership is adopted and practiced. Moreover, five themes representing the instructional leadership that Asian school principals adopted and practiced were identified based on the systematic review carried out in this study.

The first theme involves the school mission and vision that is developed based on the role of the principal through collaboration with their staff to make sure that the focus of the school is on the students and their academic progress, and the school has a clear and common goal. The second theme comprises the school climate, which should be conducive to supporting teaching and learning, communication, school culture, innovation, teamwork, collaboration, and school security. The third theme involves instructional programs that emphasize instructional leadership regarding coordination of instructional methods and material, professional training programs, teaching and teacher development, and instructional supervision.

The fourth theme concerns student achievement, which can be influenced by the principal if the mission statement of the school is clearly defined, different educational and co-curricular activities are arranged by school leaders, and the progression of students is appropriately monitored. The last theme discussed in this study is the management of curriculum, in which curriculum and instructions are properly managed by school leaders to provide a suitable teaching environment and effective teaching evaluation. This is the least important aspect of instructional leaders' practices in Asian countries.

The current study's findings and systematic review approach resulted in some recommendations that may be useful for future studies. First, future scholars should focus on those countries that have a ministry of education and related regulations. Further, it should be highlighted that the established flow diagram generated by (Moher et al., 2009) based on the article retrieving procedure can be improved for future systematic reviews. In addition, it should be noted that these investigations were limited to Asian countries. The findings highlight the need for more similar research, to compare regions within or between Asian countries. For example, a comparison of southern Asian regions with Southeast Asia, or east Asian countries with west Asian countries may be useful.

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