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FACTORS AFFECTING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A CASE STUDY IN WANGDUEPHODRANG DISTRICT, BHUTAN

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Abstract- Principal Leadership is a globally discussed concept in the education sector and by the governments. Apparently, instructional leadership has gained popularity worldwide among many other leadership styles. It plays an important role in quality education and school effectiveness. Hence, the study has been undertaken to understand the prevailing leadership practices, and determine common instructional leadership practices with an additional focus on the factors or challenges of instructional leadership practices of the principals.

The study has been carried out in Wangduephodrang District with a total respondents principals and teachers of 76. The data was collected through a mixed method, using the purposive sampling method. Semi-structured questionnaires and one to one interviews were used in the study. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 and used to draw descriptive statistics and inferential reports. Further the data were also analysed using the Pearson correlation test. The quantitative data were interpreted through narration to support the quantitative results.

Some of the key findings were, instructional leadership practices of the principals were found to be inadequate, principals concentrating on managerial roles and delegating supervisory responsibilities to staff. Some major issues faced were numerous roles and responsibilities given to principals, shortage of teachers, inadequate instructional responsibilities, and lack of time and leadership training.

Accordingly, the authors share a few recommendations to the relevant stakeholders and agencies for learning and development purposes.

Keywords- Principal, leadership styles, instructional leadership practices, Wangduephodrang District, Bhutan

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally school leadership has become a priority in education and an important factor for school effectiveness. Scholars agree that success and failure of the school are directly related to

leadership practices of an individual. The principal leadership is regarded as the important factor since the effectiveness of a school rests with the quality of leadership that the principal demonstrates in the school (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

With regard to the effectiveness of different leadership styles, instructional leadership is gaining popularity across the world. Instructional leadership plays a vital role in improving the school effectiveness and to improve student achievement. Findley and Findley (1992) state that “if a school is to be effective, it will be because of the instructional leadership of the principal” (p.102).

Instructional leadership is the key to fostering a culture of excellence for students, teachers and their communities. As acknowledged in many countries, Bhutan as well is emphasizing on the need for principals to be instructional leaders.

Instructional leadership is a relatively new concept that emerged very recently in our Bhutanese education system with a paradigm shift in education system and demand of society. To emphasize on instructional leadership practices, principals in Bhutan are made to shift their role from being administrators to managing and supervising the teaching programme and ensuring high-quality teaching and learning. The Bhutan Performance Management System mandates principals to incline towards an instructional leadership role in the school. Principals are instructed to spend maximum time on instruction, ensuring instruction and knowledge as the central point of school. PMS is a system of continuous improvement at all schools which provides schools with the tools to manage their own performance. The principal of PMS focuses on quality of education. This has been a very challenging issue for the school principal because of the burden of administrative and managerial work. The role of the principal has become dramatically more challenging and burdened over the years. Horng and Loeb (2010) also observed that the role of principal has become complex and overloaded over the past decade.

II. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY



The instructional leader is an educational leader whose main focus is on curriculum implementation and academic achievement of children. In this regard, Hallinger and Walker, (2014) stated that instructional leaders focus on their efforts to create a school environment conducive to teaching and learning and they are most likely to facilitate school improvement. Cotton (2003) also points out that instructional leaders are involved intimately in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect student achievement. Principal of the school should be responsible for supervising the teaching programme, ensuring high quality teaching and learning and developing a conducive teaching and learning environment.

The effectiveness of instructional leadership having an impact on the quality education is being identified for study. Bhutan School Principal Guidelines (MoE, 2011) posit that principals are responsible for effective delivery of curriculum and management fostering learners' achievement. It is also stated that principals need to demonstrate professional leadership along with an efficient management system emphasizing greater accountability for quality teaching-learning in the schools. Jita (2010) points out that schools need principals that spend a lot more time on implementation of the curriculum, as well as instruction and assessment. School needs principals who give more priority to instructional programme aligning leadership practices towards school effectiveness (DuFour, 1999).

Principals face many hindrances within their working circle on a daily basis impacting their instructional practices. Gillet (2010) through the study of twenty principals found that their work had intensified over the period and had increasingly focused on financial and managerial work to the exclusion of instructional leadership. Similarly, the challenge principals have become very complex often requiring a lot of skills and effort unlike in the past. The principals suffer from the overwork and as a result, instructional leadership drifts into the managerial tasks.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Principals in Bhutan function as the manager and administrator of the school. Managing the resources, running the school in line with the set norms and government policies, attending meetings and protocols have been main tasks of the principals; as a result, principals spent less time on the management of instructional programs and more time on organizational and managerial roles. Therefore the purpose of this study is to find out how school principals in Wangduephodrang District carry out their instructional leadership role and challenges encountered in carrying out the instructional responsibilities. The researcher is motivated by the fact that the instructional leadership practices designed by the Ministry of education are seldom practiced because there are some differences of opinion related to roles and amount of workload entrusted to the principals.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this research is:

1. To know the leadership practices of the principals in Wangduephodrang District,
2. To find out the common practice of instructional leadership practices, and
3. To identify challenges of instructional leadership practices of the principals.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Instructional leadership is a new leadership model in Bhutanese schools. However, there is no study being carried out on how Bhutanese principals practice instructional leadership. It is to examine the level of instructional leadership practices and the challenges to instructional leadership practices of principals in Wangduephodrang District.

VI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The finding of the study is limited to the schools in Wangduephodrang District, so the result cannot be generalized for the whole country. This study focuses only on government schools, therefore the results are not to be generalized to private schools. The study does not cover other education stakeholders; policy makers, education officers and parents thus the opinion and insight are not taken into consideration.

VII. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Definition of Concepts

Instructional leadership can be defined as those actions that a principal takes to enhance teaching and learning. Instructional leaders emphasize on managing curriculum and supervising practices related to teaching and learning. Many literatures indicate that instructional leadership is a significant factor in facilitating, improving and promoting instructional practices and the academic progress of students. Similarly, Mestry, Koopasammy and Schmidt (2013) states instructional leadership as those actions that principal takes to promote growth in students' learning. Instructional leadership refers to providing direction, resources, and support (Tan, 2012). Hallinger and Walker (2014), instructional leadership is one of the most useful gears which helps to create an effective teaching and learning environment. The Ministry of Education (2011) states that instructional leadership are those actions that a principal takes or delegates to others to promote in students learning. The administration concerning educating and learning procedure by including connection amongst instructors, learners and the educational programs (Sim, 2011).

Admed (2016) highlighted that instructional practices include framing school goals, supervising and evaluation of instruction, coordination of curriculum, monitoring of students' progress, and protection of instructional time and promotion of professional development. Similarly, Quah (2011) stated that instructional leadership practices are leadership roles that are directly related to the teaching process, involving the interaction between teachers, students and the curriculum.



Further, Jita (2010) stated that instructional leaders go beyond the traditional role of school administrators and spend a lot more time focusing on developing knowledge and implementation of the curriculum, as well as instruction and assessment. Rigby (2014) the central role of the principal is to take charge of issues focusing on curriculum, instruction and assessment so that performance of learners is improved. In this context instructional leadership is a vital aspect of school leaders. It is the knowledge and skills the principal must possess to actively support the academic programme, provide direction and instructional support to both teachers and students for learning and development.

2. Instructional Leadership in Bhutan

Principals usually functioned as the manager and administrator of the school in the past. Managing the resources, running the school in line with the set norms and government policies, attending meetings and protocols have been the main tasks of the principals. As a result the principals spent less time on management of instructional programs and more time on organizational and managerial roles. The major shift in principal's roles from managerial to instructional leaders took place in 2010. The Ministry of Education (2011) stated that principals are responsible for ensuring effective curriculum delivery and management which can foster effective delivery of curriculum and improve learning outcomes. The Education Monitoring Support Service Division laid out specific roles and responsibilities for principals to carry out in the schools (EMSSD, 2010). Performance Management System (PMS, 2010) mentioned the principals' requirement to spend 65% of their time on instructional programs. Principals are enabled to carry instructional programs effectively in the schools. However, Tshering and Sawangmek (2016) found that instructional leadership is not effective in Bhutan and continued to be a challenge due to its narrow definition to a large number of roles of the principal.

3. Curriculum Implementation

Instructional leaders prioritized curriculum and instruction. Instructional leaders assure that the curriculum is implemented according to the guidelines and needs of the learners, and requires establishing links among the curriculum content, teaching strategies and assessment. Researchers have found that effective implementation of curriculum fostered academic achievement of students. Prytula, Noonam and Hellsten (2013) affirmed that management and coordinating curriculum and instruction as one of the fundamental roles of an instructional leadership. Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the curriculum are among the roles of the principal as an instructional leader Badugela (2012).

Many principals in schools failed in implementation of curriculum due to challenges such as inadequate resources, financial constraints, lack of training and limited knowledge in curriculum and instruction. Currently, some of the principals as school leaders are not trained or oriented in terms of the National Curriculum Standard, so they perceive it as an imposition and they merely comply. Badugela (2012) affirmed

that due to weak knowledge and understanding educators face enormous challenges in implementing the new curriculum. The survey conducted by Mafora and Phorabatho (2013) found inadequate training as a barrier in managing the implementation of the curriculum.

4. Supervising and Evaluating Instruction

Supervision and evaluation of instruction is a necessary feature of instructional leadership. It is an administrative process of assessing the performance of teachers for the purpose of helping teachers and making administrative decisions. The broader conception of instructional leadership is a significant way to frame effective approaches to teacher supervision and evaluation. DiPaola and Hoy (2013) defined supervision as an informal, cooperative relationship between the principal and teachers and evaluation as a formal hierarchical process between principal and individual teachers. Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern and Kelling (2009) defined supervision as the formative process in which principles attempted to maximize teachers' growth and assess the professional development needs of teachers. Managing the instructional program required the principal's active participation in supervising, monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in the school. The principal must possess expertise as well as commitment, in the school's instruction and curriculum. Supervising, and evaluating teaching and learning in the school demands that the principal has expertise in teaching and learning as well as a commitment to the school's improvement (Borba, 2009). The view indicated supervision and evaluation of instruction as one of the most critical functions of the administrator. Principals should focus on this role to reinforce and enhance teaching practices that will contribute to improve student learning.

Several challenges have impacted negatively on the effectiveness of instructional supervision. Researchers have identified time, lack of commitment, organizational management issues like budgeting, administrative paperwork and administering discipline as the common barriers to effective supervision and evaluation. Due to these challenges principals spend less time on supervision and evaluation of instruction in schools. Camburn, Spillane, & Sebastian, (2010) also stated that the various factors that the principals spend the least amount of time on fit within the instructional leadership.

5. Instructional Time

The role of the principal in instructional time management is to make sure that instructional time is not interrupted by other school activities which are not related to the instructional process. Ensuring proper management of time and appropriate delegation of instructional tasks to teachers can enhance instructional tasks and academic achievement of children. Effective instructional leaders devote time to instructional related activities such as coordination of the curriculum, spending time in classrooms to observe, monitor, and evaluate classroom lessons, and development of staff. Principals with good time management strategies allocate time in ensuring quality instructional delivery in their schools (Victor, 2017). Botha (2010) stated that the ability of principals to effectively



supervise instruction time and facilitate instruction delivery offers rich learning opportunities. Ahmed (2016) highlighted instructional leadership practices such as monitoring of students' progress, protection of instructional time, promotion of professional development are directly linked to creating the conditions for optimal teaching and learning.

Principal's dynamic skill in management of instructional time as an essential for the attainment of school goals and most importantly for the quality instruction. Principal should provide time on instruction by prioritizing tasks, delegating tasks to subordinates, avoiding unnecessary interruptions and time wasting activities. However, it is difficult for principals to find time to focus on instructional leadership because they are often filled with managerial tasks, such as paper work, meetings, students' discipline, correspondences and community relationships. The demands on principals' time make it difficult for them to devote enough attention to instruction (Spiro, 2013).

6. Professional Development

Promotion of teacher's professional development is considered as the responsibilities of instructional leaders. Professional development is one strategy to support teachers as they work to increase student achievement. Sekhu (2011) stated that staff developmental programmes ensured teacher commitment; build teacher confidence, and self-esteem towards performing their teaching tasks. Principals should provide professional development opportunities to teachers based on teachers' desires or needs. Desimone, Smith and Ueno (2006) also stated that it is the duty of principal to provide quality professional development for teachers. In promoting professional development, instructional leaders facilitated lifelong learning by helping teachers to identify meaningful and relevant learning opportunities and provide support and resources to teachers that enabled them to become more effective in the classroom. Bourne (2016) stated that school leaders, especially within low-performing schools, were typically ineffective in providing support and mentoring to improve instruction, and providing direction and resources for teacher learning and professional development within and outside the school.

7. Challenges to Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices

There are a number of challenges experienced by principals in their execution of instructional roles. The role of instructional leadership is a difficult task. Kellerman (2015) as cited by Mestry (2017) asserts that "school leadership has become a high wire act that only the most skilled are able to perform successfully" (p1). The challenge with instructional leadership is that the principal's role has become very complex, requiring a great deal of skills and effort than in the past. The most common challenges revealed; constant changes of the curriculum, disruptions of contact time, and other bureaucratic requirements. The school principal's day is usually filled with diverse activities of administration and management – scheduling, reporting, dealing with unexpected multiple learner and teacher crises, and extraordinary situations (Early, 2013; Bottery, 2016). Mestry (2017) found out that many principals

placed more emphasis on their managerial and administrative duties than focusing on teaching and learning. Goslin (2009) stated that many school principals overlooked their main responsibility of instructional leadership as too busy attending administrative and managerial work. Although principals are accountable for the performance of administrative and managerial tasks, there is a need for them to take an active instructional leadership role, which is crucial to enhance learner performance.

VIII. METHODOLOGY

1. Sampling

The target population for the investigation included the principal and teachers of Wangduephodrang District. The sample size is 16 school principals and 65 teachers. The purposive sampling was used as all the participants were certified under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The participants were also selected from all levels of school: Higher secondary school, middle secondary school and primary schools.

2. Questionnaire

In order to gather the appropriate information about current practice of instructional leadership practices and challenges faced in carrying out instructional responsibilities by the principals in Wangduephodrang District, close-ended and likert type questionnaires were prepared for principals and teachers in light of the literature review.

This instrument has two sections. In the first section, information about the independent variables: age, gender, year of experience, professional qualification and teaching subjects. The second section contains the inventory of instructional leadership practices of 46 items covering the instructional leadership functions by using five points, likert scale rating. The respondents were made to rate their instructional leadership practices depending on the frequency with which specific function they are in practice and observed.

3. Interview

Structure interview questions were prepared in advance and interviews conducted with principals. Items in the interview reflect the concept of instructional leadership, leadership practices, challenges that principals encountered and the recommendation for improvement of instructional leadership practices.

4. Statistical Planning and Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to organizing the data depending on the source of information, getting a general sense of information and interpreting the data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from sample respondents. Quantitative data collected through survey questionnaires were tallied, tabulated out by using SPSS version 22 and reported in a form of frequency and percentage table, graphs, and figures. Whereas the qualitative data collected through the interview were interpreted through narration to support the quantitative result.

IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



The data was collected through interview and survey questionnaires. 7 principals were interviewed and surveyed 16 principals and 60 teachers. The major findings of the study are organized into three sections as follows.

- a. Quantitative: the principal leadership practices, common instructional practices and challenges of instructional leadership practices.
- b. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the qualitative data was analyzed into themes and presented in the form of narrative descriptive statements.

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Of the total of 76 individuals who participated in the study. The demographic profiles indicate that all the principal participants were all male. From the teacher participants 34 (56.7 percent) are male, and 26 (43.3 percent) are female.

Similarly, majority (50 percent) of the principals were aged between 40-45 years, 4 principals were between 45-50, 2 principals were aged between 30-35 and only 1 principal is above 51 years. Noteworthy, that there is no principal of age below 36 years.

Majority of the principals in the study have good experience in school leadership. Principals with good experiences will have a better understanding of the education system and management practices. As for the teachers, the majority (83.3 percent) were aged between 25-35 while the least (3.3 percent) were below 24 years. This clearly indicated that many teachers were young and energetic.

By academic qualification, there is 1 principal with primary teacher qualification, 9 with bachelor's degree and 6 with master's degree. Evans (1996) had suggested that the successful supervisor of the 21st century will need to be a very professional, competent, highly trained and a well-motivated individual. Similarly, out of 60 teachers, 49 have a Bachelor's degree and 5 have a master's degree.

2. Principal Instructional Leadership Practices

In this segment the research question was tested to discover the level of leadership practices of the principal. The PIMRS survey was utilized to gather information. The respondents were requested to show how frequently principal exhibited leadership capacities. The information gathered were categorized through descriptive statistics based on standard deviation and mean.

To analyze the finding, the rating scale was divided into five perception levels to the mean score from 4.30–5.00 as Highest, 3.30–4.29 as High, 2.30–3.29 as Moderate, 1.30–2.29 as Low and 1.00–1.29 as Lowest.

Table 1. Level of Leadership Practices of the Principal via PIMRS.

Leadership Practice	N	Mean	SD	Level
Delegate administrative responsibility to staff	76	4.37	0.73	Highest

Supervise and evaluate the instructional programs in the school	76	4.13	0.81	High
Delegate instruction responsibilities to academic head /HoDs/ master teacher/ SBIP coordinators	76	5.00	4.69	Highest
Involves teachers in the school improvement planning process	76	4.45	0.74	Highest
Arrange teachers' meetings to help them grow professionally.	76	4.12	0.88	High
Work with teachers to define educational objectives and set goals	76	4.12	0.80	High
Plan professional development opportunities according to needs.	76	4.07	0.84	High
Develop follow up plans for assessing professional development	76	3.80	0.82	High
Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	76	3.92	0.80	High
Organize and deliver the instructional materials to students and teachers	76	4.17	0.76	High
Protect classroom instructional time from outside interruptions	76	4.21	0.81	High
Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels	76	4.30	0.77	Highest
Use test and other performance measures to assess progress towards school goals	76	3.96	0.82	High
Review curriculum and ensure that teachers are aware of changing conception of curriculum	76	3.97	0.99	High
Meet teachers to get reports about curriculum implementation.	76	3.84	0.95	High
Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strength and weakness	76	4.17	0.79	High
Solve issues related to discipline to maximize instructional time.	76	4.00	0.85	High
Teachers receives sufficient and quality coaching from Principal/subject coaches	76	3.68	0.82	High
Limit the intrusion of extra and co-curricular activities during instructional time.	76	3.88	0.88	High
Valid N (list wise)	76	4.11	1.03	NA



The general mean score of this function was 4.11 at level **high**. Item 3, ‘delegate instruction responsibilities to academic head/HoDs/master teacher/SBIP coordinators’ was at the maximum level with the mean score of 5.00. Item 18, ‘teachers receive sufficient and quality coaching from principal/subject coaches’ was at the minimum with the mean score of 3.68.

Further, going deeper, on item 3 scores on *delegation of instruction responsibilities to academic head /HoDs/master teacher/SBIP coordinators*, the results indicated that 50 percent of the participants responded **almost always**, 38 percent responded **frequently**, 10.5 percent responded **sometimes** and 1.3 percent responded **seldom**. Similarly, items 4 and 1 of similar nature inquiring on principals involvement in planning and delegation of works to staff has also been scored highest with mean scores of 4.45 and 4.37 respectively.

This indicates that most of the principals delegate instructional responsibilities to academic head/HoDs/master teacher/SBIP coordinators. The results correspondingly exposed that principals were involved more in official and unintended instructional leadership functions. Having said that, looking at lowest rated item 18, the frequency of quality coaching the teachers receive from principal/subject coaches, 15.8 percent of respondents responded **always**, 43.4 percent responded **frequently**, 34.2 percent responded **sometimes** and 5.5 percent responded **seldom**. This reveals that the frequency of coaching provided by principals is at the lowest level.

Further, Pearson Correlation was used to see the correlation of *delegating administrative responsibility to instructional leadership practices* as shown in the table below. The results indicated that *delegating administrative responsibility* to staff has a strong correlation with supervising and evaluating the instructional programme in the school, involving teachers in the school improvement planning process and arranging teachers' meetings to help them grow professionally. It implies that delegating administrative responsibilities by principals plays a major role in the said instructional leadership practices.

Table 2. Correlation of Delegating Administrative Responsibility to related Instructional Leadership Practices.

Delegate administrative responsibility to staff	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Supervise and evaluate instructional programs in the school	.326**	0.004	76
Involves teachers in school planning process	.335**	0.003	76
Arrange teachers' meetings to help them grow	.431**	0	76

3. Common Instructional Practices

Table 3. Common Instructional Practices of the principal in terms of Managing Curriculum and Instruction.

Common Instructional Practices	N	Mean	SD	Level
Checks teacher's record of work	76	4.14	0.86	High
Encourage all teachers to come to class well-prepared and on time.	76	4.51	0.64	Highest
Makes visits to classroom to observe teacher's lessons	76	3.57	0.96	High
Provides feedback after class observation	76	3.61	1.01	High
Discuss with teachers the matters related to the instruction	76	3.92	0.96	High
Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	76	3.88	0.99	High
Encourage teachers to take steps to solve instructional issues.	76	3.97	0.78	High
Encourage a lesson plan for making the curriculum effective.	76	4.47	0.76	Highest
Ensure that teachers teach the required curriculum.	76	4.43	0.79	Highest
Discuss students' results with teachers for curricular strengths.	76	4.34	0.83	Highest
Carry out result analysis to see the academic progress	76	4.42	0.74	Highest
Evaluate students' work for evidence that standard has been achieved.	76	4.14	0.76	High
Enthusiastically support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in-service training	76	3.72	0.53	High
Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form	76	3.62	0.69	High
Informs students of school's academic progress	76	3.93	0.60	High
Clear guidelines exist for assessment methodology (question paper setting and marking schemes) for consistency within each standard.	76	3.93	0.66	High
Physically available for instructional issues.	76	4.18	0.78	High



Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	76	4.05	0.96	High
Valid N (list wise)	76	4.05	0.79	High

Encourage teachers to take steps to solve instructional issues.	.660**	0	76
Encourage a lesson plan for making the curriculum effective.	.672**	0	76
Ensure that teachers teach the required curriculum.	.653**	0	76
Discuss students' results with teachers for curricular strengths.	.587**	0	76

Table 3, displays the means and the standard deviation of Common Instructional Practices of principal. The instructional practice rating scale consists of 18 items on Managing Curriculum and Instructions, in which the participants were asked to indicate the extent of their rating with each statement using a five point rating scale (Almost Always, Frequently, Sometimes, Seldom, Almost Never). As it is seen in the above table the average mean score was 4 at the **high** level. The most Common Instructional Practices 'encouraged a lesson plan for making curriculum effective' with the mean score of 4.47. The least practiced item with the mean score of 3.5 was 'make visits to the classroom to observe the teacher's lessons'.

Further, the frequency and the level of encouragement provided by principals to teachers to come to class well prepared and on time were looked at in particular. 58 percent responded that principals **always** encourage teachers to come to class well prepared and in time, 37 percent responded **frequently**, 4 percent responded **sometimes** and 1 percent participant responded **seldom**. Hence, it is evident that all principals provide encouragement to their teacher to come to class well prepared and on time.

Similarly, on the principal's encouragement on lesson planning for making curriculum effective, 60.5 percent responded that principals **always** encourage lesson planning for making curriculum effective, with 28.9% rated frequently, 7.9% rated sometimes and 2.6 % rated as seldom. The findings therefore imply that monitoring and evaluation of lesson plans was very effectively done by principals. Having said that, making visits to observe lessons by principals was rated the lowest by the respondents among the 17 other common instruction practices. 14.5 percent responded that principals **seldom** visit to observe lessons, 32.9 percent responded **sometimes**, 34.2 percent responded **frequently** and 18.4 percent responded **always**. The frequency and the percentage in this role shows that not many principals visit classes to observe lessons as mandated.

Table 4. Correlation of Principal checking Teacher's Record of Work to related Instructional Leadership Practices.

Checks Teacher's Record of Work	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Makes visits to classroom to observe teacher's lessons	.580**	0	76
Provides feedback after class observation	.590**	0	76
Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	.661**	0	76

As depicted by the table, the strongest correlation of the variable are between check teachers record of work and encourage a lesson plan for making curriculum effective; followed by monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives; encourage teachers to take steps to solve instructional issues; ensure that teachers teach the required curriculum; provides feedback after class observation; discuss students' results with teachers for curricular strengths and makes visits to classroom to observe teacher's lessons. This correlation signifies that monitoring teachers' record of work can help in various areas of instructional responsibilities.

4. Challenges of Instructional Leadership Practices

To interpret the mean value, the following scales were used; 1-1.99 (very low), 2-2.99 (low), 3-3.99 (high), 4-5 (very high). Table 5, indicates the mean and standard deviation of the challenges faced by the principals in carrying out instructional responsibilities. Most of the respondents agree that the principal spent most of the time on attending meetings/seminars and visitors and lack of financial support/budget with a mean score of 3.2. The item with the lowest mean score of 2.2 has no clear job description of principal.

Table 5. Challenges of Instructional Leadership Practices.

SN	Challenges	N	Mean	SD	Level
1	No clear job description of principal	76	2.29	1.31	Low
2	Inadequacy of instructional materials	76	2.70	1.14	Low
3	Shortage of instructional materials	76	2.71	1.15	Low
4	Shortage of teachers	76	3.07	1.37	High
5	A lack of instructional support personnel	76	2.78	1.18	Low
6	A lack of other support personnel	76	2.78	1.15	Low
7	Time spend on attending meeting/seminars/visitors	76	3.24	1.13	High
8	Time spent on attending disciplinary issues	76	3.14	1.13	High



9	Lack of financial support/budget	76	3.24	1.23	High
	Valid N (list wise)	76			

Noteworthy that *the time spent on attending meetings/seminars/visitors* to be a challenge to instructional leadership practices. 8 percent responded **strongly agree**, 45 percent responded **agree**, 20 percent responded **undecided**, 18 percent responded **disagree** and 9 percent responded **strongly disagree**. From the figures it is evident that the principals' inability to meet the instructional leadership requirement was due to time they spend on attending meetings, seminars and visitors.

Similarly, *lack of budget or financial support* was one of the challenges faced by the principals. 15.8 percent responded **strongly agree**, 31.6 percent responded **agree**, 18.4 percent responded **disagree** and 10.5 percent responded **strongly disagree**. From the response it is clear that lack of financial support was hampering principals in carrying out instructional responsibilities. The lack of financial support has also hindered in providing instructional matters and conduct of professional development programs.

In addition, *shortage of teachers* as a challenge faced by the principals in carrying out instructional leadership practices was also considered for analysis. 45 percent responded that shortage of teachers as a challenge to instructional leadership practices. During the interview with a principal, it emerged that shortage of teachers is a major challenge to their effective performance of supervisory instructional roles. To address the problem of teacher shortage many principals have resorted to full time teaching, thus resulting in inadequate time to practice instructional leadership responsibilities.

5. Principals Instructional Leadership Concept, Practices and Challenges.

After the quantitative phase 7 principals were interviewed on a voluntary basis. The interviews were intended to discover the concepts, challenges and instructional leadership practices of the principals. The collected data were sorted and content analysis was done. To maintain anonymity participants were allotted with pseudonyms.

Question 1: How do you define instructional leadership as a principal of the school?

All the participants provided their explanation to what they understand to be instructional leaders. According to respondents, instructional leadership is implementation of instructions of curriculum, focusing on instructional matters to promote students' learning.

Two principals provided a comprehensive interpretation of the concept.

"Instructional leadership is segregating overall school administration from academic learning of children, having depth knowledge and leading in implementation of instruction of curriculum. Specifically dedicated towards teaching-learning and instructional matters." (Principal C)

"To me instructional leadership is the roles and responsibilities that the school leaders take to monitor and provide instructional support to teachers for the academic achievements of learners." (Principal F)

Question 2: What is your function as an Instructional leadership?

It was evident from the view expressed by the participants that the role of principal has become more complex. Some principal claims that this was the responsibility of the School academic head and Head of Department. The common function shared by the respondents are to support teachers on implementation of curriculum and monitoring the teaching learning process. For example Principal D remarked:

"I monitor the teachers as well as academic heads and HODs and ensure that procedures are implemented for effective teaching and learning. I monitor the progress of learners and provide necessary support."

Principal E also saw that his main function at instructional leadership is to monitor the teachers. *"I monitor that teacher's lesson plan for effective teaching and learning and instruction time is used effectively"*.

Principal C has a different perspective of his function as instructional leader and provided a comprehensive response: *"Strategizing curriculum implementation, adapting suitable pedagogies and paradigm shift. Institution of school level monitoring and support services. Supervision of curriculum implementation and draw analysis."*

Question 3: What are the key characteristics of successful instructional leaders?

As per the respondents, a successful instructional leader should possess professional attributes like being supportive to teachers and learners, having good information about instruction and curriculum, providing timely and appropriate feedback on students' progress, and providing professional development opportunities to teachers.

"The successful instructional leader is knowledgeable about research based centered instruction, model to use of these strategies and requires implementation of appropriate research based strategies within the classroom as a component of continuous improvement plans." (Principal F)

Question 4: What are the hindrances to principals' instructional leadership practices?

The major challenges shared by the respondents are attending ad-hoc programmes, burden with administrative work, lack of staff, lack of leadership training, lack of budget, limited instructional resources and attending to meetings.

Principal C responded that *"attachment to other educational institutions like extended classroom schools, early child care centers and Non formal education also hamper our efficiency and consume our time."*

Principal E, a primary school principal responded that *"I have to do full time teaching due to the shortage of teachers and carry out plenty of administrative work."* Similarly Principal D stated that *"shortage of teachers results in inadequate time to practice leadership skills."*



Question 5: What must be done to overcome the challenges to instructional leadership?

When asked on their view to overcoming the challenges Principal C suggested *“segregating of instructional and administrative leadership jobs and roles and ministry of education to provide teachers with right teacher students’ ratio.”*

Principal B suggested that schools be appointed with a vice principal to carry out administrative work so that the principal can focus on instructional matters. *“Every school should have a Vice Principal appointed by MoE to ease the burden of principal.”*

Other suggestions provided by the respondents were strengthening the decentralized system of monitoring in the school, providing enough instructional resources and providing timely training to school principals.

X. DISCUSSION

In the study, most of the principal and teachers confirm that principals delegate administrative responsibilities to staff; delegate instructional responsibilities to academic head/ HoDs/ master teacher/ SBIP coordinators; involve teachers in the school improvement planning process and make clear on the responsibilities for coordinating the curriculum across the grade level. However, the study registered a lower rating on coaching received from principal and subject teachers. The study finding showed that the majority of principals do not provide instruction to the teacher which is one of the important responsibilities of instructional leaders. It was also found that most of the principals delegated their instructional supervisory activities to academic head/ HoDs/ master teacher/ SBIP coordinators due to many planned and other emergent management duties to attend to within and outside the school. The inferential studies revealed that delegating administrative responsibilities has a significant correlation to supervising and evaluating the instructional program in schools, involving teachers in improvement planning, and helping teachers to grow professionally. The studies indicate that principals should delegate and decentralize administrative responsibilities with staff to execute instructional responsibilities effectively.

The second question is the desire to study the common instructional leadership practiced by the principles of Wangduephodrang District. The overall mean of 4.04 was stated as the high level of instructional practices. The principals encourage all teachers to come to class well prepared and in time; encourage planning, carry out result analysis to see academic progress and ensure that teachers teach the required curriculum. The result revealed that principals practiced instructional leadership at the high level signifying their acquaintance with the instructional leadership authenticated by the qualitative phase. The findings established that principals' visits to observe teachers' lessons were fairly effective. The principals interviewed also reported that they generally do not visit classrooms to observe teachers' lessons due to enormous

administrative responsibilities. It was also observed that most principals delegate the responsibilities of lesson observation to the Head of Departments (HoDs). It was observed principals delegating instructional leadership roles to teachers while they concentrate on managerial tasks.

There are challenges identified by the respondents through questionnaires and interviews in this study. The first major factor was the shortage of teachers. Owing to the shortage of teachers some principals are found carrying full-time teaching which resulted in inadequate leadership skills. Similarly principals mentor teachers and make a visit to classes to observe teachers' lessons are found to be associated with the shortage of teachers.

The result from both quantitative and qualitative data also shows the lack of financial support and budget which hinder the principal's instructional leadership practices. Financial constraints limit the provision of required facilities to achieve the goals of instructional supervision such as the conduct of professional development activities, development of instructional materials, and academic improvement.

The study revealed that principals not being able to provide instruction support was owing to the time principals spend on attending meetings, seminars, visitors, and disciplinary issues. Most principals expressed that they were not able to focus on the instructional responsibilities as they have to attend an ad-hoc program like meeting, visitors, and disciplinary problems in the school. The respondent also expressed their inability to meet the instructional leadership requirement due to the heavy administrative responsibilities and lack of leadership training. Generally, it was found that almost all principals are selected from teachers and assigned without any additional leadership training, which influences the effectiveness of principals' leadership practices. Therefore, principals' educational leadership background is also a problem in our schools.

The respondents identified the common idea in overcoming the problem such as segregating instructional and administrative leadership jobs, providing enough teachers, a decentralized system of monitoring, providing enough instructional resources, and providing leadership training to principals.

XI. CONCLUSION

The study was primarily carried out to find out the instructional leadership practices and hindrances faced by principals of one of the districts of Bhutan. Based on the above major findings of the study the following conclusion are made. It is evident that principals are aware of the instructional responsibilities and practice instructional leadership. However, the findings of the study showed that the instructional leadership practice of principals was ineffective in providing instruction to teachers and visiting the class to observe teachers' lessons. It was also found most of the principals delegating their supervisory responsibilities to academic head/HoDs/master teacher/SBIP coordinators while they concentrate on managerial tasks.



The hindrances to the instructional leadership practices faced by the principal were also observed from the study. The major hindrances were numerous roles and responsibilities, shortage of teachers, lack of financial support, inadequate instructional resources, lack of time and leadership training. The main reason the principal was not able to carry out instructional responsibilities effectively as mandated by the ministry of education was owing to the numerous hindrances.

XII. RECOMMENDATION

Having investigated the common instructional leadership practices and hindrances to instructional leadership practices in Wangduephodrang District, the following recommendation was made:

1. *Recommendation to the Ministry of Education and Dzongkhag Education Officer.*
 - a. The school administration workload should be reduced so that they can address both their administrative and instructional duties. This can be done by providing enough support staff in schools to carry out managerial works.
 - b. Deploy teachers as per the teacher-student ratio and number of subjects/classes. So that principal can focus more on instructional supervision.
 - c. The school principals must be provided with induction courses to acquaint them with relevant skills and knowledge in the management of instructional time.
 - d. Explore and mobilize adequate instructional materials.
 - e. Provision of financial budget to enhance professional development programs and development of instructional materials.
2. *Recommendation for Principals.*
 - a. Principals need to decentralize administrative and managerial work to non-teaching staff and pay attention to instructional programs like observation, professional development, and curriculum implementation.
 - b. Principals must balance their administrative and managerial duties with instructional leadership functions.
 - c. It is found important for principals to plan and prioritize the instructional role in the school.
3. *Recommendation for future research studies.*
 - a. A study to find the impact on students' academic achievement on the hindrances to instructional practices of principals.
 - b. Researchers may study with the larger sample including other stakeholders.
 - c. Conduct a nationwide study to examine principal instructional leadership practices.

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