Instructional Leadership Practices of School Heads and Learners' Learning Lag: A Springboard for Learning Recovery Strategies

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Abstract: Instructional leaders are considered as the key contributors to the success in the implementation of change in schools. This study determined the instructional leadership practices and learning lags of learners. The researcher utilized the descriptive- correlational method. This research study employed the total sampling technique to determine the sample of schools and stratified random sampling in finding the respondents to participate in data gathering. Mean and Pearson r were used statistical data analysis.

Findings revealed that instructional leadership practices of school heads in terms of instructional support for teacher effectiveness and efficiency, enhancing teacher capability building, curriculum enhancement and assessment of learning outcomes were rated always. The school heads have very high degree of providing support to teachers in improving teaching learning and learning outcomes. Constantly involved and practiced their instructional leadership by giving technical assistance to the teachers in the form improving the teaching capability of the teachers especially during classroom observation. Persistently practice their instructional leadership by enhancing the curriculum to make it relevant and responsive to the learners' needs. The level of learning lags of learners relative to learning skills, numeracy, literacy and critical thinking were rated unsatisfactory.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership Practices, Learning Lags of Learners

1. Main text

Introduction

Leadership in instruction is crucial in a strategic school activities include organizing the curriculum, creating clear goals, analyzing, assigning resources, and keeping track of lesson plans. Teachers routinely encourage learning and development in their students. As opposed to the conventional leadership that exists today, instructional leadership entails using non-coercive influence to mold educational objectives and define. It develops the vision of future, and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision (Hussien 2019).

Instructional leaders are considered as the key contributors to the success in the implementation of change in schools. However, public elementary school administrators are poorly equipped with the knowledge and skills in performing their instructional leadership functions specifically in developing programs and/or adopting existing programs. Public elementary school administrators are moderately competent in assessment of learning, implementing programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision respectively. Instructional leaders are considered as the key contributors to the success in the (Basañes, 2020).

Though everyone recognizes the importance of the instructional leadership responsibilities of the school head, in reality, good instructional leadership skills are seldom practiced. There is a need for information about the skills and tasks required to support practices of instructional leadership in schools so that they can provide the best possible instruction to the children.

One of the more significant outlook in basic education is learning gaps among the learners because of pandemic. The learning gaps if left unaddressed, to compound over time and become more severe and pronounced, which can increase the chances that a learner will struggle academically and socially or drop out of school. Seemingly, if foundational academic skills like reading, writing, and math, as well as social and interpersonal skills are not acquired by learners early on in their education, it may be more difficult for them to learn these foundational skills later on. As learners' progress through their education, remediating learning gaps tends can become more difficult because learners may have fallen well behind their peers, or because high school teachers may not have specialized training or expertise in teaching foundational academic skills (Scherer & Nilsen, 2019).

The prioritization of learning objectives and content that enables a better comprehension of and response to the crisis, the incorporation of care and health-related aspects, critical and reflective thinking with regard to information and news, understanding social and economic trends, and encouraging behavior that is empathetic, tolerant, and non-discriminatory, among other things, should all be addressed by curriculum adaptation, flexibility, and contextualization. In the meantime, a balance was sought between determining the key competencies that learners will need to continue learning and strengthening the all-encompassing and humanistic nature of education without having to pressure to emphasize just instrumental learning (UNESCO, 2020).

Learning gaps happened when learners missed a skill and proceeded to a new lesson without any remediation on it. Since the lessons are arranged from simple to complex competencies, any unmastered simple skills will hinder the learners to master, too, the higher level of competencies, thus leaving a gap from the standard mastery level to what is expected of them on their succeeding lessons (Torres, 2021).

Despite the boundless opportunities and efforts done by the teachers in face-to-face teaching, there are still learning lags occurred. Some students suffered from losing the merit of education due to being discouraged or not taking to attend classes because of fear. Ehen they were in school, some of them were not engaging as much as they used to while attending classes seriously.

Of the many concerns that teachers express about the performance of the learners and giving intervention on the learning lag is that it takes a lot of precious time. Certainly, it takes significant amounts of time to develop the learning skills. Learning gaps are to be eradicated through the effective instructions and embracing different interventions.

Locally, experiences and observations speak out the reality of school heads instructional supervision and academic gap of learners. From the 2-year lag of schooling, learners' knowledge was deteriorated and has low learning level. Several learners in higher grades, could not read, write and even do simple math calculations because they do not understand their modules.

The instructional leadership approach requires school principals to give top priority to the continuous improvement of teaching quality and academic outcomes. Thus, there is a limited body of knowledge on academic gaps of learners in the new normal. This study finds to have a significant contribution in the existing literatures. The researcher aims to conduct this study to determine the instructional leadership of school heads and the learning gaps of learners.

Conceptual Framework

Learning gaps are often the discrepancy between what students should know by the end of a particular school level and what they actually know. Learners are likely to fall further and further behind as a result of the skills and knowledge they have lost because these learning gaps are frequently increasing. As students go to a higher level of study, this compounding phenomena presents a significant problem for teachers and students alike (Torres, 2021).

As a result of instructional monitoring, Professional Learning Communities were eventually established in each institution. These guidelines for supervision must center on the teachers' support, reciprocal trust, and accountability. Therefore, assistance in enhancing teachers' professionalism is always needed. The enhancement of professionalism can be accomplished, for example, by instructional supervision. A critical step in the process of implementing educational management in schools is the adoption of supervision (Hussein, 2019).

The goal of instructional supervision is to continuously encourage, organize, and direct teachers in schools, both individually and in groups, so they can better comprehend and be able to achieve the function of learning in action. As a result, there is a direct connection between instructional supervision and teacher professional development. A detailed analysis has focused on the connection between teacher supervision and professionalism in recent years (Mudawali & Mudzofir, 2017).

The above cited concepts anchored the present undertakings of the study on the instructional leadership practices of school heads and pupils' learning gaps. This research study follows the INPUT-PROCESS-OUTPUT model. The input of this study includes the data to be taken from the school heads and teachers on their instructional leadership practices and learning lags of learners. The output of the study includes the use of different data processes like the survey questionnaire, statistical analysis and discussion of the findings. The output of the study will be a program that could eradicate the learning gaps of the learners.

The following diagram depicts how the variables will be treated to determine the extent of the instructional supervision practices, and responsibilities of master teachers.

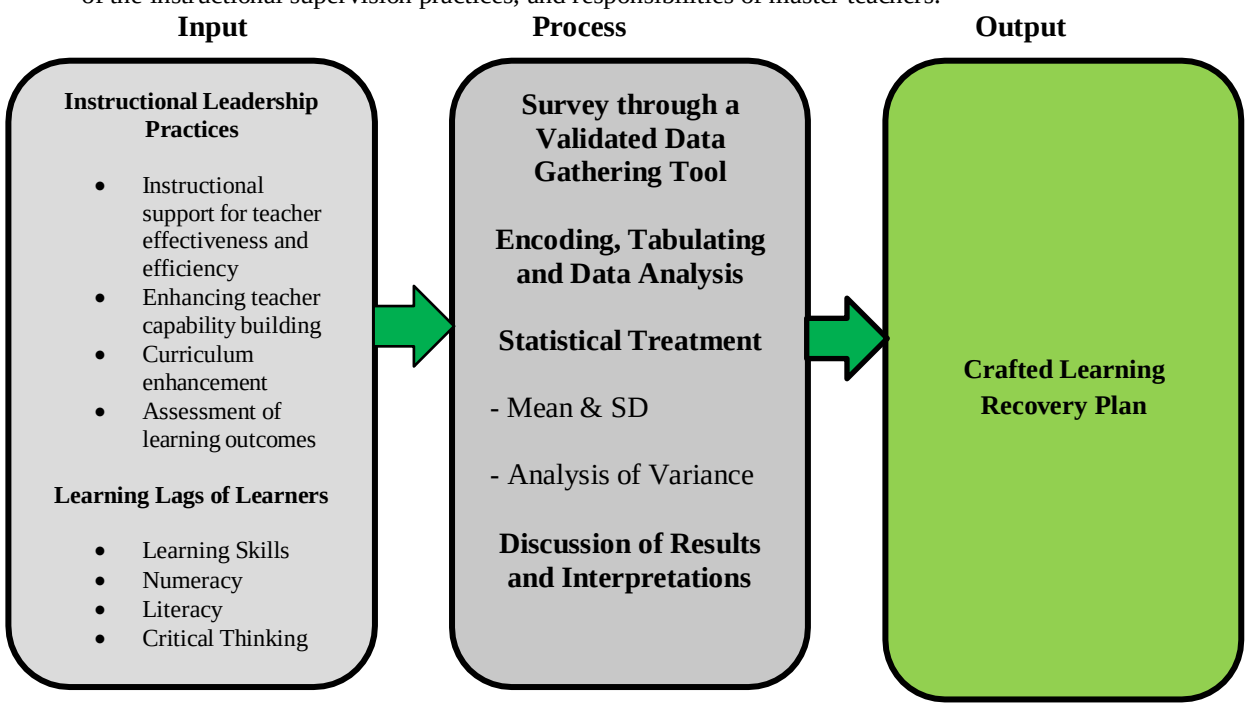

Figure 1. Research Paradigm

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the instructional leadership practices and learning lags of learners in Lake Sebu 3 district. Findings serve as springboard in designing a learning recovery plan. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of the instructional leadership practices of school heads in terms of:
   1.1 Instructional support for teacher effectiveness and efficiency;
   1.2 Enhancing teacher capability building;
   1.3 Curriculum enhancement; and
   1.4 Assessment of learning outcomes?
2. What is the extent learning lag of learners in terms of:
   2.1 learning Skills;
   2.2 Numeracy;
   2.3 Literacy; and
   2.4 Critical Thinking?
3. Is there a significant difference on the instructional leadership practices of school heads across schools?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what recovery program could be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher utilized the descriptive- correlational method. In descriptive survey, this study involves the description and analysis of the characteristics of the populations. It described the level of instructional leadership practices of school heads and learning lags of learners. The study conducted at Lake Sebu 3 District located at the municipality of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

The respondents of this research study were regular permanent teachers of Lake Sebu 3 District composed of one hundred (120). Mean was used to determine the instructional leadership practices of school heads and learning lags of learners. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the significant difference on the instructional leadership practices of school heads across schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Instructional Leadership Practices of School Heads

The level of instructional leadership practices of school heads in terms of instructional support for teacher effectiveness and efficiency. As shown, providing professional, technical and instructional assistance to teachers was rated always with mean of 3.62. This followed by motivating and supporting teachers to attain peak performance which obtained the mean of 3.58 and described as always. Taken as a whole, the mean of instructional support for teacher effectiveness and efficiency was 3.52 and rated as always. The consistent ratings for all indicators substantiate the overall results. This means that most of the school heads always practice instructional support for teacher effectiveness and efficiency. The school heads have very high degree of providing support to teachers in improving teaching learning and learning outcomes. The result indicates that school heads always see to it that their teachers were given appropriate instructional support towards effective classroom instruction and improve their competence in

teaching. Moreover, result implies that instructional leadership practices of school heads manifested very high in guiding, assist and improve the instructional capability.

The level of instructional leadership practices of school heads in terms of enhancing teacher capability building. As shown, serving as consultant and resource speakers in INSET was rated always as manifested in the mean of 3.50. This followed by organizing school-based seminars, workshops and school learning action cell and conducting action research designed to improve instruction and academic performance were rated always with mean of 3.40 respectively. Taken as a whole, the mean of enhancing teacher capability building was 3.38 and rated as always. The consistent ratings for all indicators substantiate the overall results. This means that school heads constantly involved and practiced their instructional leadership by giving technical assistance to the teachers in the form improving the teaching capability of the teachers especially during classroom observation. The implication of the findings stated that school heads play a significant role promote teacher capability.

The level of instructional leadership practices of school heads in terms of curriculum enhancement. As shown, reviewing the competencies utilized in classroom instruction was rated always as manifested in the mean of 3.41. This followed by proposing innovations to improve instructions and acting as consultant in the subject or other fields assigned on his/her expertise were rated always with means of 3.37 respectively.

Taken as a whole, the mean of curriculum enhancement was 3.35 and rated as always. The consistent ratings for all indicators substantiate the overall results. This means that school heads persistently practice their instructional leadership by enhancing the curriculum to make it relevant and responsive to the learners' needs. The result implies that major ideas that need to be included in the essential curriculum must be understood by school heads. They are knowledgeable enough to assess whether students are learning the body of information, the concepts, and the abilities that are required by the core curriculum. The level of instructional leadership practices of school heads in terms of assessment of learning outcomes. As shown, assisting and ensures utilization of a range of assessment processes for learners performance and assisting teachers in identifying strengths and growth areas through monitoring and observation were rated always and obtained the means of 3.41 respectively. This followed by leading in the evaluation of learners' achievement and utilizes results to improve learning was rated always with mean of 3.41. Taken as a whole, the mean of assessment of learning outcomes was 3.40 and rated as always. The consistent ratings for all indicators substantiate the overall results. This means that school heads effectively and constantly practice their instructional leadership in assessing the learning outcomes through effective assessment and giving technical assistance to the teachers on how to assess the learning outcomes of their learners.

Learning Lags of Learners

The level of learning lags of learners relative to learning skills. As illustrated in the results, ability to absorb written material sufficiently rapidly and at a level of accuracy was rated unsatisfactory with mean of 2.49. This followed by willing and able to hear and actively comprehend verbal messages was rated unsatisfactory with mean of 2.49. Taken as a whole, the mean of learning skills was 2.49 and describe as unsatisfactory. This means that learners were assess to have learning gap in learning skills because of the closure of schools for the past 2 years. The result implies that when learners have low learning skills they have also low performance level and find lack of interest in education. Many of the soft skills have heard that how it can be compared to lifelong learning skills. They relate to how we interact with one another and the outside environment. They are also, in many ways, about developing relationships. In light of this, let's examine the abilities that are useful for all parties—students, teachers, parents, etc.

The level of learning lags of learners relative to numeracy. As explained in the results, Statistics and Probability as a strand is all about developing skills in collecting and organizing data using

charts, tables, and graphs; understanding, analyzing and interpreting data; dealing with uncertainty; and making predictions about outcomes was rated unsatisfactory with mean of 2.23. This followed by geometry as a strand includes properties of two- and three-dimensional figures and their relationships and spatial visualization with mean of 2.18 describe unsatisfactory. Taken as a whole, the mean of numeracy was 2.09 and describe as unsatisfactory. The consistent ratings for all indicators substantiate the overall results. This means that numeracy level of learners was low because of the absence of the face to face classes for the last two years. The result implies that the learners have high learning gap on their literacy level of effective address and recovery of learning is considered to enhance their performance.

The level of learning lags of learners relative to literacy. As shown, Alphabet knowledge has a mean of 2.36 and describe as unsatisfactory. This followed by Fluency and Comprehension which rated unsatisfactory with mean of 2.23. Taken as a whole, the mean of literacy was 2.19 and rated unsatisfactory. This means that learners have high learning gaps when it comes to their literacy skills. Furthermore, unsatisfactory results indicate that learners have low literacy level that includes reading skills, comprehension and communication skills. This implies that learners were lack of literacy foundation skills and need to have in-depth practice and exercises. The achievements are evaluated well in reproducing of knowledge and skills on literacy of learners.

The level of learning lags of learners relative to critical thinking. As shown, the Alphabet knowledge has a mean of 2.36 and describe as unsatisfactory. This followed by Fluency and Comprehension which rated unsatisfactory with mean of 2.23. Taken as a whole, the mean of literacy was 1.66 and rated poor. This means that the learners have high learning gap when it comes to their critical thinking skills. The critical thinking skills were not develop and practice even at home in the past two years. This implies that learner have lack of foundation skills to express themselves and think critically.

Significant difference on the Instructional Leadership of School Heads across Schools

The computed F-value of 12.005 and the p-value of .000 are lower than 0.05 level of significance. There is a significant difference existed on the instructional leadership practices across schools. The result further implies that the level of instructional leadership practiced by school heads differ from one school to another across Lake Sebu 3 District. This means that every school head has different style of addressing the instructional leadership towards learning development and progress.

Conclusions

The instructional leadership practices of school heads manifested very high in guiding, assist and improve the instructional capability. They play a significant role promote teacher capability. The major ideas that need to be included in the essential curriculum must be understood by school heads. They are knowledgeable enough to assess whether students are learning the body of information, the concepts, and the abilities that are required by the core curriculum. The school heads effectively and constantly practice their instructional leadership in assessing the learning outcomes through effective assessment and giving technical assistance to the teachers on how to assess the learning outcomes of their learners. When learners have low learning skills they have also low performance level and find lack of interest in education. The learners have high learning gap on their literacy level of effective address and recovery of learning is considered to enhance their performance.

Recommendations

1. The instructional leadership was very high; however mastery of the quality instructions must be ready.
2. In the learning lags, the recovery strategies must be utilized to help the struggling readers.
3. All learning lags must be given DTR to comply the needed data.
4. Monitoring and assessment of the teachers must be consider.

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