

# THE LEVEL OF PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN TUMPAT DISTRICT, KELANTAN, MALAYSIA

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Received:</b> 25 March 2021  <b>Accepted:</b> 28 April 2021  <b>Published:</b> 30 April 2021</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords:</b>  Instructional leadership;  principals; school-based  management; education  management and  administration</p>	<p>This study aims to identify the level of principals' instructional leadership practices and their relationship with the school-based management in secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan. This study was conducted in the form of survey using a quantitative method with a total of 286 respondents using a questionnaire as a research instrument. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using SPSS software version 25.0. The result of this study showed that the level of principal's instructional leadership practices was high (mean=4.25, s.d.=0.444) where the dimension of forming a positive school environment scored the highest mean (mean=4.30, s.d.=0.459). The level of school-based management was also high (mean=4.24, s.d.=0.427) with the highest score mean dimension was the dimension of planning and evaluation (mean=4.29, s.d.=0.450). The Pearson correlation test showed a significant relationship between the level of principals' instructional leadership practices and school-based management which was at a high correlation level (<math>r=0.895</math>). Therefore, the implication of this study is able to provide an exposure to the Ministry of Education Malaysia who can take initiatives to make improvements in the basic aspects of education and also leadership programs in order to strengthen the leadership practices of principals in schools. This study also has implications to school principals in re-evaluating all their practices and actions in managing schools to further improve the effectiveness and the quality of their administration. In conclusion, this study gives the impression that principals' instructional leadership practices have impacts on school-based management which to some extent can affect the performance of teachers and students as well as the results of the effectiveness of school functions.</p>

## INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of a school organization can be determined through the management role played by the principal to ensure that the schools' goals are achieved. Given that the reforms in education policy implemented by the government is an initiative to improve the operation of the school system which includes the process and outcomes of teaching and learning in educational institutions. However, the implementation of various forms of transformation in education field such as educational policies, policies and innovations today have made the role and responsibilities of the school leaders, namely headmasters and principals to be increasingly challenging in leading schools. Among the issues presented in school nowadays were the ineffectiveness of principal's leadership competencies in managing school, communication problems between principals and teachers, inability in making decisions regarding school administration, lack of instructional autonomy and also the lack of personal and team accountability in school that lead to the overall poor school performance. Moreover, Other issues affecting management practices in schools are also said to be closely related to parental involvement. It is found out that the involvement of parents in school is limited due to the low level of community role in improving the quality of educational services (Ferdinand 2009; World Bank, 2011).

Therefore, the leadership process is believed to be one of the contributing factors in an organization that can determine the success of management led by organizational leaders based on the setting of organizational goals. Muhammad Suhaimi and Mazlan (2013) stated that instructional leadership is one of the more appropriate and relevant leadership styles in school organizational governance because instructional principals have commitments to implement multidimensional reforms. Mohd Yusof et al. (2012) also proved that leaders who adopt an instructional leadership style are not only able to manage the school well but can also improve student's achievement overall. With the three dimensions presented in the instructional leadership which are defining school mission, managing instructional programs and shaping a positive school climate, Mohd Ibrahim, Mohammed Sani, and Rosemawati (2015) believe that instructional leadership plays a very important role in determining the progress and decline of a school and this leadership is very relevant to school organizations in Malaysia to form effective schools (Sazali et al. 2007). Since the leadership of a principal has a great influence on the achievement of a school, the management strategy planned and implemented by the principal should be in line with the mission and vision of the school that has been set.

With this, according to Kaditong, Parcon and Monir (2016), the School-Based Management (SBM) is one of an organization's strategies to improve education by transferring significant decision-making power from state and district offices to schools that motivate principals, teachers, students, and parents to have greater control over the educational process. It has been practiced in schools as one of the management tools that prioritizes decentralization of decision-making power at the school level will lead to more efficient school management involving parents and the school community in the decision-making process. It also allows teachers under the leadership of the principal to have the power to make decisions related to school matters including the management of human resources as well as the welfare of all school staffs. This is because according to Ayob (2005), schools are not only the full responsibility of principals or head teachers, but the joint involvement of teachers, parents and the local community is also

needed to move the organization towards excellence. This is the reason why the school, which consists of principals and teachers, should have a greater accountability and authority to make decisions in school management.

Thus, this study is needed to identify the level of principals' instructional leadership practices according to teachers' perceptions and its relationship with school-based management according to teachers' perceptions in national secondary schools in a district of Malaysia which is in Tumpat in the state of Kelantan. This research is expected to provide a real-world scenario of the implementation of leadership practiced by principals in schools towards the effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) in national secondary schools. It is also needed to obtain more satisfactory answers to questions that arise about leadership and administrative management practices in schools for the purpose of improving ethical leadership practices practiced by principals at schools today. Besides that, this study can also indirectly provide a clear and comprehensive picture to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) on the effectiveness of the model used to study the level of leadership and management in schools. The findings in this study can also be used as a guide for the MOE to detail the role and responsibilities of school administrators, especially principals and headmasters as well as make improvements to existing education policies and policies by cultivating action research conducted by local researchers in education management to identify a variety of appropriate leadership and management methods or strategies to further improve the quality of national education.

On top of that, this study is also necessary to provide a solid explanation of the implementation practice of SBM model in schools and also the effectiveness of instructional leadership style among teachers so that they can understand the administrative pattern of principals in schools and be able to apply the values practiced by principals in teaching practice. them to manage classrooms and pupils in schools. It will also be a beneficial input for principals to know the level of effectiveness of the implementation of SBM in their management and so their leadership skills in managing schools, teachers, staff, resources and students. As a result, principals are able to make improvements in their leadership and management practices so that they can lead the school more excellently.

To be more specific, the researcher wishes to find the answers to the following research questions: 1) What is the level of principals' instructional leadership practices according to teachers' perceptions in national secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan?; 2) What is the level of school-based management according to teachers' perceptions in the national secondary school of Tumpat district, Kelantan?; Is there a relationship between principals' instructional leadership practices according to teachers' perceptions and school-based management according to teachers' perceptions in national secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan?

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

The design of this study was implemented using quantitative methods because the focus of this study is to examine teachers' perceptions of the level of principals' instructional leadership practice and its relationship with school-based management in national secondary schools Tumpat district, Kelantan. This study was conducted using a survey method as a questionnaire is distributed to secondary school teachers in the district of Tumpat, Kelantan.

### Sample

Respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique in which 286 teachers in 10 schools in Tumpat district were given the opportunity to be the study sample that have different backgrounds in terms of age, highest level of education as well as teaching experience in school. A majority of the respondents in this study aged between 41 to 50 years with a total of 145 people (50.7%). As many as 85 teachers (29.7%) were in the age range of 51 to 60 years while the respondents aged 31 to 40 years were 54 people (18.9%). The number of respondents for the age group of 21 to 30 years is the lowest with only 2 teachers which represents 0.7% of the total number of respondents in this study. Meanwhile, the highest level of education for the respondents in this study is at the level of bachelor's degree with a total of 265 teachers which is equivalent to 92.7%, followed by the level of master's degree which recorded a total of 17 respondents (5.9%), and the level of diploma degree with a total of 4 teachers (1.4%) of the total number of respondents. It is noted that none of the respondents in this study had a level of doctorate in their education. Study also shows that 153 respondents, which is equivalent to 53.5% of the total number of respondents have served in school for 16 to 25 years, 68 respondents (23.8%) had served for more than 25 years and a total of 60 respondents (21.0%) worked for 5 to 15 years in school. The remaining 5 respondents (1.7%) have served as teachers in schools for less than 5 years.

### Research Instrument

In this study, a 5 likert scale questionnaire was used as an instrument to answer all the questions studied based on the purpose of the study and the research objectives. Manual questionnaires were distributed to the actual study sample as well as to the pilot study sample. The questionnaire used is divided into three parts, namely the demographics of the respondents (Part A), the level of principals' instructional leadership practice (Part B) and the level of school-based management (Part C) with a total of 51 items altogether. All these items were adapted and modified from existing instruments such as Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale developed by Hallinger (2007) for principals' instructional leadership items whereas items for school-based management were constructed from several past studies and were adapted according to the context of school management in Malaysia by Gamage and Zajda (2005), Julaihi Bujang (1999), McEwan (2002) and Walker (2000).

## Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software version 25.0. The results of data analysis are described in the form of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation for descriptive analysis. As for the inferential analysis in this study, a Pearson correlation test was also used by researcher to study the relationship between principals' instructional leadership practices and school-based management which are the variables in this study.

## RESULTS

### Level of principal's instructional leadership practices

The first objective of this study is to identify the level of principals' instructional leadership practices according to the teachers' perceptions in national secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan. Mean and standard deviation values of the level of instructional leadership practices of principals are presented in Table 1. Based on Table 1 below, the results show that the practices of instructional leadership among principals in national secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan based on teachers' perceptions is at a high level where all the dimensions under this leadership which are defining school mission, managing instructional programs and shaping a positive school climate have achieved a high mean score level (mean=4.25, s.d.=0.444). The dimension that recorded the highest mean value was the dimension of shaping a positive school climate (mean=4.30, s.d.=0.459) whereas the dimension of defining the school mission' obtained the second highest mean score (mean=4.22, s.d.=0.495) and the dimension of managing instructional programs is the dimension with the lowest mean score among the three dimensions in instructional leadership (mean=4.20, s.d.=0.512). With this, it can be concluded that the principals in Tumpat district national secondary schools practice a high level of instructional leadership where they are seen to focus more on the dimension of shaping a positive school climate compared to other dimensions in governing schools.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the level of instructional leadership practices of principals**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Level</b>
Defining School Mission	4.22	.495	High
Managing Instructional Programs	4.20	.512	High
Shaping a Positive School Climate	4.30	.459	High
<b>All dimensions</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>.444</b>	<b>High</b>

## Level of school-based management

The second objective of this study is to identify the level of school-based management according to the teachers' perceptions in national secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan. Mean and standard deviation values of the level of school-based management are presented in Table 2. Based on Table 2, the results below show that the four dimensions under the level of school-based management namely decentralization, autonomy, collaboration as well as planning and evaluation recorded a high mean score level between 4.20 to 4.29. This leads to the overall mean score which is also at a high level with a value (mean=4.24, s.d.=0.427). The dimension that obtained the highest mean score for the school-based management level was the dimension of planning and evaluation with a value (mean=4.29, s.d.=0.450) followed by the dimension of collaboration with a value (mean=4.24, s.d.= 0.483) and the dimension of decentralization with (mean=4.21, s.d.=0.445). While the 'Autonomy' dimension obtained the lowest mean score for this dimension with a value (mean=4.20, s.d.=0.478). This study clearly found that principals in national secondary schools in Tumpat district prioritize the aspects of planning and evaluation compared to the aspects of decentralization, the aspect of autonomy and the aspect of collaboration in managing the school.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the level of school-based management**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Level</b>
Decentralization	4.21	.445	High
Autonomy	4.20	.478	High
Collaboration	4.24	.483	High
Planning and Evaluation	4.29	.450	High
<b>All dimensions</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>.427</b>	<b>High</b>

## Relationship Between Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices and School-Based Management

The third objective of this study is to determine the relationship between principals' instructional leadership practices and school-based management according to the teachers' perceptions in national secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan. The results of Pearson test are shown as below in Table 3. Based on Table 3, the study found that there is a significant relationship between principals' instructional leadership practices with school-based management with a value of  $r=0.895$  and  $\text{sig}=.000$ , ( $p < .05$ ). This clearly indicates that the strength of the relationship between these two variables is strong positive.

**Table 3. Inferential statistics of the relationship between principals' instructional leadership practices and school-based management**

		<b>Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices</b>	<b>School-Based Management</b>
<b>Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices</b>	Correlation Pearson	1	.895***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	286	286
<b>School-Based Management</b>	Correlation Pearson	.895***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	286	286

\*\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be explained that the instructional leadership practices among principals in 10 national secondary schools in the district of Tumpat, Kelantan are at a high level. Studies have proven that principals have adopted all the dimensions of instructional leadership in schools, namely from the aspect of the dimensions of defining the school's mission, managing instructional programs and shaping a positive school climate. This is because the study found that each dimension related to the level of instructional leadership practice of principals has a high mean score as shown in Table 1. This clearly indicates that teachers from the national secondary school in Tumpat district, Kelantan which were also the respondents for this study have a good perception of the instructional leadership brought by their principal in school. The findings of Jameela and Jainabee (2011) also show that principals who practice a high level of instructional leadership in all dimensions in the school throughout its administration are able to achieve school mission, manage instructional programs well and create a friendly and cooperative school environment among school people.

The dimension that obtained the highest mean level is the dimension of shaping a positive school climate where principals always motivate teachers, enhance the professional development of teachers while creating a harmonious school atmosphere as a result of friendly relationships among school people consisting of students, teachers, staff as well as administrators. The analysis of findings in this study also explains that principals always ensure that the teaching and learning process is in line with school goals while ensuring curriculum requirements are met to produce an effective and dynamic teaching and learning environment. This study supports the results of Dorina (2012) which through her study, she found that the role of headmasters or school principals is the most important dimension in determining the school climate to make sure of school effectiveness. Thus, it is clearly proven that the school environment is one of the important factors that can influence the success of the school in efforts to improve the quality of education.

Meanwhile, respondents have also given a positive perception of the level of school-based management. This statement can be evidenced by the results of the analysis of the questionnaire which showed that the mean scale for all items related to the level of school-based management is high in terms of decentralization, collaboration, autonomy as well as planning and evaluation. This clearly shows that the principals in the national secondary schools in Tumpat district practice the concept of school-based management well in their administration. Among the aspects emphasized by principals in this concept in schools is the planning and evaluation dimension which recorded the highest mean score among all dimensions under school-based management. It is clear that principals use examination results as indicators to assess students 'progress in school and evaluate teachers' performance each year. This illustrates that principals attach importance to the evaluation aspect to find out the extent to which school goals have been achieved. A study conducted by Reda (2015) has also proven that school-based management can contribute to the achievement of decision-making quality in Egyptian public secondary schools through the participation of teachers and employees in the decision-making process and also improving the quality of decision-making in managing schools together.

On the other hand, the study found that principals also encourage discussion among teachers to plan and determine school management strategies to improve school performance and achievement while motivating teachers to work together to achieve school goals. In addition, teachers are also given the authority by the principal to carry out their trust related to their field of work as educators in addition to involving teachers and parents in the decision-making process related to school matters. These actions of principals indicate that they are leaders who always takes into account the needs of school people, school goal factors and also school environment factors in order to contribute to the desired results in line with the vision and mission of the school in its management. Thus, this study supports the study of Ko, Cheng and Lee (2016) that also showed positive effects of school-based management in terms of school management, teacher professional development and student learning due to significant factors of strong leadership, comprehensive continuous professional development and a positive and collaborative school climate.

Based on the results of Pearson correlation test analysis as in Table 3, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the principals' instructional leadership practices with school-based management according to teachers' perceptions in national secondary schools in Tumpat district, Kelantan. Respondents have also shown a positive perception of the leadership and management of the principal in administering the school. The study has also found that there is a strong correlation between these two variables which can conclude that all the instructional leadership practices of principals in national secondary schools in Tumpat district are related to the elements stated in school-based management. This study also clearly proves that the implementation of school-based management functions requires the leadership of principals as school leaders in order to increase the effectiveness and strengthen management practices in schools in order to achieve school goals. As stated by the elements under instructional leadership, the principal needs to perform functions that outline his role as head leader in the school that involve not only the management of students and teachers, but also the management of finances, human resources and even facilities in the school.



This is important to ensure that the school environment is conducive and comfortable for the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. A study by Erik (2013) conducted in upper secondary schools in Sweden which surveyed the performance of principals' instructional leadership tasks on school-based management practices in schools has shown that the level of administrative task performance among 234 principals is at a high level because the task practices emphasized in instructional leadership are relevant to the elements outlined in the school-based management. The emphasis on instructional leadership in the context of decentralization and partial decentralization encourages principals to have greater control over how to lead and manage their schools (Bush and Glover 2014).

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, this study has examined the principals' instructional leadership practices and its relationship with school-based management according to teachers' perceptions in schools. A total of 286 teachers were involved as respondents in this survey study. The principals' instructional leadership practices in performing their functions and roles in schools have helped in the effectiveness and efficiency of school-based management to realize the mission, vision and goals of the organization in the national secondary school in Tumpat district, Kelantan. This clearly indicates that the effectiveness of instructional leadership depends on the ability of the principal to implement this leadership as best as possible and is evaluated through the overall performance of the school's excellence. The implications of the study on the policy is a discussion on the measures recommended to be taken by stakeholders and those directly involved such as the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), State Education Department (JPN) and District Education Office (PPD) to improve or make changes to policies in the field of school management and administration. Based on the findings of this study, researchers found that principals in schools still have some aspects of leadership and management that need to be improved to ensure schools can be administered more effectively and give a positive impact not only to the interests of the organization but in meeting the needs of school staff consisting of administrators, seniors, staff, teachers and also students. Thus, this study is also conducted to improve the quality of leadership among principals in schools as well as improve school-based management practices to be more dynamic because these two aspects are key determinants of educational outcomes in schools. As an instructional leader, the principal must be wise in planning, implementing and evaluating all school programs held in order to identify the effectiveness of the program to the interests of his school people who in turn can improve all weaknesses in his organization for better results in future. Therefore, school principals need to be proactive and dynamic continuously in playing their role in line as a school leader with the current needs and have high skills and expertise especially in planning, managing and evaluating all actions to make sure that school management under his leadership can lead to a positive impact on overall school management and administration towards the achievement of school goals.

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