

The empowerment of principals as instructional leaders in PNG Schools in the 21st Century

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Introduction

Principals,

- + Can and do make a difference to teachers and to students, through their skills as instructional leaders.
- + In PNG, the context of initiatives designed to increase school effectiveness has been on the principalship or school leadership.
- + Trend is move from transactional leadership into transformational leadership then into instructional leadership.

Now, the question

- + of what should be done for school leaders to make a difference in the quality of schooling is the focus of this paper.
- + It is clear from literature that no one factor accounts for effectiveness than the role that school leaders play in performing their instructional leadership role.

What factors would make a difference?

- + Sense of mission;
- + High expectations;
- + Feedback on academic performance;
- + Positive motivational strategies based on leadership and human relations skills facilitating collaboration, communication, influence and professionalism;
- + Conscious attention to a positive, safe, ordered community climate;
- + Teachers taking responsibility, and principals modelling risk taking;
- + Administrative leadership in developing consistent policies in delegation and empowering others;
- + Parental and community involvement;
- + System support and Innovativeness of schools;
- + Academic focus aimed at promoting academic excellence

Instructional leadership

Associated with roles or tasks which include:

- + Framing and communicating school goals;
- + Establishing expectations and standards;
- + Coordinating the curriculum; supervising and evaluating instruction;
- + Promoting student opportunities to learn and
- + Enhancing professional development

Exercised :

- + Directly through clinical supervision type approaches; and
- + Indirectly through policy formulation and the control of work structure under which teachers instruct
- + (Sergiovanni, 1991, Starrat, 1993; Leithwood et al., 1994; Rosenblum et al., 1994; Dinham et al., 1995; Mulford, 1996; Lahui-Ako, 2001; Hattie, 2015; Guleria, 2017; Milley; 2016; Baldanza, 2018)

Lahui-Ako's Case Study on Instructional Leadership in PNG (Lahui-Ako, 1997)

The conceptual framework

- + Based on the argument that the difference between success or failure of the school, was the availability of the principal to lead the staff in planning, implementing and evaluating improvements in the school's curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs.
- + Principals operate in a multi-level world within and outside of the school.

The analytical model used asserted that

- + The principal's behaviour affected two fundamental aspects of the school's social organisation: 1. Learning climate and 2. Instructional organisation.
- + These contexts shape teachers' behaviour and students' learning experiences.
- + At the same time, the principal's own leadership actions are shaped by factors external to the school – personal, community, provincial, and national influences.

Key Findings: Principals did,

Engage in actions consistent with Instructional Leadership

- + But assumed a lesser degree of responsibility than was desirable and expected by themselves and the teachers.
- + They also shared instructional leadership roles with senior teachers.
- + However, the issue was not who performed the tasks but rather the tasks were performed.

Reasons why they engaged:

- + 1. Commitment to academic excellence, however, academic goals developed were mainly aimed at students passing national examinations.
- + Coaching through remediation classes was the emphasis.
- + Principals also lacked skills in needs analysis when developing academic goals.

Key Findings:

- + 2. there were inconsistencies arising from the demands placed on certain administrative procedures which override attention given to instructional leadership tasks.
- + 3. Three functions (managing the curriculum and instruction; observing and giving feedback to teachers and assessing the instructional programs) were unsatisfactorily performed.

+ Main setback for 2 and 3, the lack of appropriate professional development training.

Key Findings:

- + 4. More emphasis placed on their administrative role found principals not having time on their hands to deal with instructional leadership tasks.
- + The issue of responsibility and accountability came into question

+ 5. Their own involvement in the actual teaching of students took them away from their instructional leadership tasks.

What are the implications for theory & practice

Theory

- + 1. The changing role of the school principal. It is expanding and becoming more demanding due to the emergence of a new educational environment.
- + 2. The emphasis placed on shared instructional leadership, however, Principals are still held responsible and are accountable for seeing that support, direction and guidance are given to senior teachers.

Theory

- + Principals are responsible for the standard of instruction and monitors delegation to supervise the instructional process.
- + Monitors what is happening and participates in setting directions for the delegated roles.
- + Principals, devote resources to nurture teachers, communicate expectations, give technical and personal support, and supervise, recognize and publicly reward high quality teaching and leadership performances of teachers.

Implications

Practice

- + 1. The nature of school leadership is undergoing significant change. Principals need new kinds of knowledge, attitudes and skills to perform their work effectively and efficiently.
- + The current changes facing the National Education system with the introduction of the PNG Vision 2050 justifies the need for teacher education providers to re-examine the appropriateness, relevancy and applicability of the training and preparation they provide.

Practice

- + For the NDOE, competencies in leadership and organizational knowledge and skills among other appropriate qualities should be included in the criteria for selection and promotion of senior teachers to principal positions.
- + A system of mentoring could become mandatory as a pre-requisite for preparing potential candidates for the role of principal in PNG schools.

A paradigm shift in Training of Principals

- + An imminent paradigm shift in the training of principals should be in **goals** (towards adequate education for all children) as well as **process** (towards a collaborative rather than bureaucratic instructional system).
- + Need to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- + A new principal training delivery system be established which include field-based experience as well as provision of internship programs.
- + The intern as an outsider questions and provides new opinions, this in turn provides the mentor with a fresh look at “business as usual” to reflect on their own practice and explain the assumptions that guide their decisions.
- + Such paradigm shift could provide the required changes expected of an effective and efficient principal
- + (Lahui-Ako, 2001; ; Hattie, 2015; Guleria, 2017; Milley; 2016; Baldanza, 2018).

Therefore, the current trend needs to change:

- + PNG schools need principals with a vision and with leadership and organisational knowledge and skills, including a knowledge of change and innovation, the ability to initiate, invent and adapt and a sense of direction,
- + as well as the skills to motivate and provide appropriate leadership styles to meet the challenges and demands of the changing educational environment due to globalization.
- + Teacher Education providers need to re-examine their programs for principal or school leadership training by introducing new principal training delivery systems which include field-based experience as well as the provision of an internship program for aspiring principals
- + NDOE - called upon to provide financial support to teacher education providers in order for them to produce effective and efficient school leaders of the 21st Century.

In conclusion, if the recommendations are addressed, this will meet the

- + Aspirations expressed in the *PNG Vision 2050* and the *National Educational Plan 2015-2019 Quality Education for all* with the aim to transform mindsets and promote lifelong learning.
- + Trend now is to empower PNG principals in becoming instructional leaders by changing their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours to adopt 21st Century transformational & instructional leadership skills for overall effectiveness in carrying out their duties and responsibilities as principals.



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THANK YOU VERY MUCH....