

## **A STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF BASIC EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

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### **Abstract**

The main aim of this study is to study instructional leadership practices of the Basic Education High School Principals in Myawaddy Township, Kayin State. The specific aims of this study are (1) to study the instructional leadership practices of the principals in creating an effective learning environment, (2) to investigate the instructional leadership practices of the principals in improving classroom instruction, (3) to examine the instructional leadership practices of the principals for the professional development of the teachers, (4) to study the variations of principals' instructional leadership practices related to their personal factors, and (5) to find out the variations of principals' instructional leadership practices among selected schools.

Quantitative and Qualitative methods were used. Two sets of questionnaire were used to collect the required data, one for the teachers and one for the principals. The questionnaires were developed by the researcher based on the literature review. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.95 for the questionnaire to explore the level of performance of instructional leadership practices of Basic Education High School Principals rated by teachers. Five principals and two hundred and nine teachers in Myawaddy Township, Kayin State were selected as the participants for this study.

Instructional leadership practices of Basic Education High School Principals in this study were divided into three main areas (1) creating an effective learning environment, (2) improving classroom instruction and (3) teachers' professional development. Principals' performances were rated at moderately high level in all areas of instructional leadership practices. From the open-ended questions answered by the principals themselves, it was found that their practices were weak in the areas of improving classroom instruction and teachers' professional development. Statistically significant differences were found between the principals according to the subjects they can teach well. There were also significant differences of the principals' performance among the schools.

**Keyword:** Instructional Leadership

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## **Introduction**

The technical core of the schools is the teaching and learning process that all other activities are secondary to this basic goal. Teaching and learning activities are complex processes that need careful attention and study.

The success or failure of the school's instructional program depends largely on how the principal conducts school activities for improvement of teaching and learning situations. As a result, leading instructional efforts in schools has evolved into a primary role for school principals. Therefore, this study investigated the instructional leadership practices of the Basic Education High School Principals.

### **Aims of the Study**

The main aim of this study is

- To study the instructional leadership practices of Basic Education High School Principals in Myawady Township, Kayin State.

The specific aims are:

- To study the instructional leadership practices of the principals in creating an effective learning environment;
- To investigate the instructional leadership practices of the principals in improving classroom instruction;
- To examine the instructional leadership practices of the principals for the professional development of the teachers;
- To study the variations of principals' instructional leadership practices related to principal's personal factors and
- To find out the variations of principals' instructional leadership practices among selected schools.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are as follows.

- To what extent do the principals perform the instructional leadership practices in creating an effective learning environment?

- To what extent do the principals perform the instructional leadership practices in improving classroom instruction?
- To what extent do the principals perform the instructional leadership practices for the professional development of the teachers?
- Are there any significant differences in principals' instructional leadership practices related to principal's personal factors?
- Are there any significant differences in principals' instructional leadership practices among selected schools?

### **Theoretical Framework**

A school principal promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth (Hoy & Hoy, 2006). There are three areas of instructional leadership practices which are critical for the principals to perform.

### **Creating an Effective Learning Environment**

For improving the instructional program for achieving high academic standards among teachers and students, the school principal is responsible for creating an effective and efficient learning environment.

### ***Managing people and resources***

One of the school principal's responsibilities is to enhance the effectiveness of the learning environment in the school by managing the resources (people, time, and finance, materials) strategically. Some of the important tasks for managing the faculty members and school resources strategically are noted as follows.

Tasks to be implemented before the opening of the school are to inspect, renovate and maintain school plants and facilities, to make a plan for providing necessary instructional resources, to manage student registration, to organize subject-wise committees and education committee, to allocate teaching subjects to the teachers according to their specialized subjects, to construct the academic timetable so that the teacher can start teaching at the first opening day of the school, to develop the policies and perform the

activities for the students to learn in a peaceful, safe and secure environment, to arrange and provide resources for the effective use of multimedia classroom and school library, to provide necessary equipment and facilities for the science laboratory, to make a plan for the achievement of annual learning goals, school improvement goals and other targets.

Tasks to be implemented during the school week are to hold the regular assembly for informing the teachers and students of their routine duties and activities, to organize the activities of all-round development of the students, to supervise and record the activities of school council in keeping the well-being of school environment, to check the accomplishment of the activities to be performed during the school week regularly, to organize the activities for the special programs in school calendar.

### ***Creating a positive school climate***

A sustainable, positive school climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe. In order to fulfill this need, the school principal must nurture positive adult-adult relationships, positive adult-student and student-student relationships, shared decision-making, the value of diversity, cooperative learning, conflict-prevention, mutual support and ongoing communication, school-community involvement, staff morale and connectedness (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009).

### **Improving Classroom Instruction**

The school principal can improve classroom instruction by observing classrooms, using achievement data, and considering samples of student work and the human relation approaches to use to increase reflection, problem solving and improved practice on the part of teachers and the structures and formats of various ways to work individually or in groups with teachers (Glickman, 2002).

### ***Observing Classroom Instruction***

The principal should examine the various teaching styles, particular learning goals, and the context of a particular teacher with his or her class of

students in a specific subject or field of learning such as planning and preparation of the lesson, the classroom environment and the instruction.

In planning and preparation of the lessons of the teachers, the instructional leader should observe demonstration of knowledge of content and pedagogy, demonstration of knowledge of students, setting instructional outcomes, demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, designing student assessments.

In observing the classroom environment, the principal should observe creating an environment of respect and rapport, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior and organizing physical space.

In observing instruction, the principal should observe communication with students, using question and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, using assessment in instruction, demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness (Danielson, 2013).

The focus of classroom instruction usually involves student achievement as measured by standardized tests but larger sets of assessments related to what students can do with their learning in authentic settings. In such classroom, there is a need to focus ongoing observations on actual student work.

A focus on how students have performed or scored on past tests, how to diagnose their curriculum performance, and how to plan changes in the duration, content, and methods of classroom instruction are targets for classroom improvement (Glickman, 2002).

### ***Assisting Classroom Instruction***

The principal should conduct ***clinical supervision*** which focuses on improving teaching performance by analyzing teaching through sequential steps. The supervisory process is centered primarily on the analysis of instruction. The teachers should learn specific intellectual and behavioral skills to improve instruction. The principals should take an ***inquiry approach*** to talk with teachers. This approach includes behavior whose purpose is to learn what others think, know, want, or feel.

Supervisors should take responsibility for helping the teachers to develop skills for analyzing the instructional process based on systematic data. Supervisors should emphasize what and how the teacher teaches to improve instruction. Planning and analysis should center on making and testing instructional hypotheses based on observational evidence. Conferences should deal with a few instructional issues that are important, relevant to the teacher and amenable to change. ***Making suggestions***, proactively giving advice for the improvement of instruction is one central and powerful element of principals' verbal interaction with which teachers strongly enhance teachers' reflection and reflectively inform instructional behavior. By visiting classrooms and subsequently ***giving feedback*** to teachers, the principals should engage in thoughtful discourse with the teacher about what was observed.

The feedback conference should concentrate on constructive analysis. Supervision is a dynamic process of give-and-take in which supervisors and teachers are colleagues in search of mutual educational understanding. Individual teachers have both the freedom and the responsibility to initiate issues, analyze and improve their own teaching style, and develop personal teaching styles (Weller, 1977 as cited in Hopkins and Moore, 1994).

The principals should encourage ***peer coaching*** to reflect on current practices: expand, refine and build new skills, share ideas, teach one another (Robbins, 1991). Fellow teachers, as each other's colleagues, can conduct cycles of clinical supervision with each other along with the overall coordination of a facilitator (Glickman, 2002). The conversation will provide both suggestions about what the teacher is doing well and should continue to do, ideas and critiques about teacher inconsistencies and areas for change.

***The study groups*** must focus on improvements to learning in their own classrooms and follow or modify a generic action research sequence. To be effective, each action research team should support a common focus on improvements in certain areas of standards and achievements, such as writing, critical thinking skills, and so on. Plans of action should include how to assist each other and what information to collect on student performance that would demonstrate concrete evidence of progress.

The principals should *solicit teacher's advice and opinions* about how to improve classroom instruction which enhance their instructional leadership role in the school.

### **Teachers' Professional Development**

The teacher is the central figure in school effectiveness and improvement. Therefore, the development of the staff is perceived to be the best approach for leading the school towards better achievement. Principals should use the following strategies to promote teachers' professional growth.

#### ***Emphasizing the study of teaching and learning***

The principals should inform faculty members of current trends and issues to foster innovation in teaching (methods, materials, technology) and increase student learning. The principals should distribute educational journal articles containing information relevant to classroom teaching and the specific needs and interests of teachers. They also should provide the teachers with information about workshops, seminars, and conferences related to instruction and encourage them to attend.

#### ***Supporting collaboration efforts among educators***

Principals should support the development of formal collaborative structures among teachers through the use of inter- and intradepartmental and grade-level structures, teacher-collaborative structures to work together regularly on instructional issues. They should provide planning time as one major way to encourage the development of formal instructional and curricular collaboration among teachers. They also should encourage teachers to use informal collaboration arrangements.

#### ***Developing coaching relationships among educators***

Principals should actively encourage teachers to visit the classrooms of exemplary teachers, asked exemplary teachers to serve as models to other teachers, and encouraged teachers to make presentations within their schools and district and at professional conferences. For purposes of professional growth, the principals should encourage teachers to visit other schools to observe classrooms and programs.

### ***Using Inquiry to Drive Staff Development***

An essential part of staff development is training in collection and analysis of data about teachers' training. The principals should operate staff development as a large-scale action research project.

### ***Providing Resources to Support Growth and Improvement***

The principals should develop faculty by providing essential resources that greatly enhance teachers' growth, classroom teaching, and student learning. In order to ensure the effective implementation of high-quality professional development, the principal must allocate and provide resources.

### ***Principal Modeling***

The principals, on occasion, should actually teach during classroom visits in order to model good instruction. Such modeling will not be considered intrusive when the principals cultivate respectful and trusting relationships with teachers (Blasé and Blasé, 2004).

### ***Applying the principles of adult growth, learning, and development***

The principals must understand that teachers are the adult learners who need to be self-direct, free and autonomous in their own learning. With the understanding of self-directed learning, teachers should be allowed to involve in planning their own professional development. The teachers should be allowed to determine what direction their professional development will take (Trotter, 2006).

Professional development must strive to help teachers learn to talk about their practice and experiences. It must enable teachers to share their knowledge of experience with one another. Then, these experiences must be effectively generalized into applicable concepts for other teachers (Riley & Roach, 2006).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**(1) Instructional leadership** is divided into two as broad and narrow aspects. In narrow terms, instructional leadership is defined as a function within management and actions directly related with teaching and learning. In broader aspects, instructional leadership is stated as the process of performing all leadership activities that may affect learning at school (Yang, 1996).

- (2) **Creating an effective learning environment** refers to establishing physical, social and emotional learning environments that can sustain a strong culture of teaching and learning.
- (3) **Managing people and resources** refers managing the resources (people, time, and finance, materials) strategically so as to obtain the optimal learning opportunities for the teachers and the students.
- (4) **Creating a positive school climate** refers to establishing a sustainable, positive social climate in the school fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive and satisfying life in a democratic society (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009).
- (5) **Observing Classroom Instruction** refers to observing many aspects of classroom teaching and learning such as teacher plans and behaviors, teacher-student interactions, student achievement, test score data and actual samples of student performances and achievements, and teaching demonstrations (Good & Brophy, 2000 as cited in Glickman, 2002).
- (6) **Assisting classroom instruction** refers to giving assistance to teachers' instruction being cast as coaching, reflection, collegial investigation, study teams, explorations into uncertain matters, and problem solving (Blasé & Blasé, 2004).
- (7) **Clinical Supervision** is supervision that focuses on improvement of teaching performance by analyzing teaching through a series of five sequential steps. They are pre-conference with teacher, observation, analysis and strategy, post observation conference and critique (Hopkins & Moore, 1994).
- (8) **Peer coaching** is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices: expand, refine and build new skills, share ideas, teach one another, conduct classroom research or solve problems in the workplace (Robbins, 1991).
- (9) **Professional development** refers to all the activities aimed at empowering an educator to perform his/her duties better or more efficiently and effectively towards achieving enhanced learner performance (Maponya, 2015).

## Operational Definition

**Instructional leadership practices** refer to the activities for improving teaching and learning situations in the areas of creating an effective learning environment, improving classroom instruction and professional development of the teachers.

## Methodology

### Research Method

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to examine the instructional leadership practices of the principals in Myawaddy Township, Kayin State.

### Sample

This study included all teachers and the principals from five Basic Education High Schools in Myawaddy Township.

**Table 3.1:** Participants of Basic Education High Schools in Myawaddy Township

No.	Basic Education High Schools	No. of Principals	No. of Teachers
1.	School A	1	60
2.	School B	1	30
3.	School C	1	42
4.	School D	1	30
5.	School E	1	47
Basic Education High Schools		5	209

### Instrumentation

The questionnaire was composed of 55 items which are the principals' instructional leadership practices: 24 items were related to *creating an effective learning environment*, 20 items were related to *improving classroom instruction*, 11 items were related to *professional development of the teachers*.

In the principals' questionnaire, gender, academic qualification, years of experience in education, years of experience as a principal, the subjects that the principals can teach well were asked for the demographic data of the

principals. Open-ended questionnaires were asked the current instructional leadership practices of the principals.

### Procedure

First of all, the relevant literature was reviewed. In order to acquire the required data, the instrument for instructional leadership practices of the principals was constructed under the guidance of the supervisor. The expert validity was asked from 8 expert educators from the Department of Educational Theory from Yangon University of Education. The pilot test was carried out at No. 2, Basic Education High School, Hlaing Thar Yar. After that, the field test was conducted in five Basic Education High Schools.

### Analysis of Data

To analyze the quantitative data, descriptive analysis, the independent samples *t* test, and One-Way ANOVA were used. For qualitative study, the open-ended questions were categorized and analyzed according to the three areas of instructional leadership.

## Findings

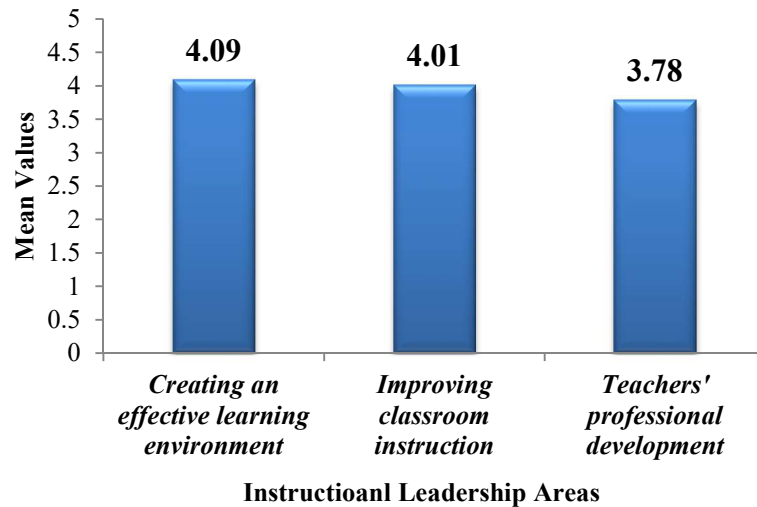
### Quantitative Findings of the Instructional Leadership Practices of Basic Education High School Principals

**Table 1:** Mean Values and Standard Deviations of the Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices

No.	Instructional Leadership Practices Areas	Mean	SD	Level of Performance
1.	Creating an Effective Learning Environment	4.09	.67	Moderately High
2.	Improving Classroom Instruction	4.01	.79	Moderately High
3.	Teachers' Professional Development	3.78	.67	Moderately High
<b>Instructional Leadership Practices</b>		<b>3.96</b>	<b>.71</b>	<b>Moderately High</b>

1.00-1.49= Very Low      1.50-2.49=Moderately Low      2.50-3.49=Satisfactory  
3.50-4.49=Moderately High      4.50-5.00= Very High

According to table 1, the instructional leadership practices of the principals of Basic Education High School in Myawaddy Township were at moderately high level ( $M=3.96$ ).



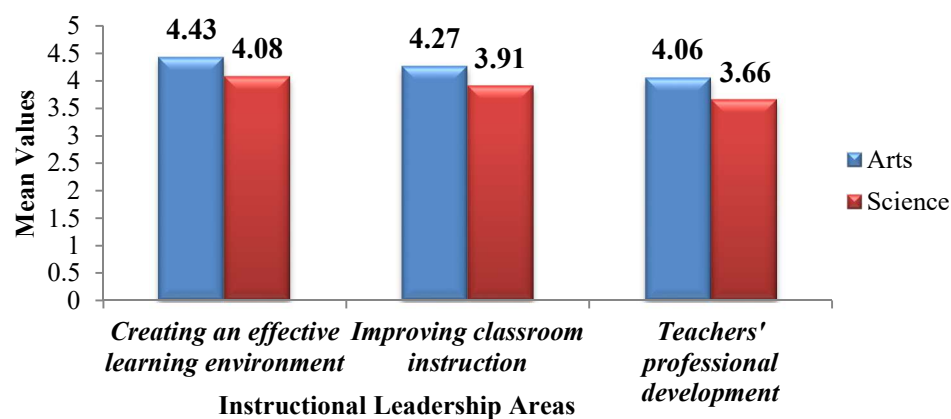
**Figure 1:** Instructional Leadership Practices of the Principals

**Table 3:** Independent Samples *t* Test Results of Instructional Leadership Practices of the Principals Grouped by the Subjects the Principals Can Teach Well

Instructional Leadership Practices Area	Teaching Subjects	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Creating an Effective Learning Environment	arts	62	4.43	.56	3.38	207	.001**
	science	147	4.08	.73			
Improving Classroom Instruction	arts	62	4.27	.65	2.97	207	.003**
	science	147	3.91	.86			
Teachers' Professional Development	arts	62	4.06	.65	3.66	150.13	.000** *
	science	147	3.66	.86			

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , *ns*=not significant

According to Table 3, there were significant differences in all areas of instructional leadership practices according to the subjects they can teach well. The group of principals who can teach arts subjects performs better than the group of principals who can teach science subjects very well ( $p < 0.001$ ).



**Figure 2:** Comparisons of Instructional Leadership Practices Grouped by the Subjects the Principals Can Teach Well

**Table 4:** Mean Values and Standard Deviations of the Areas of Instructional Leadership Practices of the Principals Grouped by Schools

Instructional Leadership Practices Areas	Schools	N	Mean	SD
Creating an Effective Learning Environment	A	60	4.43	.55
	B	30	3.87	.85
	C	42	3.94	.86
	D	30	4.15	.60
	E	47	4.30	.52
Improving Classroom Instruction	A	60	4.27	.64
	B	30	3.38	.89
	C	42	3.82	.90
	D	30	3.95	.83
	E	47	4.33	.57
Teachers' Professional Development	A	60	4.06	.64
	B	30	3.34	.86
	C	42	3.57	.99
	D	30	3.61	.81
	E	47	3.99	.66

Statistically significant differences were found in all areas of instructional leadership practices. For creating an effective learning environment,  $F(4,204) = 5.50$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . For improving classroom instruction,  $F(4,204) = 9.90$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . For teachers' professional development,  $F(4,204) = 6.23$ ,  $p < 0.001$  among five schools.

**Table 5:** One-Way ANOVA Results of Variance Summary Table for Instructional Leadership Practices of the Principals Grouped by Schools

<b>Instructional Leadership Practices Areas</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Creating an Effective Learning Environment					
Between Groups	9.89	4	2.47	5.50	.000*
Within Groups	91.71	204	.45		
Total	101.59	208			
Improving Classroom Instruction					
Between Groups	22.38	4	5.59	9.90	.000*
Within Groups	115.29	204	.57		
Total	137.65	208			
Teachers' Professional Development					
Between Groups	15.34	4	3.84	6.23	.000*
Within Groups	125.52	204	.62		
Total	140.86	208			

**Table 6:** Tukey HSD Results Showing Multiple Comparison of Instructional Leadership Practices of the Principals in the Area of Creating an Effective Learning Environment Grouped by Schools

Instructional Leadership Practices Area	(I) school	(J) school	Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Creating an Effective Learning Environment	A	B	.57*	.15	.002*	.15	.98
		C	.49*	.14	.003*	.12	.86
		D	.28	.15	.326	-.13	.70
		E	.14	.13	.838	-.22	.49

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 7:** Tukey HSD Results Showing Multiple Comparison of Instructional Leadership Practices of the Principals in the Area of Improving Classroom Instruction Grouped by Schools

Instructional Leadership Practices Area	(I) school	(J) school	Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Improving Classroom Instruction	A	B	.89*	.17	.000*	.43	1.35
		C	.45*	.15	.025*	.04	.87
	B	D	-.57*	.19	.032*	-1.10	-.03
		E	-.95*	.18	.000*	-1.43	-.46
	C	E	-.51*	.16	.014*	-.95	-.07

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

According to Table 7, Post Hoc Tukey HSD Test indicates that school A's principal and school B's principal differed significantly in their instructional leadership practices of improving classroom instruction ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 1.16$ ). Similarly, the principal of school A and the principal of school C differed significantly in their instructional leadership practices of improving classroom instruction ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 0.58$ ). Also, the principal of school B and the principal of school D differed significantly in their instructional leadership practices of improving classroom instruction ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 0.66$ ). Similarly, school B's principal and school E's differed

significantly in their instructional leadership practices of improving classroom instruction ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 1.30$ ).

Moreover, the principal of school C and the principal of school E differed significantly in their instructional leadership practices of improving classroom instruction ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 0.69$ ).

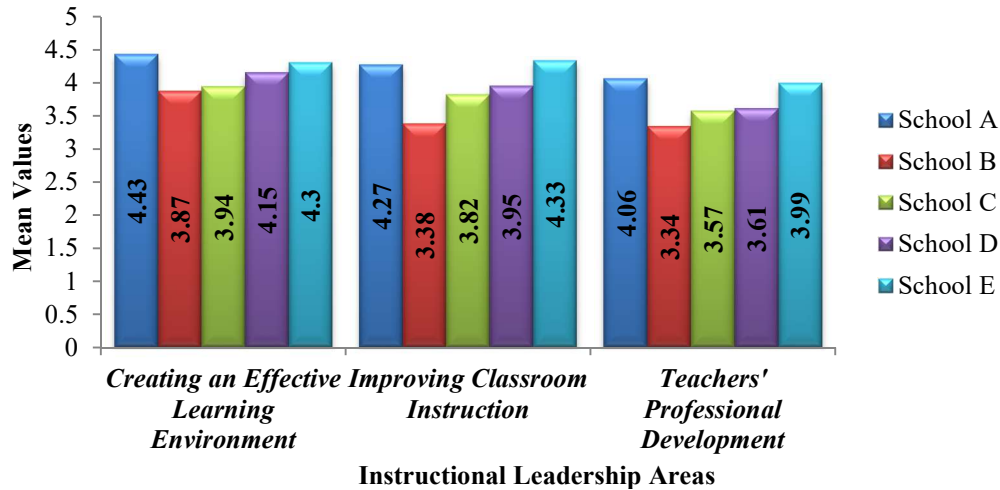
**Table 8:** Tukey HSD Results Showing Multiple Comparison of Instructional Leadership Practices of the Principals in the Area of Teachers' Professional Development Grouped by Schools

Instructional Leadership Practices Area	(I) school	(J) school	Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Teachers' Professional Development	A	B	.73*	.18	.000*	.24	1.21
		C	.49*	.16	.018*	.06	.92
	B	E	-.65*	.18	.005*	-1.15	-.14

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

According to Table 8, Post Hoc Tukey HSD Test indicates that the principal of school A and the principal of school B differed significantly in their instructional leadership practices of teachers' professional development ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 0.96$ ). Similarly, the principal of school A and the principal of school C differed significantly in their instructional leadership practices of teachers' professional development ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 0.60$ ).

Moreover, the principal of school B and the principal of school E differed significantly in their instructional leadership practices of teachers' professional development ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 0.86$ ).



**Figure 4.4:** Comparisons of Instructional Leadership Practices Grouped by Schools

### Qualitative Findings of the Instructional Leadership Practices of Basic Education High School Principals

For qualitative study, the instructional leadership practices of the principals were investigated through the open-ended questions.

#### **Question 1. What are the activities you have been doing for your school for the development of an effective learning environment?**

According the principals' responses for creating an effective learning environment, all (100%) principals did maintaining school plants, facilities supporting necessary instructional resources and cooperating with school faculties, parents and community for student development. Two (40%) principals carried out preparing and informing routine duties and instructional matters to students and teachers and giving educational talks and activities for students' whole development. However, there were one principal (20%) who nurtures positive relationships with teachers and students.

**Question 2. What are you activities for the improvement of teaching and learning process?**

For the second area of improving classroom instruction, four (80%) principals gave necessary support for students who are weak in learning. Two (40%) principal performed observing lesson planning preparation of teachers. One (20%) principal performed observing students' progress and achievement, discussion with teachers for instructional matters, students' participation, relationship between students and teachers, protecting instructional time, and rewarding outstanding teachers and students.

**Question 3. What activities do you perform for the professional development of the teachers?**

For third area of professional development, three (60%) of the principals encourage and foster cooperative and collaborative learning and attending workshops and seminars. Two (40%) principals provide resources for teachers' growth and development in their profession. One (20%) principal fostered coaching relationship.

**Conclusion**

It is the professional responsibility of the school principals to shape and form the best possible instructional program as they hold the most strategic position and implicit power to improve the quality of teachers' instruction and ultimately students' learning.

The first subscale of the first area of instructional leadership is *managing people and resources*. The participants rated the principals' performance at *moderately high level* for this subscale. *Creating a positive school climate* is the second subscale of the first area of instructional leadership. In this area of instructional leadership, the principals' performance was rated at *moderately high level* by the participants.

On the other hand, according to the principals' responses for creating an effective learning environment, the principals' performance were very strong in maintaining school plants and facilities, supporting necessary instructional resources and cooperating with school faculties, parents and community for student development. However, the principals' performance

were weak in preparing and informing routine duties and instructional matters to students and teachers and giving educational talks and activities for students' whole development. The principals were weak in nurturing positive relationships among students, teachers and faculties. In general, it can be said that the principals could create an effective learning environment although their practices were weak in certain activities in this area.

The second area of instructional leadership is improving classroom instruction. The first subscale of this area is *observing classroom instruction*. The participants in this study rated that the principals' performance was at *moderately high level* in observing classroom instruction. Among all the practices, the principals perform the activity of checking teachers' lesson plans and notes regularly as it is one of the prescribed activities for the principals. According to principals' responses, most of the principals gave necessary support for students who are weak in learning. However, the principals were weak in their performance of observing students' progress and achievement, students' participation, relationship between students and teachers. Most important of all, the principals' performances were very weak in observing teaching process (teaching methods and classroom management). Thus, most of the principals were weak in performing certain important tasks for observing classroom instruction.

The second subscale for the second area of instructional leadership practices is assisting classroom instruction. The participants in this study rated that the principals' performance was at *moderately high level* in all the practices of assisting classroom instruction. According to principals' responses, most of the principals' performances were weak in the discussion with teachers for instructional matters, protecting instructional time, rewarding outstanding teachers and students, analyzing teachers' performance and giving necessary feedbacks.

So, it can be regarded that the principals' performance were weak in certain important activities for assisting classroom instruction.

As the principals reached the leadership position from the teaching position, they had to shift the focus of their major responsibilities from a specific classroom to a wider realm of endeavor. For improving classroom instruction, the principals need to increase not only their knowledge and

understanding of how children learn and develop, but also to understand how adults grow, develop and learn. Next, the principals should improve their knowledge and skills of the subject matters, teaching methodology, techniques to solve the instructional problems, and curriculum change.

The third area of instructional leadership is professional development of the teachers. The principals' performance in this area was at *moderately high level* as rated by the participants. According to the principals' responses, the principals' performances were quite strong in encouraging the teachers to attend the workshops and seminars for improving their teaching. Most of the principals provide resources for teachers' growth and development in their profession and foster cooperative and collaborative learning. However, the principals' performances were very weak in fostering coaching relationship, informing the teachers with the current trends and issues in education, encouraging innovation, and model teaching. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the principals' performance were quite weak in effective professional development activities as they are unfamiliar with the knowledge of these techniques and properly trained to do these activities.

The traditional programs such as workshops, seminars, refresher courses are only available for the educators (both school principals and teachers), they should not be conducted as 'one-shot' experiences but providing follow-up analysis and feedback. The principals should perform action research in their schools to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and learning process and seek opportunities to fix the weaknesses and improve the strengths.

In examining the instructional leadership practices according to their personal factors, there were significant differences between the principals according to the subjects they can teach well. The principals who had more knowledge, experiences and skills in teaching are more successful in practicing their instructional leadership.

In the study of the variations of instructional leadership practices among the schools, there were significant differences among the schools located in downtown area of Myawaddy Township and the school which are located in outer suburbs of Myawaddy Township. School A and School E are in higher performance in all the three areas of instructional leadership where

the economic conditions of the students' families as well as community support, transportation, and security for the teachers and students are in good condition.

There was a problem of having not enough teaching staffs in the schools where the transportation is difficult. These schools should be provided enough teaching staffs. The Basic Education High Schools are complex organizations so there are heavy workloads for the principals. The principals can solve these problems by developing the leadership potentials of their colleagues and distributing the leadership responsibilities to them.

Finally, there would not be effective instructional leadership by the principals unless they do not possess leadership knowledge and skills to do so. There should be the professional courses for the principals that include the knowledge of teaching and learning process, leadership and management theories, current and suitable practices of professional development of teachers and standards for what principals should know and be able to do for providing the students with the best possible and right education system.

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