

Gillian Heaven¹,
Paul Andrew
Bourne²

¹University of the West
Indies, Mona, Kingston,
Jamaica.

²Northern Caribbean
University, Mandeville,
Jamaica.

Correspondence to:
Mr. Paul Andrew Bourne,
Northern Caribbean
University, Mandeville,
Jamaica.

E-mail Id: paulbourne1@
gmail.com

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Instructional Leadership and its Effect on Students' Academic Performance

Abstract

Introduction: Leadership in schools has been a major cause for concern, not only in our Jamaican society, but on a global level. Leaders are metaphorically viewed as anchors, as they are totally responsible for the success of their organization. The aims of the current research is to 1) evaluate the role of instructional leadership on academic performance of students; 2) assess how instructional leadership influence on teachers' instructions; 3) evaluate instructional leadership and typology of school, and 4) Explore instructional leadership in secondary educational institutions in St. Andrew, Jamaica.

Methods: This research employed mixed methodology. Survey research and phenomenological research methodologies were employed to investigate the topic. The sample comprised of one hundred teachers and administrators at two secondary educational institutions in Kingston and St. Andrew. For the quantitative data, these were recorded, retrieved and analysed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences for Windows (Version 21.0). The qualitative data were analysed using thematic identifications and narrations. A p value of 5% was used to establish statistical associations.

Findings: The majority of the respondents were females (69%), non-senior teachers (68%), and have been teaching for 4-10 years (43%). A positively weak statistical correlation existed between the performance of students and instructional leadership, with only 1.4% of the variance in academic performance students can be accounted for by instructional leaderships.

Conclusion: The discourse of instructional leadership accounting for high academic achievement of students does not exist in this study, and this provides a platform for further examination of the issue from the perspective of instructional leadership and other variables.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, Instructional supervision, Performance management, School leadership, School management.

Introduction and Background to Study

Every leader has a crucial role to play in the growth and development of his or her organization. Leadership in schools has been a major cause for concern, not only in our Jamaican society, but on a global level. Leaders are metaphorically viewed as anchors, as they are totally responsible for the success of their organization. One needs to realize that the school comprises of various entities of leadership, but the principal plays a dominant role, one that is inextricably linked to the growth and development of the school.

Cambers (2003) viewed leadership as the process of social influence, one in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) posited the idea that school leadership has significant effects on students' learning, and the effects of the quality of the curriculum and teachers' instruction. They further reiterated the idea that leaders influence students' learning by helping to promote a vision and goal and by ensuring that resources and processes are in place to enable teachers to perform at their optimal levels.

It is a common belief that leaders have a major impact on school quality and students' achievement, hence developing effective leaders is expected should be considered as a major priority of all policy makers. Too often when a school is deemed as failing the underlining effect is that of poor leadership, one that is, for the most part does not focus on the importance of developing instructional delivery modes in his or her educational institution. This may be inextricably linked to the perception of Okumbe (1999) and Maicibi (2005), who concluded that without appropriate instructional leadership effective academic performance cannot be realized in schools. This research will demonstrate that there is statistical correlation between instructional leadership and academic performance in schools; but that it is a weak one suggesting that there are other factors that account for the high academic performance of students in schools which is sometimes attributed to instructional leadership. In addition, the literature review will focus on leadership as a whole, but will be inextricably linked to instructional leadership and its impact on academic achievements, with the current work examining this from the perspective of two selected secondary schools in Kingston and St. Andrew, Jamaica.

For too long teachers have voiced their grouses and have enveloped feelings of dissatisfaction, based on the type of leadership that is demonstrated by the principals, for the most

part in secondary institutions. Consequently, the National Education Inspectorate (N.E.I.) has been given the mandate to inspect secondary schools based on several criteria, one of them being leadership, and it impacts on the growth and development of the institution. Hence, the inspectors visited several secondary schools, used three consecutive days to analyse the school setting and at the end of this procedure, rate the leadership based on certain criteria. These range from exceptional, good, satisfactory and poor. The researcher has a number of doubts based on this three days analysis. Could a conclusive report be done in just three days and are the findings really valid? Based on these reports they conducted interviews with both staff and students, perused the notebooks of students, tour the various campuses with the assistance of the principal and finally visited several classes from various subject areas. The NEI Report (2012) rated Wolmers' Girls as being exceptional in their performance, Meadowbrook High and Jamaica College as good. Just to cite a few examples. One now needs to consider if the ratings were inextricably linked to the type of instructional leadership exhibited in these various institutions. Based on the above it is the researchers' view that their findings may have some level of accuracy, but three days in a school environment would not be deemed sufficient to adequately rate the type of leadership. With this borne in mind one has been motivated to explore the concept of instructional leadership and how it impacts or influences academic performances of students in schools. The objectives of this study are 1) Identify the impact instructional leadership has on the academic performance at two specific high schools; 2) Investigate the impact of instructional leadership on the teachers' instructional role; and 3) Determine whether there is a correlation between instructional leadership and the quality scores attained in internal and external examinations.

Review of Related Literature

The concept of principals embracing their roles as instructional leaders is of paramount

importance in a new era of school management if they wish to improve the performance levels of the students in their charge. Although public schools operate under the mandate of the Education Act (1980), the principal is held accountable for the total success (or failure) of the school he or she manages. The success (or failure) of any school is intertwined with the type of leadership which governs the institution, which holds true for fortune five companies.

The failure of a school is never levied against teacher(s) and this has always been in the case in school administration. This is equally true when there is success in an educational institution, suggesting that the principal has an overarching role of the institution. Hence, if a school is excelling academically, it may be inferred that the leader has embraced aspects of instructional leadership and is in control of the management of that institution. The literature review provides pertinent details on instructional leadership and its influence on academic performance.

School Management via Instructional Leadership

Lunenburg FC, Ornstein AO posited that leadership has six major categories.³⁴ These are: 1) Instructional Leadership; 2) Moral leadership; 3) Participative Leadership; 4) Contingency Leadership; 5) Transformational Leadership, and 6) Managerial Leadership. In the broad categorization of leadership, Lunenburg and Ornstein included instructional leadership which indicated that management; particularly of an educational institution must be an instructionally based. It can also be deduced from Lunenburg and Ornstein that leadership is not singularly about managerial leadership or moral leadership as leadership extends to instructional management. Instructional Leadership analyses the significant practice in students' outcomes by focusing on the teacher and the quality of instruction offered (Lunenburg and Ornstein 2008).

Moral Leadership focuses on value judgements or the ethical boundaries of leadership, while participative leadership gives members equity in the decision making process.³⁴ In addition, Vehbi Celik (2011) viewed leadership as one of the most stressed leadership approaches like visionary leadership, strategic leadership and instructional leadership. He asserted that it is the process of forming and developing values and principles which lead followers to act according to moral principles. It is also his belief that school leaders who cannot perform morally focussed leadership behaviours may lead a school into a process of moral pollution. Reisch et al (2006) views moral leadership as synonymous to ethical leadership which they believe constitute certain characteristics such as unity, awareness, motivating and encouraging, transferring authority and administering moral accountability.

Contingency Leadership, however, provides the true test for the leader, as his ability to respond to organizational problems and address them effectively is totally analysed.³⁴ Transformational Leadership deals with leader's achievement of large scale changes, therefore, allowing others to learn how to embrace change in a successful manner. These leaders create a sense of vision and purpose through inspiration and execute changes, once they have the commitment of all its members. On the other hand, Managerial leadership focuses on the functions tasks and behavioural patterns of the leader.³⁴

On examination of Lunenburg and Ornstein's leadership theories, one realized that none of these theories can be tailored to suit any single organization. In the case of a school, the principal has to continually analyse his/her leadership style, for the most part and employ a multiplicity of organizational styles so that the school may experience academic success. A school is a unit of teachers, administrators, ancillary staffers, and students that must be coalesce with a single focus of educating the pupils (or students). For many school educating is adjudged based on academic performance, particularly external examinations for those at

the primary to tertiary level in Western hemisphere. Clearly, while a school may require a principal to employ different combinations of the leadership theories, there is no denial that instructional leadership must be the focus of the top administrators.

In addition, Cotton (2003) cited the idea that effective instructional leadership involved principals who were intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly impacts on students' achievement. With instructional improvement at the top of a principal's priority list, there is the autonomy to ensure that the major issues or concerns are addressed in the educational setting. Short and Spencer (1990) opined that instructional leadership included various elements which were extremely important if principals hoped to accomplish academic success. The principal should be able to prioritize according to the needs of the institution. Prioritization may be deemed as a simplistic notion, but it is indeed a mammoth task for principals to know what tasks to prioritize, as the scope of their job appears to be unlimited or infinite. This simple, but profound terminology "prioritization" suggests that teaching and learning must be the consistent focus of the school administrator as he or she performs the myriads of roles embedded in principal ship. One recognizes that all principals have to demonstrate the ability to strike the balance between management and vision and other duties, in an effort to make classroom instruction and practice their main focus.

Persell and Cookson (1992) reviewed more than seventy five research studies based on leadership and had some interesting findings highlighted in their work. They reported that there are certain recurrent behaviours which are inextricably linked to principals who display strong leadership which is needed if a school is expected to experience academic success. These are as follows: 1) Demonstrating a commitment to the establishment of academic goals; 2) Creating a climate of high expectation; 3) Establishing order and discipline; 4) Consulting effectively with others; 5) Effective

use of time; 6) Marshalling resources, and 7) Evaluating results.

All these characteristics are interwoven in the roles that an instructional leader has to perform if he or she wishes to boost students' academic success. Taken collectively, these characteristics suggest that the principal exhibits strong leadership, one that is dynamic, exhibits high energy and assertiveness and displays openness to innovative concepts. Persell and Cookson's work highlighted the diverge role of a leader and that an instructional leader cannot singly focus on any one element in order to attain high standards of staffers and pupils in his/her charge. It can be extrapolated therefrom that a leader who is unable to coalesce all the elements outlined by Persel and Cookson would be an ineffective leader.

Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) described effective leadership as one that is more of mutating followers to achieve goals, which would be a combination of all the elements forwarded Persell and Cookson. Hence, good performance in a secondary school must not only consider academic rigours, but should also focus on other domains of education such as the affective and psychomotor domains. With the context of the studies, one can conclude that if leadership is not instructionally based, then followers, in the case of teaching staff may not perform at their optimal levels (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003; Togneri and Anderson, 2003).

There is wide recognition that school leaders exert a powerful, if indirect, influence on teaching quality and students' learning. In a review of literature for the American Educational Research Association, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) forwarded that school leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers' instruction. Case studies of exceptional schools indicate that school leaders influence learning primarily by galvanizing effort around ambitious goals and by establishing conditions that support

teachers and that help students succeed (Togneri and Anderson, 2003).

In large-scale quantitative studies of schools, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) concluded that the effects of leadership on student learning are small but educationally significant. Although leadership explains only about 3 to 5 percent of the variation in student learning across schools, this effect is nearly one-quarter of the total effect of all school factors. In these studies, as in case studies, the effects of leadership appear to be mostly indirect: leaders influence student learning by helping to promote a vision and goals, and by ensuring that resources and processes are in place to enable teachers to teach well (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). Although leadership offers a weak statistical correlation of students' performance, the indirect effect by way of the atmosphere, provision of material, motivation of people and high expectation impacts on students' learning.³¹

Principals play key roles in instructional change in their schools. Their level of involvement often dictates whether attempts to change instruction succeed (Riordan, 2003). In addition, school leaders, especially within low-performing schools, are typically ineffective in providing support and mentoring to improve instruction, and providing direction and resources for teacher learning and professional development within and outside the school (Riordan, 2003). This pattern continued despite a great deal of research that identifies the importance of the principal's role as instructional leader.^{4,27,30,33} Jones RD aptly summarized the 'Instructional Leadership, when he wrote that Understanding the Quadrant D Leadership Framework gives schools leaders a mental model for attacking the adaptive challenges of instructional leadership.²⁹ Instructional leadership involves developing a common vision of good instruction; building relationships; and empowering staff to innovate in instruction, give one another feedback, and share best practices.²⁹

Jones' theory provided a good summative perspective on framework for Instructional Leaderships, roles and responsibilities and duties of the leader (principals or senior administrator of an educational institution). It can be deduced from Jones' work, that instructional supervision is simply more than dictating assignments and merely providing documentary issues for regulators to actually supervising the teaching-learning process. He went further to detailed framework of instructional leadership (or supervision) by list a 25-item practice of leaders. These were: 1) Academic intervention; 2) Balanced assessments; 3) Celebrations; 4) Classroom walk-throughs; 5) Co-teaching/team teaching; 6) Grading; 7) Individualized professional learning; 8) Instructional coaching; 9) Instructional technology; 10) Leadership teams; 11) Mentoring; 12) Needs assessment/strategic planning; 13) Peer review of student work; 14) Personnel and budgets; 15) Policies and procedures; 16) Professional development workshops; 17) Professional learning community; 18) Rigor/Relevance Framework; 19) Master schedule/teacher assignment; 20) Staff meetings; 21) Staff reviews and evaluations; 22) Student achievement data analysis; 23) Teacher incentives and rewards; 24) Teacher observations/study tours, and 25) Vision/mission/goals.

Consequently, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2004) insisted that the principal should provide leadership in the school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning. But the association argued that the principal should never act alone. Rather, according to NASSP, all schools should establish a governing council that includes students, parents, and staff members in key decisions to promote student learning and an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. Although the principal (or chief administrator) of an educational institution is required to meet administrative procedures and task, his/her duties are not limited solely to these activities or principalship.^{23,25,32}

Reid (2012), Principal of Jamaica College, in an article published by The Gleaner alluded to the idea that principals are ineffective when there is a decrease in school performance. He also asserted that if the quality of leadership is not improved in schools then we are travelling in a circulatory manner. In addition, Allen (2012), Principal of Shortwood Teachers' College in the same article overtly stated that problems faced in the schools are often compounded by poor leadership. From these two sources one can ascertain that the concept of good or sound leadership is inextricably linked to the success of any educational institution. Lunenburg FC, Ornstein AO postulated that instructional leadership typically focuses "on the behaviours of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students".³⁴

Hoy and Miskel (2008) opined that "instructional leadership is a particular form of leadership that emphasises the improvement of teaching and learning in the school's technical core". They go on further to state that "such leadership can come from a variety of sources including principals, teachers, parents, administrators and students". Hanson EM, on the other hand, stated that "instead of being the person in direct control of the school or school district, the leader is seen as the person in the middle who must somehow perform acts that must satisfy a multitude of complex and other conflicting demands".³⁵

Instructional leaders are expected to continually monitor students' progress towards school achievement and teachers' effectiveness in accomplishing their set goals.²⁸ One medium a school administrator can utilize is consistent appraisal of teachers. This includes frequent classroom visitations, outlining distinct evaluation criteria and a consistent feedback procedure. Duke (2004) reported that teachers have verbalized that evaluation processes have become meaningless rituals. These teachers are of the view that the evaluation reports are redundant and often do not provide adequate suggestions for improvement.

Donaldson (2010) endorsed the view that the current evaluation practices which exist in schools manifested various inadequacies, such as the absence of high quality feedback to teachers by those conducting this process. Feedback from this process is quite beneficial as it allows the teacher to reassess her strategies in an effort to garner academic success. Hence, the principal who deems him/herself as an instructional leader will consistently seek to review the evaluation and supervision process in her school. An effective Principal, therefore, is engaged in instructional leadership activities which promote students achievement.²⁶ Copeland II developed a 6-item Likert Scale question to measure the principals' involvement in the educational leadership that stimulates students' achievement.²⁶ He also developed a 6-item Likert scale question which captures scores the instructional leadership for a school's principal.

In addition, Cotton as cited in (Gammage, Adams et al 2009) has asserted that the following types of behaviours by principals have a significant impact on students' achievements: The establishment of a clear focus on student learning by having a clear vision, clear learning goals and high expectations for all students, Providing instructional leadership by observing classroom teaching and giving feedback, supporting teacher autonomy and protecting instructional time, and Developing a school culture conducive to teaching and learning through shared leadership and decision making and risk taking leading to continuous improvements.

Gurr, Mulford et al (2006), reinforced the idea that extensive studies demonstrate that particular leadership styles of school leaders, especially instructional leadership could have positive impacts on teaching and learning environments and processes leading to improvements in students' performance and academic achievements. The Coleman Report (1996) demonstrated how the school has little or no effect on students' achievements, concluding that family background was the key factor influencing the students' achievements,

but Edmonds (1979) refuted this point as he believed school leadership behaviour is critical in determining the quality of education. Further, on the basis of his research on instructionally effective schools in Detroit and a review of previous studies involving effective schools in New York, California, and Michigan; He has concluded that school factors have predominantly contributed towards the creation of instructionally effective schools. These factors are: strong administrative leadership, high levels of expectations in students' achievements, an orderly but not oppressive school climate and a conducive atmosphere to instructional processes. Bossart et al, as cited in Yin Cheong Cheng (1991) summarised the results of the recent studies of effective principals and successful schools into four areas of principal leadership: Goals and production emphasis, Power and decision making, Organization/Coordination, and Human Relations.

Principal's Instructional Leadership Behaviours

Ubben and Hughes (1997) reinforced the idea that an effective principal must exercise a series of specific instructional leadership forces. These are: technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural. Technical forces included being a good manager and applying good planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling techniques to ensure optimum effectiveness of the school. Human forces emphasized the human relation skills, implementing good motivational techniques, and building good morale within the organization. Educational forces focus on the conceptual knowledge of education. This skill entails the ability to diagnose educational problems, carry out the functions of clinical supervision, evaluating educational programs, developing curriculum, implementing staff development activities and establish appropriate individualized educational programs for students. Symbolic force demonstrates to others those things that the leader perceives to be important and of value to the organization. Symbolic actions can also

be expressed by principals modelling the behaviour they wish to emphasize. The cultural leader functions as the "high priest" of the school. In his or her capacity the leader seeks to strengthen the values and beliefs that make the school unique.

The leader attempts to build traditions around those things most highly valued. The cultural force of leadership bonds students, parents and teachers as true believers of the school. The cultural life of the school is "constructed" by someone, hopefully the instructional leader who seeks to reflect an appropriate set of values beliefs and traditions that provide the foundation for excellence.

More recently, the definition of instructional leadership has been expanded to towards deeper involvement in the core business of schooling which is teaching and learning. Attention has shifted from teaching to learning, and some have proposed the term "learning leader" over "instructional leader" (Richard DuFour, 2002). The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) defined instructional leadership as "leading learning communities".

In learning communities, staff members meet on a regular basis to discuss their work, work together to problem solve, reflect on their jobs, and take responsibility for what students learn. They operate in networks of shared and complementary expertise rather than in hierarchies or in isolation. People in a learning community "own the problem" and become agents of its solution. Instructional leaders also make adult learning a priority; set high expectations for performance; create a culture of continuous learning for adults and get the community's support for school success. Blase and Blase (2000) expressed instructional leadership in specific behaviours such as making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching

Academic Performance: Culture and Milieu

The academic performance of both teachers and students may be inextricably linked to the culture and climate of an institution as well as, the type of leadership demonstrated in the school.³² This may have an immense impact on the attainment of quality academic standards achieved by students both in their internal as well as, external examinations. Every organization has its distinct culture which its members should embrace if they want to feel a sense of belonging and commitment. Too often a new culture is created by those teachers who view themselves as a part of the “out group” in relation to the other members of staff who may see the importance of maintaining the norms and values of the institution.

Culture distinguishes one organization from another and provides members with a sense of organizational identity (Hellriegel, Slocum et al 2000). Every school has a specific climate and culture; hence the leader of the organization has a vital role in the reinforcement of these areas if he wishes to boost the academic standards in his or her school. Organization climate is viewed as those characteristics that distinguish the organization from other organizations (Gilmer B.H. 1999). The school climate also characterizes the organization of the school building and also refers to the “feel” of a school. In addition, Administrators need to embrace a school that has an open climate one that embraces cooperation and respect for teachers, one in which a principal listens and is open to suggestions, gives commendations, gives teachers the liberty to be creative without close and constant scrutiny. This type of climate will boost staff performance and builds a high level of support for the school and its culture.³² Every leader basks when he or she is in charge of a school that has a high level of performance.

All schools at some point undergo a period of inspection, as the National Education

Inspectorate (N.E.I.) has been given the mandate to inspect all primary and secondary schools in an effort to improve and identify areas of weaknesses. In addition, the N.E.I. is also charged with the responsibility of making recommendations in an effort to improve the academic outcomes for all learners. In addition, one of the various roles of an effective principal is the improvement of academic standards interwoven with their ability to allocate resources in ways that would maximize teacher effectiveness and students’ achievements. Another component of their role is to selectively and systemically apply other support mechanisms in the form of advantageous scheduling, meticulous assignment of teachers and the dispensing of recognition to achieve these goals. The principal who embraces his role as instructional leader should ensure that the classrooms are for the most part conducive to the learning process that is adequate resources are in place to enhance the teaching learning environment with the aim of improving academic standards

Peterson and Deal (2000) stated that a school with positive school culture is a place with a “shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of care and concern and a shared commitment to students attainment of success”. If these are attained there will be a maximum comfort level among teaching staff, and the climate in the school will be one that is pleasing to work and would in turn maximize teachers’ effectiveness and students’ performance. Two other studies have contrasted the traditional view of instructional leadership which focussed on curriculum instruction with a broader view on instructional leadership focussing directly on organizational management. In the first study, a comparison was made with principals who spend more time doing informal classroom observations with those who spend little or no time doing so. The findings revealed that there was no evidence that the frequency or duration of principals’ classroom observations had a significant impact on the instructional climate of the school as well as students’ achievements (Ing 2008). In the second study, there was an

examination of the role of the principal in supporting teachers by creating collaborative work environments. Hence, Ing (2008) revealed that teachers lead by effective organizational managers is more likely to turn to principals and other teachers for resources and advice on how to improve their teaching practices. Consequently, principals who are poor organizational managers are more likely to have teachers who look outside the school for support (Horng et al 2010). It may be concluded here that, strong instructional leadership is essential but is not always inextricably linked to increased student performance.

The principal's values and belief system plays a dominant role in the performance of teachers and the school in general. According to Owens (2004) in an effort to create an excellent school, two forms of leadership must be evident. These are symbolic leadership and the leadership that can build organizational culture. When a leader is operating via the symbolic frame she signals and demonstrates her vision for that organization. A symbolic leader pays keen attention to time management and tries to provide a unified vision for the school. This vision distinguishes leaders from those who are just viewed as managers. This type of administrator has the capacity to create and communicate a view of desired state of affairs that evokes commitment among his or her members. Principals, who engage in maintaining strong organizational cultures, spend adequate time articulating the goals and objectives of the school as well as, participate in consistent evaluations of the various norms and values which exist in their school. They also spent the necessary time to do self-appraisals to ensure that they are not allowing personal beliefs and judgements to override certain issues in their school.

Nadine Molloy-Young (2010) former president of the Jamaica Teachers' Association, was asked, what is it that makes a good school? Her reply was, it takes a caring principal and staff to make a good school. The former Minister of

Education, Andrew Holnes (2008) in his contribution to the Sectoral Debate on reiterated the fact that invariably any school that is performing well has strong leadership. The varied output and the wide disparity in performance are primarily due to the difference in leadership.

Armstrong (2004) defined effective leadership as the influence and legitimate authority acquired by a leader. This allows the leader to be able to effectively transform the organization, leading to the achievement of the desired purpose. He further reiterated the idea that this can be done through the articulation of the vision and mission of the organization. Gurr, Mulford et al (2006), reinforced the idea that extensive studies demonstrate that particular leadership styles of school leaders, especially instructional leadership could have positive impacts on teaching and learning environments and processes leading to improvements in students' performance and academic achievements. The Coleman Report (1996) demonstrated how the school has little or no effect on students' achievements, concluding that family background was the key factor influencing the students' achievements, but Edmonds (1979) refuted this point as he believed school leadership behaviour is critical in determining the quality of education. Further, on the basis of his research on instructionally effective schools in Detroit and a review of previous studies involving effective schools in New York, California, and Michigan; He has concluded that school factors have predominantly contributed towards the creation of instructionally effective schools. These factors are: strong administrative leadership, high levels of expectations in students'

The Impact of Effective Leaders

Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) described effective leadership as one that is more of mutating followers to achieve goals. Hence, good leadership commits to doing less and being more. In addition, they viewed good performance in any secondary school as one

that not only considered academic rigour, but should also focus on other domains of education such as the affective and psychomotor domains. Educational leadership and management have now extended to include instructional leadership.¹⁰ He argued that the issue of instructional leadership emerged as a paradigm in the 1980s for school leadership and management in the United States. The theories in instructional leadership were that the principal was critical to an effective educational institution. A group of researchers elaborated that change in school management and leadership is that of effectively managing all the resources, which includes the teaching-learning process and not merely the being consumed with administrative responsibility at the expense of improving the students' learning.

There is wide recognition that school leaders exert a powerful, if indirect, influence on teaching quality and students' learning. In a review of literature for the American Educational Research Association, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) concluded that school leadership has significant effects on student learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teachers' instruction. Case studies of exceptional schools indicate that school leaders influence learning primarily by galvanizing effort around ambitious goals and by establishing conditions that support teachers and that help students succeed (Togneri and Anderson, 2003).

Indeed, research has repeatedly shown that principals play key roles in instructional change in their schools. Their level of involvement often dictates whether attempts to change instruction succeed (Riordan, 2003). For example, studies have shown that school leaders, especially within low-performing schools, are typically ineffective in providing support and mentoring to improve instruction, and providing direction and resources for teacher learning and professional development within and outside the school (Riordan, 2003). This pattern continues despite a great deal of

research that identifies the importance of the principal's role as instructional leader.

Consequently, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2004) insists that the principal should provide leadership in the school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning. But the association argues that the principal should never act alone. Rather, according to NASSP, all schools should establish a governing council that includes students, parents, and staff members in key decisions to promote student learning and an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. In addition, Duke (2004) reported that teachers have verbalized that evaluation processes have become meaningless rituals. These teachers are of the view that the evaluation reports are redundant and often do not provide adequate suggestions for improvement. One is cognizant of the fact that the principal has a multiplicity of roles to perform, but if she truly wishes to attain academic success among the students, then she has to learn the art of delegating some of her responsibilities to the vice-principals or heads of department. Donaldson (2010) endorsed the view that the current evaluation practices which exist in schools manifest various inadequacies, identified was the absence of high quality feedback to teachers by those conducting this process. Feedback from this process is quite beneficial as it allows the teacher to reassess her strategies in an effort to garner academic success. Hence, the principal who deems him/herself as an instructional leader will consistently seek to review the evaluation and supervision process in her school.

In addition, Cotton as cited in Gammage, Adams et al., 2009 has asserted that the following types of behaviours by principals have a significant impact on students' achievements: The establishment of a clear focus on student learning by having a clear vision, clear learning goals and high expectations for all students. Providing instructional leadership by observing classroom

teaching and giving feedback, supporting teacher autonomy and protecting instructional time, and Developing a school culture conducive to teaching and learning through shared leadership and decision making and risk taking leading to continuous improvements.

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Finally, Bossart et al, as cited in Yin Cheong Cheng (1991) summarised the results of the recent studies of effective principals and successful schools into four areas of principal leadership: Goals and production emphasis, Power and decision making, Organization / Coordination, and Human Relations.

Motivational Strategies

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is consistently utilized as an example of motivational theory in both practitioner and scholarly journals, while the argument can be made that teaching might be either an art of science (Burns, 2005), it is

certainly comprised of skills. One skill career and technical education both teachers and school administrators must exhibit is the ability to motivate. Motivation should not only be limited to commendations but tangible rewards can be provided for both teachers and students. Just in the same way a teacher utilizes a certain reward system in his or her class in an effort to stimulate continuous progress in her classroom, principals also need to find innovative ways to motivate his staff if he or she wishes to boost productivity.

Motivation has been described as what energizes, directs and sustains behaviour (Porter, Bigley and Steers, 2003). There are varieties of sources of motivation including goals, values and the need for achievement, biological needs and relatedness, among many others (Reeve, 2005). In addition, Heuristical motivational model suggests the use of models which sought to integrate various motivational theories proposed by scholars (Locke and Latham, 2004; Meyer et al., 2004). Administrators and teachers need to utilize rules of thumb for the application of motivational techniques used on a consistent basis. The heuristical workplace model proposed that administrators be seen as motivators (Kroth, 2006) and should seek to provide whatever resources that are needed in an effort to effectively improve classroom instruction as they go about the quotidian change of helping teachers to perform at their optimal levels.

Methods and Materials

Research Design

The principal focus of this study was to evaluate the influence of instructional leadership on academic performance of students in two (2) secondary schools in St. Andrew, Jamaica as well as, to provide policy makers with needed information that will guide policy implementation and intervention programmes. The study will be conducted using a non-probability (i.e. purposive sampling) sampling approaches. This research

is twofold as 1) it is a descriptive cross-sectional survey and 2) interpretivism component which allowed for the use of interviews, narratives and thematic identifications. The survey method allows for the 1) measurement, 2) statistical analyses, and 3) objectivism (Rea and Parker, 2005; Powell, Bourne and Waller, 2007; Crotty, 2005; Creswell, 2003; Burnham, et al., 2004; Blalock and Blalock, 1968; Bastick and Matalon, 2007).

According to Bastick and Matalon (2007), descriptive research which is quantitative in nature is a type of investigative research that measures the characteristics of a sample or population on pre-specified variables. This study fitted this design because it typically sought to ascertain respondents' perspectives or experiences on a specified subject in a predetermined structured manner. Hence, a standardized questionnaire was developed to collect information from a wide cross-section of people (Powell, Bourne and Waller, 2007; Rea and Parker, 2005). Because of the nature of the study, the researcher sought information from people who are currently teachers and/or administrators in the secondary educational institutions in Jamaica (High schools). The use of teachers and/or educational administrators in the secondary educational institutions in Jamaica was because of the nature of the subject and those persons outside of this milieu may not be able to provide pertinent information on the topic. As a result, the decision was taken to purposively select people who will be able to provide information on instructional leadership and academic performance in Jamaica. While people in tertiary educational institution would be able to provide adequate information, it was the researcher's bias to examine the issue at the secondary leadership based on the fact that she teaches at this level.

The twinned research design provides more information as limitations from one are offset in the other design. Based on Creswell's perspective (Creswell, 2003), mixed research designs amalgamate the elements of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis and

collection, and therefore increases the overall strength of a research (Punch, 2005; Neuman, 2006; Babbie, 2007; Peters and Bourne, 2012a, 2012b).

Survey Research

Survey research is well documented in the social sciences as a methodology which comes from positivism (or post-positivism)-(Crotty, 2005). This methodology requires conceptualization and measurement of phenomenon as it seeks precision, objectivity and sometimes the forecasting of results (Blalock, 1982). According to Blalock (1982), "Conceptualization involves a series of processes by which theoretical constructs, ideas, and concepts are classified, distinguished, and given definitions that make it possible to reach a reasonable degree of consensus and understanding of the theoretical ideas we are trying to express".

Suggesting that survey research can be used to formulate and construct theories and/or laws, extensively evaluate issues and understand general issues. Blalock (1982) noted that "By measurement, we refer to the general process through which numbers are assigned to objects in such a fashion that it is also understood just what kinds of mathematical operations can legitimately be used". Hence, survey research is built around conceptualization, measurement and objectivity before it can be used to establish laws and/or theories. Crotty (2005) aptly summarizes the research process using objectivistic epistemology in a diagrammatic manner highlighting the rationale for conceptualization and measurement in survey research:

Four Elements of Objectivistic Epistemology

1. Objectivism
2. Positivism
3. Survey research
4. Statistical analysis

There is no denial that objectivism can be used to formulate social theories and/or laws, which

can be accommodated by way of survey research and sometimes advanced multivariate statistical techniques. The present study seeks to generally understand a phenomenon in attempting to 1) test hypotheses, 2) generalize, 3) use scientific proposition and 4) guide policy formulations; hence, the use of conceptualization and measurements, sampling, data analysis, and document reviews.

Embedded in Crotty's objectivistic schema is survey methodology, which is widely used by social scientists. Survey research allows for the falsification of propositions, generalization and theorizing because of its emphasis on 1) conceptualization, and 2) measurement (Kuhn, 1996; Blalock, 1982; Rosenberg, 1985). Rosenberg's opined that "A proposition is scientific if and only if it is falsifiable" (Rosenberg, 1985), suggesting a schema, gradual development of issues and a systematization in the study of any science.

Crotty was not the first academic to use a diagrammatic and systematic display to encapsulate something in social sciences as Alleyne and Benn (1989) used this approach in representing phases in a survey process. Alleyne and Benn outlined eight components in the survey process. These are as follow (Alleyne and Benn, 1989):

1. Defining the problem
2. Planning the execution of the survey
3. Preparing an outline
4. Designing the response schedule and pre-testing
5. Sampling
6. Interviewing
7. Processing and analysing the data
8. Reporting the results

In order to define the research problem or understanding the researchable issues and its gaps, the researcher requires information on past studies, theorizing, methodologies, methods, measurement and conceptualizations. All those are enveloped in document reviews (or literature search).

Documentary Reviews

A literature review is the documentary evidence which provides a comprehensive understanding of a problem and/or how other studies have approach related or similar issues in the past. Neuman succinctly summarized the literature when that "Reviewing the accumulated knowledge about a question is an essential early step in the research process, no matter which approach to social science you adopt. As in other areas of life it is best to find out what is already known about a question before trying to answer it yourself" (Neuman, 2006, 96).

The researcher reviewed written documents including books, journal articles, and school documents. The review was to determine 1) Theoretical framework, 2) Items for instrument, and 3) Epistemological framework for the study, and 4) How to interpret the statistical analysis as well as study.

Elite Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they were closest to the unstructured interview which is flexible, iterative and continuous (Rubin and Rubin, 1995; 43; Shepsle and Bonchek, 1997) as well as more likely to yield information that were not planned for (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; 148). Semi-structured interviews allow for systematic and consistency while giving sufficient latitude for the subject to 'digress' thus enabling a deeper probe (Berg, 2001) and facilitating new and unexpected information (Daugbjerg, 1998). The use of semi-structured (instead of structured) format study enabled the researcher to make deeper probe into the issue of instructional leadership and its impact on academic performance.

Elite interviews are most effective in obtaining information about decision-making and the decision-making process (Burnham et al., 2004) as the subjects may be treated as 'experts' (Burnham et al., 2004). The interviews took the form of a "guided conversation" (Rubin and Rubin 1995, in Gubrium and Holstein 2001)

where the interviewees were seen not as “passive conduit for retrieving information”, but more for interpretation and perspective (ibid) thus facilitating a deep probe. The questions for the elite interviews were guided by the literature review and pre-existing notions of the researcher based on other studies.

Population and Sampling Design

The population for this research was teachers and educational administrators in the secondary educational system in Jamaica.

The sample will be selected based on two criteria; persons who are employed as teachers in the secondary educational system in Jamaica and only those who are currently employed as teachers and administrators in a secondary educational institution in Jamaica. All persons who fulfilled these criteria were part of the sample. The sample group was two (2) secondary educational institutions in the St. Andrew, one being co-educational and the other single-sexed school (i.e. attended by only female students). Ten teachers were used for the sample of which five were senior teachers and five non-senior teachers. The sampled respondents were purposively reselected by the researcher. This was based on the researcher’s bias that these people are more likely to participate in the process and researcher having known them on a personal or work related manner. Having known the people from before, it was easier for the researcher to approach these individuals and request their assistance in being a participant in the study. If an individual was busy or unwilling to participate in the process, the researcher eliminates this person and move to other people that she knows who was more likely to engage in the process.

In addition to person who the researcher knew in other areas of life, at the other educational institution, the researcher used a gatekeeper (a person she knew) who is informed of the matter and asked her to seek willing participants for the study. The gatekeeper was

given the sole responsibility to have the questionnaire answer and interview conducted. In cases where interview had to be done, the gatekeeper was forwarded with a tape recorder that was used to store the information for future use.

The sample was 100 teachers and two administrators at two secondary educational institutions in St. Andrew. Fifty participants were drawn from the co-educational institution and the same percentage was selected from the singled sex school. In addition to the 100 teachers for the survey, there were eight elite interviews with teachers (including senior and non-senior teachers), principals and/or vice principals.

Instrumentation

A standardized questionnaire and interview items were developed in order to evaluate ‘The impact of instructional leadership on the academic performance of students at two secondary educational institutions in St. Andrew, Jamaica. The primary purpose of 15-item survey instrument (or questionnaire) was to solicit general information from a wide sample of respondents in different geographical areas in St. Andrew (Appendix I). The standardized questionnaire had only close ended-items (Appendix I). The survey instrument was divided into two sections. Section I had socio-demographic questions (questions 1-3), Section Two deals instructional leadership strategies and performance indicators. The entire process of instrument design was aided by Rea and Parker’s book on designing and conducting survey research (Rea and Parker, 2005) as well as a copy of cross-sectional survey conducted by Powell, Bourne and Waller (2007) on probing political culture in Jamaica. The Interview Items comprised of five questions (Appendix II).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was done to validate, as well as to ensure reliability of the data gathering instrument. The researcher pilot tested the

instrument with some 15 teachers in secondary educational institutions in St. Catherine, Jamaica. In addition to the aforementioned issue, the items were vetted by the researcher's supervisor. Following the vetting, editing and modification processes with the aforementioned stakeholders, the researcher again pre-tested the instrument. The exercise lasted for on average thirty minutes. The inputs of the various stakeholders were feedback into a modified instrument, from which the final instrument emerged.

Administrative Procedure

In order to administer the questionnaire and the interviews, the researcher informed participants of their rights and responsibilities in the event they decide to participate in the study. In cases where a gatekeeper was used, he or she was told to inform the participants of their rights and responsibility in the research process. Informed consent was read to each participant and only those who agreed with the processes were allowing being a part of the research. The administrative procedure in completing the questionnaires was also explained. For the interviews, people were informed of their rights and responsibilities, and unwritten consent was sought and accepted before they were allowed to participate in the study. In addition to the aforementioned issues, those who participated were made cognizant of the likeliness of withdrawing from the process at any time if they so desire.

Method of Analysis

For this survey instrument (questionnaire), the large volume of data were stored, retrieved and analysed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows version 20.0 (SPSS Inc. Chicago, IL, USA). Descriptive statistics were performed on the data as well as, percentage and frequency distributions (include percentages and frequency counts). Descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to meaningfully describe the many pieces of data collected Gay and Airasian (2000). Statistical

significance was determined a p-value less than or equal to five percentage points (≤ 0.05)-two-tailed. In addition to descriptive statistics, scatter plots and box plots were also used to analyse or present the data. Multi-analysis of Variance was used to examine particular linear dependent variable by multi-independent variables. The qualitative data were analysed using themes, narrations and other descriptions.

Ethical Concerns and Informed Consent

Like Kuhn noted science is so because of the approaches taken, the rigours followed objectivity, measurement and gradual development. The social science is an inquiry into social phenomena, meaning peoples' attitudes, behaviours and perceptions. Because social science is on people, care must be taken in how the information is gathered (Babbie, 2007; Neuman, 2006). To comprehend the seriousness of ethical issues, in Neuman's book entitled "Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches" chapter 5 reads 'The Literature Review and Ethical Concerns', suggesting that document analysis which provides the context for scientific investigation must take into consideration ethical standards that hold true throughout the research process. He opined that "Researchers need to prepare themselves and consider ethical concerns as they design a study so that sound ethical practices is built in to the study design" (Neuman, 2006, 116). He noted further that "Ethics define what is or is not legitimate to do, or what 'moral; research procedure involves" (Neuman, 2006, 110).

In keeping with Neuman's perspective, the researcher includes ethics as a part of the research process and followed it throughout. Firstly, the researcher ensures that nowhere on the survey instrument requires the participant to give his/her name, other personal identifiers and information that can be traced back to the individual. Secondly, the participants were informed of their rights and responsibility of the subjects, and that they can withdraw from the process if they so desire. An informed

concern Form was given to each willing subjects to sign before they were allowed to participate in the research (Appendices III).

Validity and Reliability

Kuhn (1996) who had a doctorate in physics argued expensively on the validity and verifiability of qualitative inquiry despite its seemingly non-objectivism. Knowing how things operate was not singly embedded in empiricism, objective measurability and statistical analyses (Kuhn, 1996; Balashov and Rosenberg, 2002) as meaning accounts for actions that are sometimes outside of the realm of objectivism. It can be extrapolated from Kuhn's perspectives that validity and reliability is equally important in all scientific inquiry, and the issues of conceptualization and measurement must include an aspect of validity and verification.

For any research project to be credible, its reliability and validity have to be clearly established (Wiersman, 2000). As such, the necessary steps taken to ensure that the proposed project has both internal and external validity and internal and external reliability on the instrument used are outlined. According to Wiersman, reliability is concerned with the reliability and consistency of the methods, conditions and results while validity deals with the accurate interpretability of the results and the generalizability of the results.

In order to ensure a high response rate on the questionnaire, the researcher ensured that all steps were taken to have the number of items not more than is necessary to elicit the required information, thus avoiding unnecessary and ambiguous questions.

Table 1. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

| | ques 4 | ques 5 | ques 6 | ques 7 | ques 8 | ques 9 | ques 10 | ques 11 | ques 12 | ques 13 | ques 14 | ques 15 |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| ques 4 | 1.00 0 | 0.53 8 | 0.65 3 | 0.52 9 | 0.46 1 | 0.47 0 | 0.560 | 0.584 | 0.711 | 0.695 | 0.300 | 0.555 |
| ques 5 | 0.53 8 | 1.00 0 | 0.70 5 | 0.63 7 | 0.57 0 | 0.09 3 | 0.556 | 0.619 | 0.544 | 0.641 | 0.353 | 0.464 |
| ques 6 | 0.65 3 | 0.70 5 | 1.00 0 | 0.78 8 | 0.81 6 | 0.49 7 | 0.669 | 0.627 | 0.668 | 0.791 | 0.543 | 0.691 |
| ques 7 | 0.52 9 | 0.63 7 | 0.78 8 | 1.00 0 | 0.85 2 | 0.32 2 | 0.691 | 0.530 | 0.600 | 0.676 | 0.417 | 0.703 |
| ques 8 | 0.46 1 | 0.57 0 | 0.81 6 | 0.85 2 | 1.00 0 | 0.36 4 | 0.739 | 0.516 | 0.605 | 0.592 | 0.522 | 0.643 |
| ques 9 | 0.47 0 | 0.09 3 | 0.49 7 | 0.32 2 | 0.36 4 | 1.00 0 | 0.551 | 0.294 | 0.526 | 0.597 | 0.592 | 0.610 |
| ques 10 | 0.56 0 | 0.55 6 | 0.66 9 | 0.69 1 | 0.73 9 | 0.55 1 | 1.000 | 0.529 | 0.498 | 0.595 | 0.596 | 0.648 |
| ques 11 | 0.58 4 | 0.61 9 | 0.62 7 | 0.53 0 | 0.51 6 | 0.29 4 | 0.529 | 1.000 | 0.750 | 0.685 | 0.514 | 0.639 |
| ques 12 | 0.71 1 | 0.54 4 | 0.66 8 | 0.60 0 | 0.60 5 | 0.52 6 | 0.498 | 0.750 | 1.000 | 0.820 | 0.353 | 0.746 |
| ques 13 | 0.69 5 | 0.64 1 | 0.79 1 | 0.67 6 | 0.59 2 | 0.59 7 | 0.595 | 0.685 | 0.820 | 1.000 | 0.451 | 0.699 |
| ques 14 | 0.30 0 | 0.35 3 | 0.54 3 | 0.41 7 | 0.52 2 | 0.59 2 | 0.596 | 0.514 | 0.353 | 0.451 | 1.000 | 0.467 |
| ques 15 | 0.55 5 | 0.46 4 | 0.69 1 | 0.70 3 | 0.64 3 | 0.61 0 | 0.648 | 0.639 | 0.746 | 0.699 | 0.467 | 1.000 |

The researcher also established a directory of the respondents so as to be able to make the relevant follow up calls. The researcher also did personal deliveries and pickup of the instruments, in an effort to personally outline to the respondents the importance of their responses to the project..

In this study, reliability of some items was based on Equivalence Reliability-Cronbach alpha (Neuman, 2006, 180). This was compared based on high or low values of Cronbach alpha. Reliability was increased by way of using 1) previously tested items (or questions), 2) pre-testing, testing and post-testing of items. The researcher adheres to the following types of measuring validity-1) Face validity, 2) Content validity, 3) Criterion Validity, and 4) Concurrent validity (Neuman, 2006, 183).

Instructional leadership is the summation of 12 Likert scale items (Questions 4-15). The Cronbach alpha for the 12-item Likert Scale Index was 0.943. A Cronbach alpha of 0.943 means that the 12-item is a good measure of the construct of instructional leadership. The inter-correlations are provided in Table 1

Operational Definition

Academic performance: This construct is derived by the average of last semester grades for the students that the teacher taught.

Instructional leadership

Based on how the items were entered into the SPSS, where 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=disagree and 4=strongly disagree, these were recoded into 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree and 4=strongly disagree. Instructional Leadership is an index which is the summation of 12 items from Likert ranged questions (Appendix I). The scores range from 1 to 48, where higher values indicate greater degree of instructional leadership.

Limitations

Among the disadvantages of non-probability sampling techniques are 1) it does not allow for the generalizability of results, 2) results are not necessarily repeatable, and 3) the expressed views are only those of the studied participants at the time of the investigation. Those limitations are evident in this research as it employed a non-probability sampling design.

Findings

Table 2 presents information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the sampled respondents. The majority of the respondents were females (69%), non-senior teachers (68%), and have been teaching for 4-10 years (43%).

Table 2. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Sampled Respondents (n = 100)

| Characteristic | Frequency (Percentage) |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 31 (31) |
| Female | 69 (69) |
| Position | |
| Senior teacher | 32 (32) |
| Non-senior teacher | 68 (68) |
| School typology | |
| Co-educational | 50 (50) |
| Singled sex | 50 (50) |
| Length of service | |
| 1-3 years | 15 (15) |
| 4-10 years | 43 (43) |
| 11+ years | 42 (42) |

Figure 1 shows the position of the respondents based on gender distribution. There were more female non-senior teachers (69.6%) than their

male counterparts (65.4%) and this was reverse among the senior teachers.

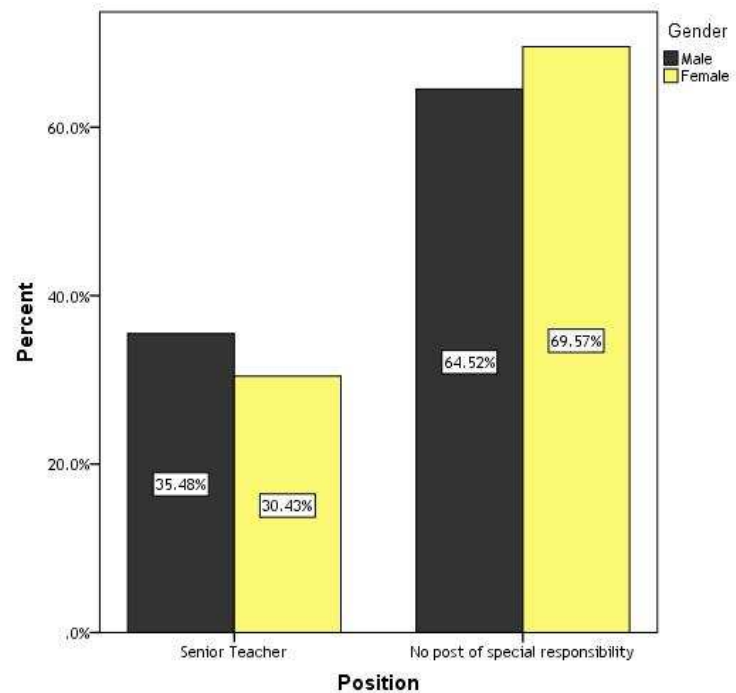


Figure 1.Position of Teacher by Gender

Figure 2 depicts a bar graph of gender of respondents and their relevant length of service in teaching. More females have spent

more than 4 years' service in teaching compared to their male counterparts (Figure 2).

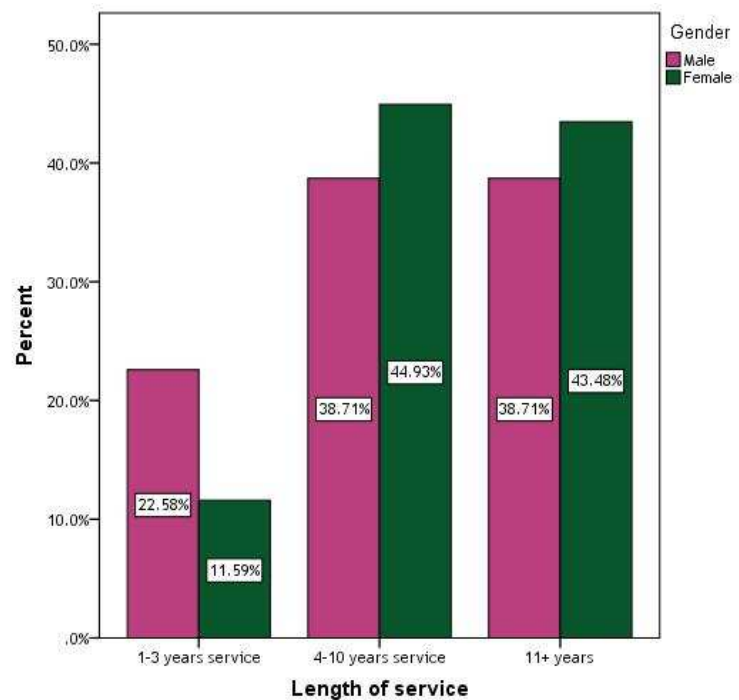


Figure 2.Length of Service by Gender

Figure 3 is a graphical representation of position of respondents and their length of service in teaching. The majority of the senior

teachers have spent at least 11 years in teaching (65.6%) compared to 30.9% of those whom are non-senior teachers.

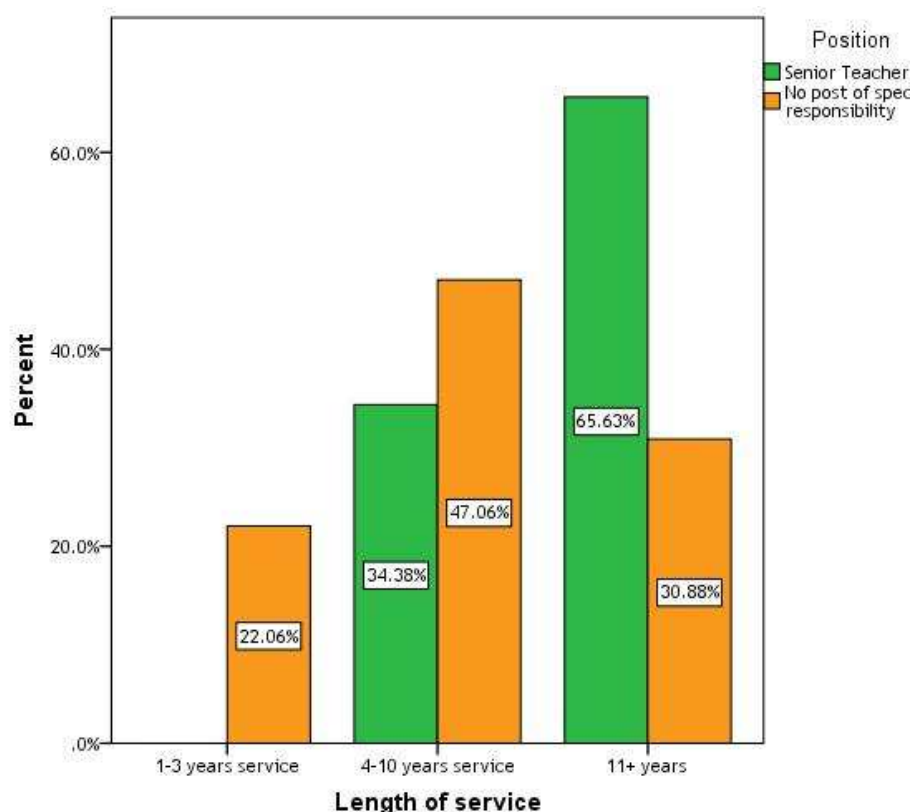


Figure 3. Position and Length of Service

Research Question One

Does instructional leadership influence academic performance of students?

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics on Instructional Leadership Index and Academic Performance of the students for sampled

teachers. The overall academic performance of students taught by the sampled teachers was $72.2\% \pm 14.5\%$, indicating that in general the students are high performers. Instructional Leadership in the sampled schools was high 33.7 ± 8.1 , 95% CI: 32.1-35.3, with the maximum value being 48.0.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Instructional Leadership Index and Students' Academic Performance of the Sampled Teachers

| Characteristic | Mean \pm SD; 95% CI |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Instructional leadership index | 33.7 ± 8.1 ; 32.1-35.3 |
| Students' performance | $72.2\% \pm 14.5\%$; 69.3%-75.1% |

Figure 3 presents descriptive statistics on the academic performance of the students taught by the sampled teachers. While the average academic performance of the teacher's

students was 72.2% (shown by the bold line in the rectangular box), the upper limit was 98% and the lower limit was 40%.

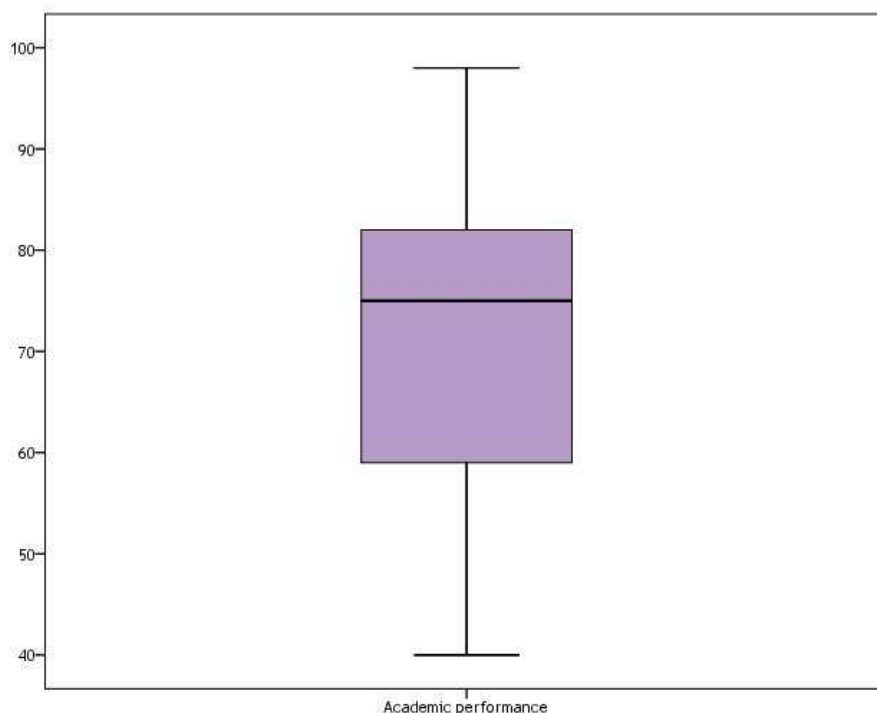


Figure 4.Box Plot of Academic Performance of the Student Taught by the Sampled Teachers

Figure 4 depicts a box plot of Instructional Leadership Index. The mean Instructional Leadership Index was 33.7 (represents by the bold line inside the rectangular box), with the upper limit was 45 and the lower limit was 20 (Figure 4). Simply put, the sampled teachers rated the instructional leadership in their

school as low as 20 and the highest being 45. This means that there are teachers whom believed that instructional leadership in their school is low (20) and reverse was also true (45). The scores were out of a possible maximum of 48 and a minimum of 1.

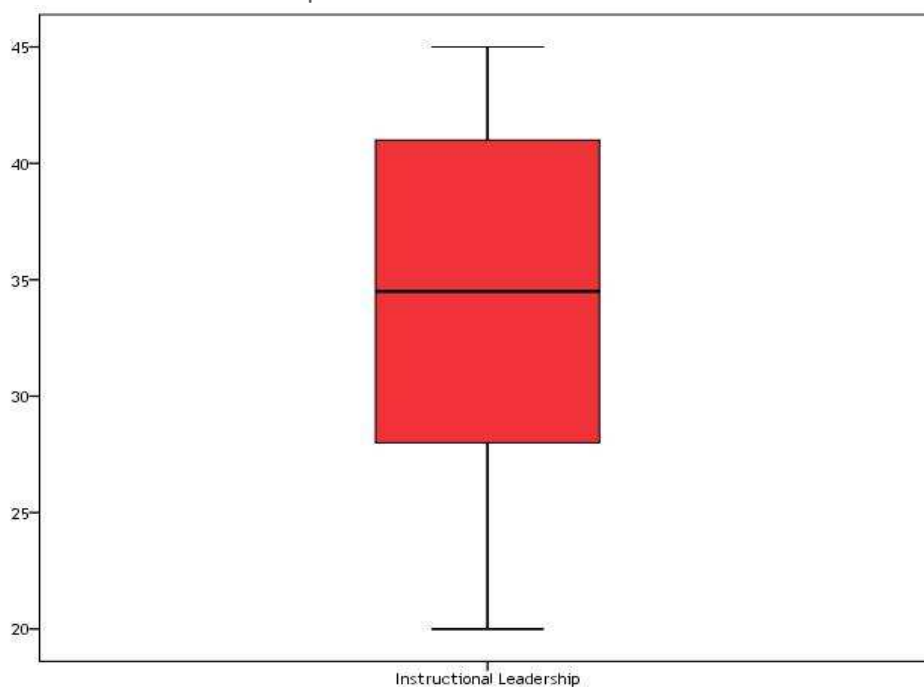


Figure 5.Box Plot of Instructional Leadership

Figure 5 shows a scatter diagram of academic performance of students for the sampled teachers and instructional leadership index. On eyeballing the scatter diagram (Figure 5), there is a positive statistical correlation between the two aforementioned variables. In fact, using squared R, a significant statistical relationship existed between academic performance and instructional leadership. Furthermore, with a value of 0.014 (or 1.4%) it suggests that the

linear relationship is a positively weak one as only 1.4% of the variance in academic performance of the teacher's students can be accounted for by instructional leaderships. This denotes that almost 98.6% of the variance in the academic performance of students for the sampled teachers is not based on instructional leadership, as well as the relationship may not be a linear one.

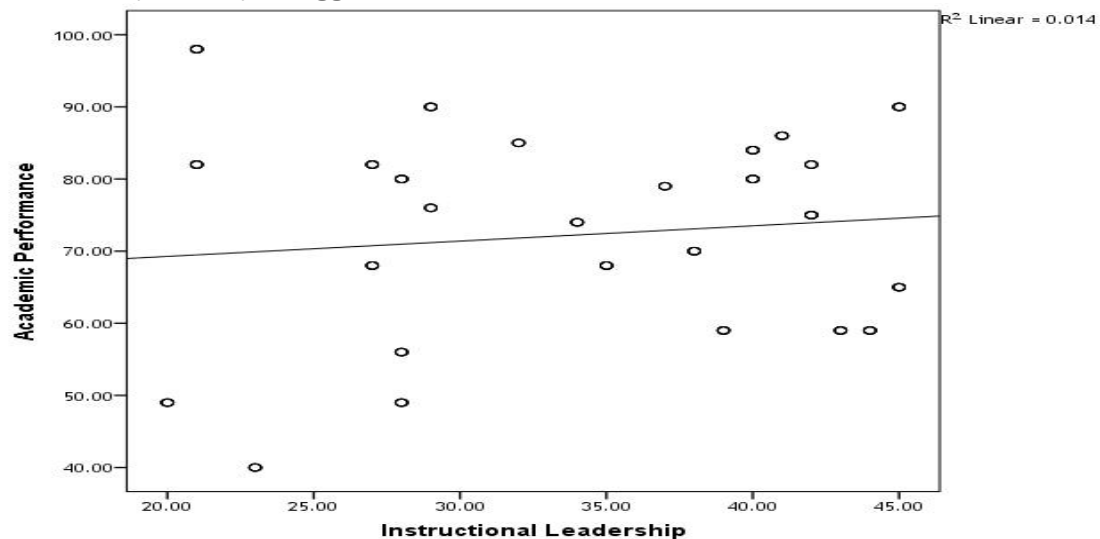


Figure 6. Scatter Diagram of Academic Performance of the Teacher's Students and Instructional Leadership Index

Figure 6 depicts a non-linear scatter diagram between the academic performance of the teacher's students and instructional leadership. Clearly, the relationship between the two aforementioned variables is not curvilinear one

as the squared R accounts for 1.9% of the variability in academic performance and instructional leadership as in this case the squared r only increased by five tenths percentage (Figure 6).

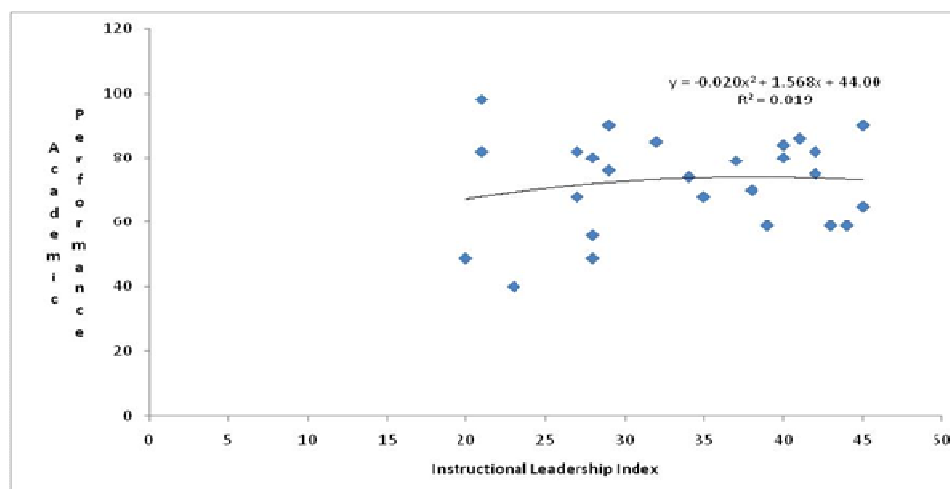


Figure 7. Scatter Diagram of the Academic Performance of the Teacher's Students and Instructional Leadership

In the qualitative data gathering (elite interviews with teachers and educational administrators in the secondary school studied), all the participants indicated that instructional leadership influences academic performance of the students in the institution. They argued that the very nature of instructional leadership lends itself to improvements in academic performance of the students. The belief that continuous gathering of data and using them to feedback in the teaching-learning process facilitates improvements in academic performance of students as well as the atmosphere that this accounts lends itself to. Some of the respondents recalled what has happened in their institutions to justify the linkage between academic performance of the students and instructional leadership. Ms. Clarke (pseudo name) stated that “[If the students] aren’t

motivated to exert their best effort because they know that no one is expecting it from them, they won’t do well academically” using that to indicate the obvious relationship between instructional leadership and academic performance of students.

Research Question Two

Can instructional leadership have an impact on teachers’ instructions?

Figure 7 shows a pie-graph of participants’ views on “Does instructional leadership influence your teaching instructions?” The majority of the respondents indicated that instructional leadership impacts their teaching instruction (82%).

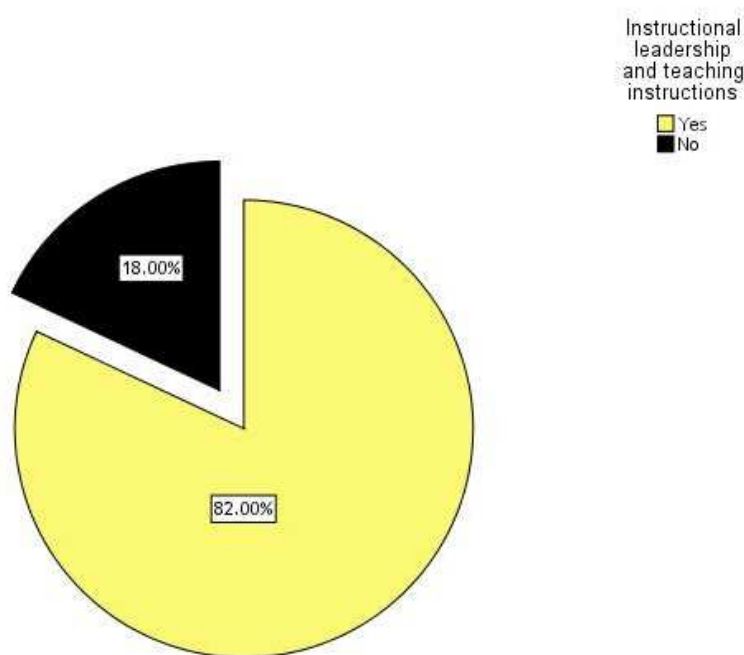


Figure 8. The influence of Instructional Leadership on Teaching Instructions

Eight three and eight tenth (83.8) percentage points of those in the non-senior teachers indicated that instructional leadership influence their teaching instruction compared

to 78.1 percentage points of those in senior teacher categorization (Figure 8), with there being statistical difference between the figures ($\chi^2 = 0.419$, $P=0.374$).

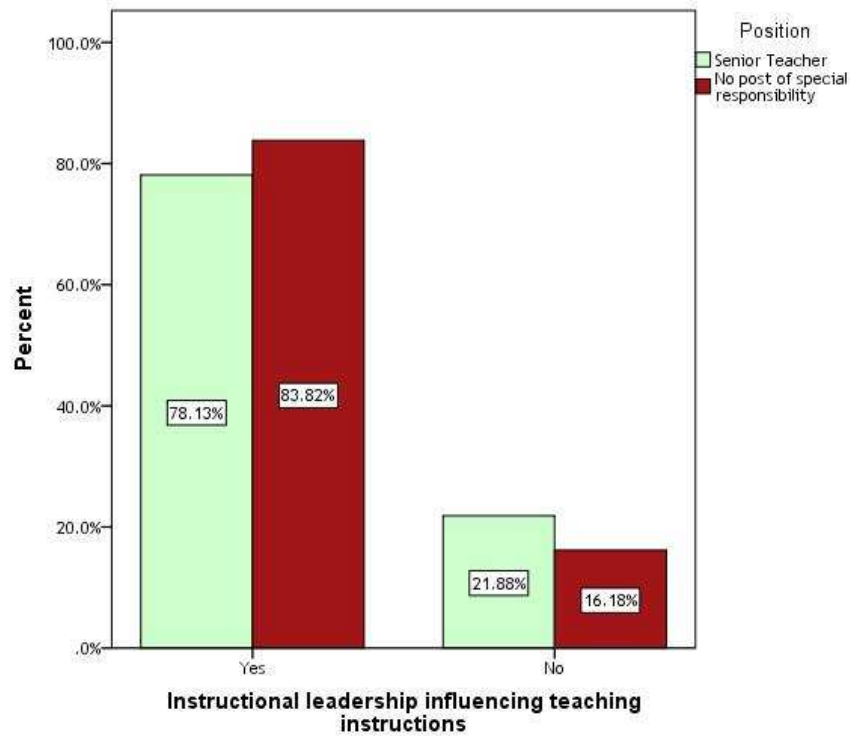


Figure 9. Instructional Leadership Influencing Teaching Instructions by Position

Figure 9 depicts the results of instructional leadership on length of service. The majority of the people in the different length of service

categorizations indicated that instructional leadership (or supervision) influences the individual's teaching instructions.

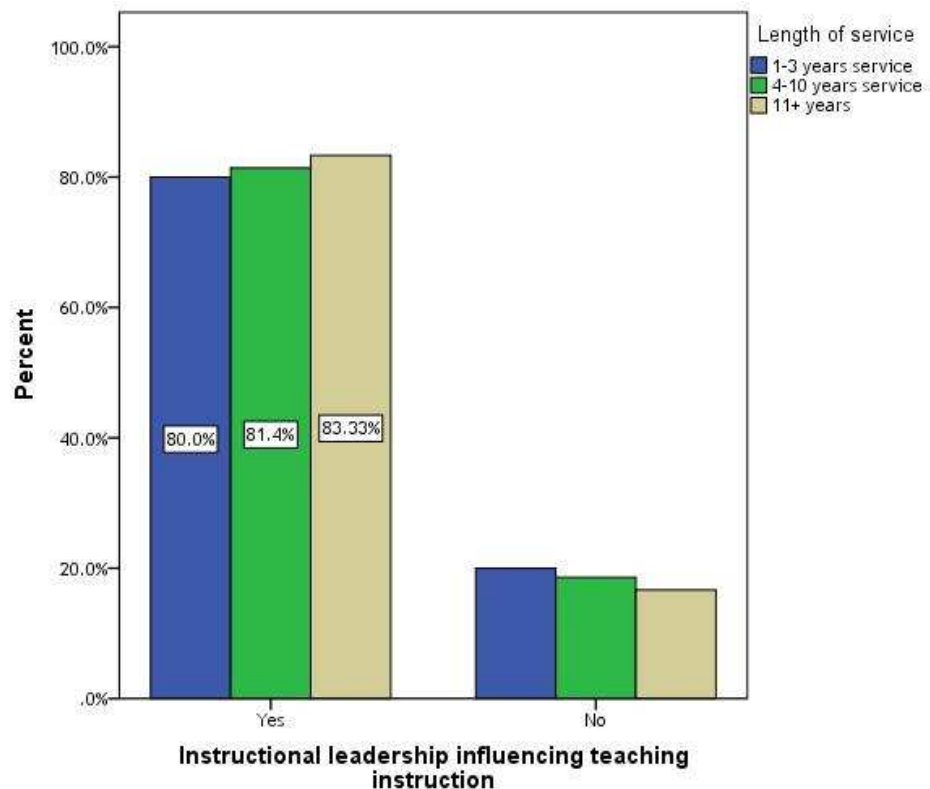


Figure 10. Instructional Leadership Influencing Teaching Instructions by Length of Service

Of those in the co-educational school type marginally believed that instructional leadership can influence teaching instructions (86.0%) compared to 78.0% of those in the

singled sex educational instrument (Figure 10), with there being no statistical relationship between the two variables ($\chi^2 = 1.084$, $P = 0.294$).

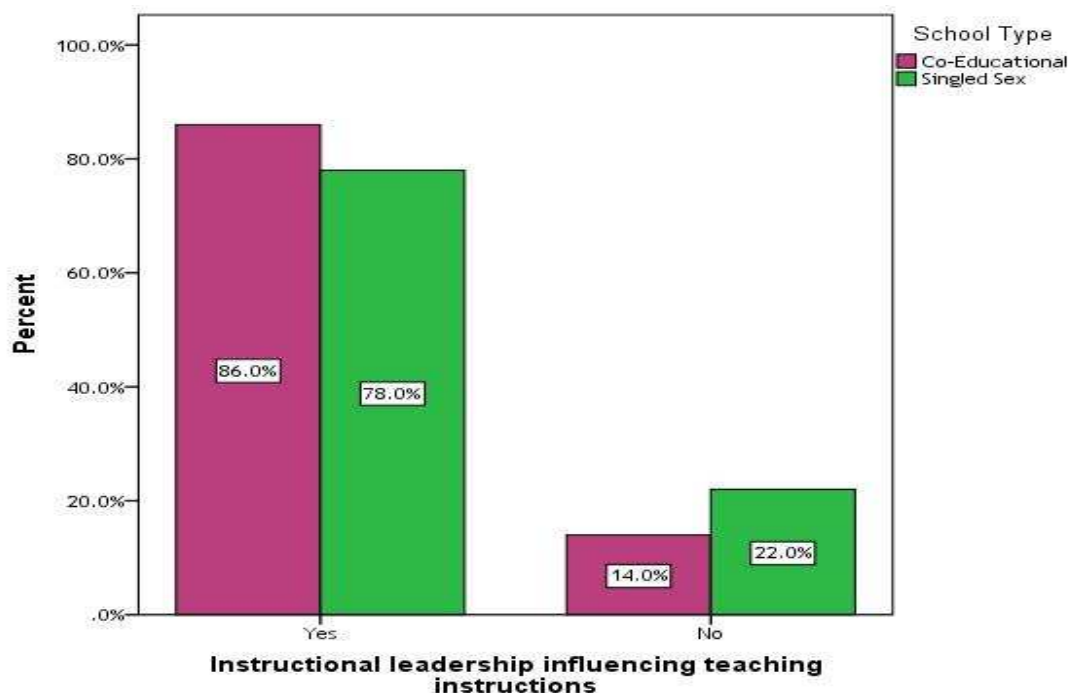


Figure 11. Instructional Leadership Influencing Teaching Instructions by School Type

Of those who are males, marginally more of them believed that instructional leadership influence teaching instructions (87.1%) compared to 77.7% of females (Figure 11).

There was no statistical relationship between the two aforementioned variables ($\chi^2 = 0.791$, $P = 0.374$).

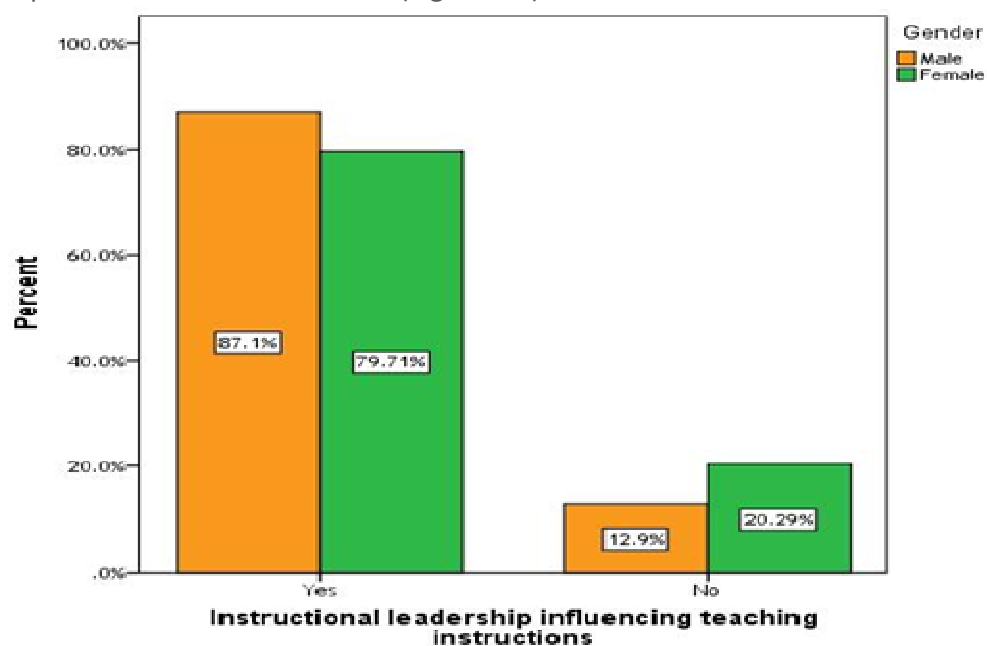


Figure 12. Instructional Leadership Influencing Teaching Instructions by Gender

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics from an Independent Sample t-test with Instructional Leadership Index and Teaching Instructions. Participants whom indicated that they used teaching instructions rate the instructional leadership at their institution to be 33.4 ± 8.3 compared to 34.3 ± 7.7 for those whom stated

that they did not use teaching instructions, with there being no statistical difference between the two values (t-test = -0.517, P = 0.607). With the P value being 0.607, it means that no statistical relationship exist because the value is greater than 0.05 (or 5%).

Table 4.Independent Sample t-test of Instructional Leadership Index and Teaching Instruction

| Characteristic | Mean standard deviation |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Teaching instruction | |
| Instructional leadership index | |
| Yes | 33.4 8.3 |
| No | 34.3 7.7 |

t-test = -0.517; P = 0.607

Research Question Three

Does instructional leadership vary based on the typology of school?

The box plot of instructional leadership index by typology of school revealed that participants in singled sex secondary educational institutions rate instructional leadership in their schools as greater 39.6 ± 4.6 compared to

their counterparts in co-educational secondary institutions (27.8 ± 6.2), t-test = -10.733, P < 0.0001 (Figure 12). A significant P value (i.e. P < 0.05 which is < 0.0001 in this study) denotes that participants in singled sex secondary educational instrument were more likely to indicate a greater instructional leadership in their school than those in co-educational secondary school.

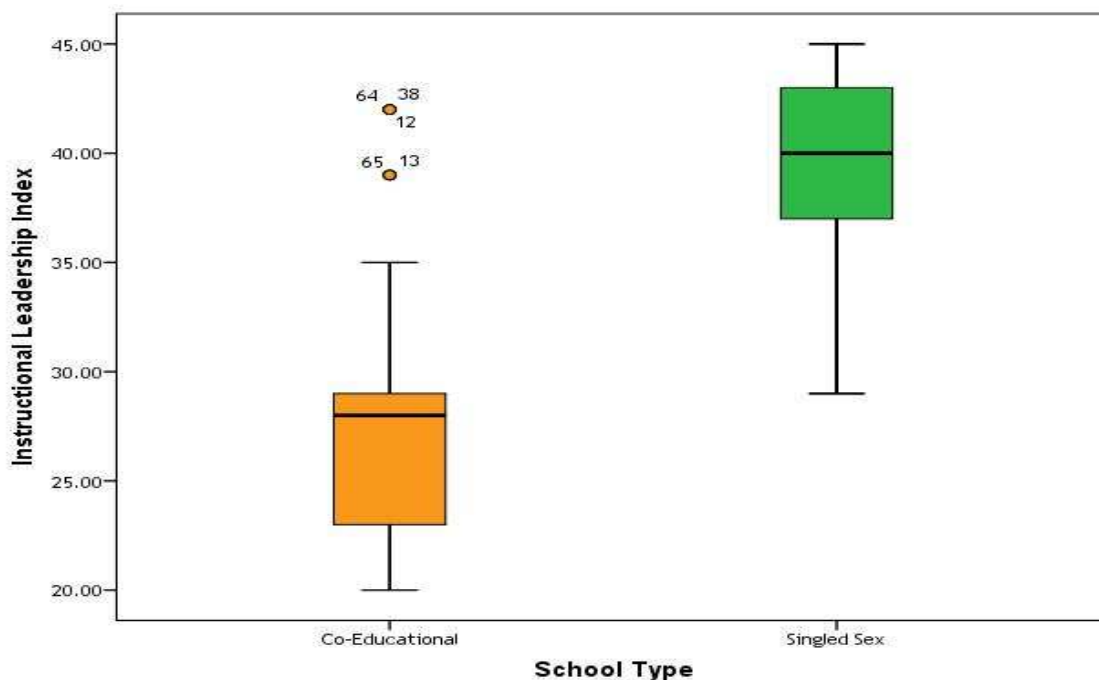


Figure 13.Box Plot of Instructional Leadership Index by School Type

Research Question: Four Explore instructional leadership in secondary educational institutions in St. Andrew, Jamaica.

Instructional Leadership

All the participants across the interviews believed that the principal should be an

instructional leader. Ms. Bent (pseudo name) said that “If every principal were instructional leaders, schools would have teachers and students who are highly motivated and who performed at their optimal level.” She continued to say that, “Teachers would have the needed resources to improve instruction; they would know that tests results would be useful to the curriculum that the school uses and in return the necessary measures would be put in place so that students’ academic performance could be improved. If this is achieved, the school’s spirit would be lifted and teachers would move forward in a harmonious way.” The participants opined if the principal is an instructional leader, he or she would be able to marshal his/her troops for the cause. “I believe that every principal should be an instructional leader because there must be guidance from the head first and then it trickles down to other managers in the institution. Also, without a [clear] vision the people perish. Hence, the principal should have a vision for an institution, which is shared and carried forward in the instructional development of teachers and students” Mrs. Lindo said (pseudo name).

Clearly the participants were cognizant of the challenges of the secondary educational system and the benefits of that can be derived from instructional leadership as this was a sustained response across the interviews. “Yes, based on the benefits that instructional leadership provides. Employees’ turnover will be very high if a leader/principal cannot create an environment that is characterized of high expectations for students and staff. Ultimately, it will not go well for stakeholders involved in the school community if effective instructional leadership is not maintained” Mr. Reid remarked (pseudo name). One participant contextualized the role of the principal, and then used this to argue the importance of instructional leadership in schools. “It is the principal’s responsibility to work with teachers to define educational objectives, create a climate of high expectation for both staff and students, provide the necessary resources for learning, communicate these to the relevant personnel and create new learning

opportunities for students and staffers. Those reasons provide the rationale for instructional leadership and the primary leader being the principal” Ms. Matthews argued (pseudo name). Ms. Matthews’ perspective was equally shared by other interviewees, with variations in how the issue was expressed. This was aptly captured in participant’s argument, “They [scholars] said that every instructional leadership encompasses a commitment to the achievement of academic goals, creates order and discipline in a school, improve the culture and climate of the institution, emphasizes good time management techniques and the provision of resources to improve classroom practices and academic performance. If instructional leadership offers all these benefits, then all principals despite their cumbersome workload even if they have to delegate, they should embrace this concept.”

The principals interviewed for this study were cognizant of the concept of instructional leadership. They even demonstrated how the issue of instructional leadership was embraced by them and they seek to execute many of its tenets. One principals indicated that he 1) walked the corridors, 2) observed some classes in session, 3) seek to motivate heads of departments and the general staffers, 4) seek to standardize tests and mark schemes, 5) have common lesson plans, 6) seek to improve the physical infrastructure, 7) have regular feedback following internal and external examinations, and 8) and improve technological capabilities of the institution. While the other principal, was more relaxed, confident and eager to express her on the nature of instructional leadership. She contended that “Firstly, school leadership to a great extent has significant effects on students’ learning as well as teacher motivation. Every principal, although our job description is a mammoth one, embracing instructional leadership is of paramount importance when managing a school. It allows administration to be intimately (she chuckles) involved in the process of instructional delivery. Although we may not be physically present at all times in the classrooms, based on the relationship among

heads of department and their members and the feedback I receive, I am cognizant of what happens in the classroom.” She continued that “Apart from the fact that that every leader is in the business of management being an instructional leader is inextricably linked to the management of a school. This is also important as it helps one to do an evaluation of the students’ progress and initiate programmes/strategies to address them.”

Extent of Principals as Instructional Leadership

All the participants expressed some variations in the extent of instructional leadership at their institution. It appears that the educational training of many of the interviewees made them adequate and comprehensive aware of instructional leadership, its tenets and how it should be employed in schools. Ms. Lyttle (pseudo name) said that “My principal doesn’t understand what instructional leadership means much less to embrace it. From his approach to leadership, he may be attempting to be an instructional leader, but he is failing to improve curriculum, create a climate of high expectations for staff and students, evaluate tests results and make recommendations for improvement and provide resources to improve instruction and motivate staff and students on a regular basis”. Unlike Ms. Lyttle, the other participants believed that their principals generally understand the concept, and has been satisfactorily practicing it in the school. Accompanying the satisfactory remark by the participants is the claim that there is need for more improvement on the extent of the instructional leadership practiced at their institution. On the other hand, another respondent offered an explanation why some principals are unable to effectively carry out instructional leadership, resource constraints. Mr. Clarke mentioned that “I am of the belief that he is hampered by a lack of financial resources to implement certain elements of such leadership. I also am of the view that better implementation techniques use with instructional leadership can be employed. For example, staff motivation/appreciation should

not be responsibility of teachers to plan regardless of the fiscal constraints.”

Role of Instructional Leadership

In assessing the instructional capability of his principal, Mr. Tomlin noted that “On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, I would give him [my principal] 2. There is the urgent need to have an instructional leader in this school as the quality of scores in the external exams has fallen and students are not taken a serious approach to internal exams.” Clearly, participants continue to interpret their principal’s leadership approach to assess its closeness to instructional leadership, identify the gaps, examine its benefits and therefore argue for this style of leadership in schools. “Absolutely, instructional leadership is essential to the academic growth of an institution as it allows external results to improve”, Mr. Reynolds said.

The respondents contended that the feedback generated from instructional leadership provides the bedrock upon which future improvements can be made. “I believe there is a correlation between the two [instructional leadership and academic performance] because it is through the acquisition of knowledge that one is able to perform; it is through a focal point (vision) that all can work to achieve a desired goal; and motivation makes the success in academic performance even greater” Ms. Livingston said. All the participants concurred with each other that there is an obvious relationship between instructional leadership and academic performance. Ms. Spencer recalled what transpired at her school to declare that there is a positive relationship between the two aforementioned factors. “Instructional leadership boosts academic performance as the former principal focused on the curriculum and we saw a great difference in the performance of students” Ms. Spencer noted. While in the elite interview participants did not have empiricism to support the claim of a relationship between instructional leadership and academic performance, the current

quantitative study shows that there is a direct correlation between the two phenomena. Although the quantitative aspect of the study identified a positive relationship between instructional leadership and academic performance, it was weak one which opens a discussion of 'What are the other factors that influence academic performance, outside of instructional leadership?'

Ms. Sinclair commented that "Based on the fact that our principal is an instructional leader, we have been rated as the top school in a number of subject areas. Currently, all our CSEC and CAPE subjects have a pass rate of 85% and over. We examine the students' progress from first form and implement strategies to boost performance and these have been proven to be successful". It could be extrapolated from Ms. Sinclair's construction that there is a strong correlation between instructional leadership and academic performance, which would mean that things like 1) ability of the student, 2) preparation of the student, 3) how the student copes with examination stress, 4) dietary intake of the student, and 5) time management have less to contribute to academic performance than instructional leadership. While Ms. Sinclair's perspective provides an additional factor of academic performance it cannot be strong contributor to academic performance when many students have highlighted the importance of many of the aforementioned factors in performance. Like the general information that emerged from this research that there is a strong correlation between academic performance and instructional leadership as emanated from the teachers' perspective, the principals shared the same view.

Motivation

One of the themes that emerged from the elite interviews with particular stakeholders was the fact that one of the tenets of instructional leadership is motivation and it is this ingredient that good managers in schools can use to change undesired behaviours into good desired

behaviours. The participants argued by that instructional leader motivate staffers and students, it becomes easier for him/her to show the desired landmark to those involved and this increases the desire for people to excel, offer their best and be encouraged to give even more to a cause. They alluded to the psychological tenets of motivation and how it translates into positive reinforcement of desired behaviours.

Feedback

The purpose of feedback was offered by almost all of the participants in the elite interviews. People noted that it is through assessment, evaluation, analysis of issues and time reporting of what happened that one is able to identify strengths and weaknesses that are embedded into a practice. "Feedback offers information and knowledge is power" Ms. Williams said. Ms. Williams' comment was equally echoed by other interviewees including the principals. One interviewee's description of instructional leadership offers an explanation for the high quality results that feedback can provide as it highlights areas of strengths and weaknesses. "My classes are visited once per term by administration. The feedback given only serves the purpose of commending or highlighting areas that need improvement" Ms. Simpson said. It can be extrapolated from Ms. Simpson's perspective, like the others, that feedback is a resource that can be used to improve one's weaknesses and reinforces his/her strength. When the information is provided by the administrators, the information (or feedback) becomes a part of the teaching-learning process and this deepens the quality of the next exercise.

Resources and School Environment

A principal's listing of components of instructional leadership sets the stage this theme. She listed: Analysis of both internal and external exams; Continuous improvement of the physical plant; Prize giving for each grade level; Incentives scheme for staff with averages of 90% and over in external exams; Provision of

resources to boost teaching and learning; Creation of an appropriate climate for teacher to work; Open door communication process with principal; Visibility and presence of the principal; Standardization of mark schemes and common tests in departments; Intervention programmes for weak students, and Score cards for teachers as they are thoroughly evaluated by heads of department.

The principal's listing highlight that of the eleven elements outlined, the majority of them relate directly or indirectly to resources and/or school milieu. On examination of the elements of instructional leadership by a principal, it can be deduced that school's milieu extends beyond physical to the social environment. By controlling the environment in a school, it is easy to see how instructional leadership offers an explanation for good management practices and how goals can be attained by the institution and those therein. The principal's comments aptly summarized how a good environment and availability of resources for the milieu can lead to high expectations among all therein. "Oh, my teachers have to attend at least one seminar or workshop for the year. They are also in house workshops for our teachers. Once per year we have a retreat for senior staffers who have the responsibility of sharing with the other members of their department. We also do our research to investigate whether another school, although we are rated with the top performing schools, has an academic edge and we partner so best practices can be shared. Hence, the teachers have their 'fingers on the pulse' in relation to innovative ideas use in instruction" she said. The principal believed so much in the resources and social milieu that when she was asked "To what extent do you view yourself as an instructional leader", the response was "I would rate myself at 8.5 out of ten. Still [I] have a bit more work to do on the physical plant, boosting students a bit more in relation to their enthusiasm towards certain subject areas and award a bit more [to staffers] since [to] a large extent most teachers are committed to their roles and functions." Embedded in the principal's perspective is the value of the social

environment as a part of the overall quality performance of students, the outcome. It is this very reason why she added that despite the initial the role of the being to provide educating the children, aiding them as a part of the positive reinforcement mechanism will create an environment that solicits more them.

Outside of the physical resources, embodied in all the comments forwarded by participants including the principals highlight the human resource and how increasing the quality of the human resource improves overall academic performance of the students. It can be noted here that among the elements forwarded by a principal, all of them rely on the human resource to be execute and there this speaks to the importance of the quality of the human resource in obtain high quality performance in the area of academics. As such, this explains the rationale behind award incentives for high standard, gifts, materials, and provide a socio-physical environment that will allow the human capital to function at its highest and therefore this will provide the high end yields or outcomes. The aforementioned is captured in this statement made by a principal that "...Just take a look at our internal and external results (hope I am being modest). If a leader embraces even a significant aspect of this type of leadership [i.e. instructional leadership], (s)he would reap benefits as long as (s)he is cognizant of the cliché, delegate or die."

Discussion and Recommendation

Among the legacies of British in the Caribbean, particularly Jamaica is an educational system that is substantially based on testing and evaluation to determine competence and knowledge. Jamaica's educational system is fundamentally predicted on testing and evaluation as the bedrock to indicate degree of performance.⁷ The secondary school system in Jamaica, like the wider Caribbean, is based on external examination to determine further academic pursuit of pupils. Currently, many nations in the Caribbean used the Caribbean Examination Council certification to ascribe knowledge and competence of students at the

secondary level. Prior to the Caribbean Examination Council certification in the Caribbean was 1) Cambridge Examination Council (GCE), 2) Pitman Examination, 3) London Examination Council and other examinations developed and designed in Britain to evaluate performance at the secondary level. Although an external examination (or test) is not only indicator of performance, it is widely accepted as a summary of capability, skills, knowledge, competence and aptitude future studies or employment. There is no denial that testing and evaluation are a part of culture in Jamaica and other Caribbean nations used to assess academic performance, which is adaptation the British Educational System. Caribbean children are culturalized into testing and evaluation and dates back to elementary school where students are assessed internally and finally by the Ministry of Education (Grade Six Achievement Test or GSAT). The entire society is structure on testing and evaluation of pupils that students are adjudged as succession on the premise that they reach a particular standard on internal and external examination. It is this reality that explains why pupils who attend secondary schools are adjudged in Jamaica. The evaluation is not singly for the students as it is also for the teachers, and ultimately the yardstick for assessing the performance of a principal. Such situation accounts for the continuously demands and pressure placed on principals to produce students who have met the internal and external expectations in testing and measurement.

There is much psychological pressure placed on students in the educational system in Jamaica, and this begins at the primary level. The psychological stressors levied on Jamaican students have been expounded upon by Luton D, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Edward Seaga and the present Minister of Education, Ronald Thwaites as well as scholars, Colquhoun and Bourne.¹⁵ Luton D wrote an article which was caption 'GSAT is apartheid', which aptly summarises the challenges of students at the primary level.¹⁵ Luton D opined that Thwaites

[Current Minister of Education] said "this high-stakes terminal examination wreaks fear and trauma among parents and children alike, all because of the perceived and the real absence of quality secondary places".¹⁵ Despite the captions and speeches made by different influential Jamaica, students are still adjudged based on the testing and evaluation system. On examination of Seaga's perspective again highlights the travails of many students and parents and not the least are there teachers and principals.

Seaga E opined that: The consequence of the excessive homework burden falls on the parent/caregiver who either responds by giving full assistance to the student, or fails to respond, leaving the student to take on the responsibility alone. Obviously, the degree of assistance received will markedly improve the success of the student. Although this is a desirable relationship between parents and children, the first part of the problem starts here.²²

The GSAT is not a once-a-year problem. It is an insidious problem for the great majority of parents and caregivers, almost daily. This agitation occurs particularly with those responsible for nine and 10-year-old students approaching the dreaded GSAT exam that is taken at age 11. The heavy burden of homework in preparation for GSAT is occupying from two or three hours. This is a prime grievance.²²

Seaga's comment that "The GSAT is not a once-a-year problem. It is an insidious problem for the great majority of parents and caregivers, almost daily", can be juxtaposed for all external examinations, parents and caregivers.²² The teachers and principals of all schools in Jamaica are continuously assessed based on internal and external testing and measurement; and much pressure is placed on them for perform at an expected standard. Students are placed under 'invisible disability' to perform academically in schools (Hill and Wigfield, 1984), and should come as no surprise the stressful milieu that is created for them result

in low academic performance (Hill and Sarason, 1966). The psychological stressors levied on students account for their low academic performance, and it is the teachers, particularly the principals, who are held accountable for the dismal performance of pupils.⁹ While academic performance is influenced by social milieu and psychological issues; the teachers' motivation and expectation as well as the principals' input are among many factors that influence academic performance of pupils.^{2,3,6,14,17,19,20} Yet the principal is held accountable for the students' successes and failures. The principal is equated to the manager of a fortune five company, and (s)he is totally responsible for failure and successes of the institution and explains the rationale behind the concept of instructional leadership as a tool for school management which emerged in the 1980s in America.^{10,34}

The principal is expected to be a person who effectively coalesces all the resources, human and otherwise, with the primary purpose of meeting the expected outcome of the society. The expected outcome of the society is high expectation of the students, expressed in terms of high performance on internal and/or external testing measurements. Cotton (2003) cited the idea that effective instructional leadership involved principals who were intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly impacts on students' achievement. With instructional improvement at the top of a principal's priority list, there is the autonomy to ensure that the major issues or concerns are addressed in the educational setting. Short and Spencer (1990) opined that instructional leadership included various elements which were extremely important if principals hoped to accomplish academic success. The principal should be able to prioritize according to the needs of the institution. On reading the literature, the impression is given that instructional leadership accounts for a significant change in academic performance of students. This study refutes the perspective that instructional leadership accounts for a strong influence on the performance of pupils. In fact, the current

work found that instructional leadership accounts for only 1.4% of the variance in academic performance of students. Clearly there is a weak statistical correlation between instructional leadership and academic performance of students, which concurs with a research done by Leithwood K et al.³¹

The present findings highlight that academic performance is influenced by instructional leadership; but that its impact is minimal on performance of students unlike the claims alluded to in the literature and in the qualitative aspect of this work. This work went further than previous studies on instructional leadership, by examining the students' academic performance, degree of instructional leadership and other factors that influence outcome of students on internal and external examinations. Currently, the pupils in the sample are high performers although instructional leadership was moderately practiced by the studied principals. If the pupils are high performers in a moderate instructional leadership milieu, it follows that there are other factors that account for their academic achievement. Included among the factors that influenced academic performance are 1) self-esteem, 2) aptitude of students, 3) parental background including income, 4) coping strategies, 5) teacher involvement and 6) socio-physical milieu including the school's environment.

When one argues that instructional leadership is strongly correlated with academic performance of students, (s)he is postulating that self-esteem, socio-physical environment, coping strategies, intelligence quotients, parental background, nutrition and students' attitude towards academic are lawyerly correlated with academic performance. Purkey WW found that self-esteem is directly associated with academic performance.¹⁸ In fact, another study by Colquhoun LK, Bourne PA discovered a strong positive statistical correlation between general academic performance and self-esteem ($r_s = 0.611$, $P < 0.0001$).⁷ A research found a weak statistical correlation between self-esteem and academic

performance.⁸ This work did not examine either self-esteem as a variable in the quantitative or qualitative research and so cannot comment, except to say that other factors account for academic performance of the present work based on unexplained variance having taken out instructional leadership.

With academic performance being great among the sampled respondents even though instructional leadership is moderate denotes that something else is account for the high performance of the pupils involved in this research. A factor that was not examined is stressors. There are many empirical studies that have established the inverse statistical association between stressors and academic performance and in fact some found that those with less stressors are the better academic performers, suggesting that pupils in this study may be the among the lowly stressed ones.^{1,12,13,21} Even among a secondary school aged cohort, a study by Malik P, Balda S found that even among adolescents with high Intelligence Quotient (IQ), 110 and over, academic stress was indirectly associated with academic performance ($r = -0.37$, $P < 0.05$).¹⁶ Again, there is nothing to test this work in the present work; but this finding offers an insight to other factors that can account for remaining 98.6% of the unexplained variance in academic performance having accounted for instructional leadership (1.4%).

Another issue that was not discounted for in this research is the motivational level among the sampled students. Ms. Bent (pseudo name) said that "If every principal were instructional leaders, schools would have teachers and students who are highly motivated and who performed at their optimal level" as if to say that instructional leader must be able motive the students to the desired level. The Bent ascribed almost everything good with academic performance to instructional leadership, and in this failure to accept that there is internal and external motivation and that the student may be intrinsically motivated which has nothing to do with the school or the principal. It can be

extrapolated from the present findings that the students in this study have motivated outside of instructional leadership, and that principalship had little to explain the good academic performance of the pupils.

There is no denial that the management of a school influences academic performance and the contribution of a principal aid in better (or worse) academic outcomes of pupils; but in the same breath instructional leadership should not be ascribed the king of performance of students when it is not.

Management in education is not an end in itself. Good management is an essential aspect of any education service, but its central goal is the promotion of effective teaching and learning ... The task of management at all levels in the education service is ultimately the creation and support of conditions under which teachers and their students are able to achieve learning. The extent to which effective learning is achieved therefore becomes the criterion against which the quality of management is to be judged (South African Task Team Report, 1996:27 in Bush, 2003, 401).

Clearly the management of the school accounts for an aspect of the performance of students, but we should be mindful that such performance cannot be limited to good instructional leader as in this case it is not. While this research understand Lunenburg and Ornstein's perspective that effective schools have the following characteristics; Safe and orderly environment; Clear school mission; Instructional leadership; A climate of high expectations; High time on task; Frequent monitoring of students' progress, and Positive home school relations (pp4, p345), many other factors such as nutrition, self-esteem, parental background, peer group and other issues are of even greater importance in academic performance of the sampled respondents. The statement made by a principal that "...Just take a look at our internal and external results (hope I am being modest). If a leader embraces even a significant aspect of this type of leadership [i.e. instructional leadership], (s)he

would reap benefits as long as (s)he is cognizant of the cliché, delegate or die”, would suggest that instructional leadership is most significant factor influence academic performance of students, which is absolutely not the case in this study. While the school atmosphere, resource materials, teachers’ competence, continuously feedback and assessment, and management of the human and physical resources provide some influence on learning outcomes, they play a secondary role to improving academic performance.

The current work has gone beyond the literature by examining instructional leadership employed by two school types in St. Andrew, Jamaica. A significant finding which emerges is that instructional leadership is more practiced in the singled sex secondary school than in the co-educational secondary institution studied. Although the singled sex secondary school is among the top academic performers in Jamaica, the top secondary school is a co-educational institution, which further goes to mitigates against the concept that instructional leadership is the most important factor influencing academic performance in students at the secondary level. In fact, the top academic secondary school in Jamaica, Campion College, has a number of characteristics that can explain it high achievement among the students. The factors are, on average, family live to good neighbours, have access to financial resources, students can be assigned specific tutelage if needs be, children have access to available needed material resources, good nutrition, and are exposed to less psychological stressors like those students who dwell in inner-city communities. Another issue that accounts for the greater academic performance among students who attend Campion College is the aptitude of the pupils who were sent there from GSAT. The students are the top performers and therefore this institution has an advantage over those who are allotted poor-to-moderate academic performers. Hence, instructional leadership cannot balance the imbalances of students, particularly as it relates to academic attitude. As students with

greater intelligence quotient (IQ) with limited instructional supervision are highly likely to outperform those with lower IQ and more instructional supervision. Like Campion college, the singled sex secondary educational institution in this study have students who were top performers in the GSAT examination averaging 80+% compared to those in the co-educational institutional school with an average of 70+%. So when the principal remarked that “...Just take a look at our internal and external results (hope I am being modest). If a leader embraces even a significant aspect of this type of leadership [i.e. instructional leadership], (s)he would reap benefits as long as (s)he is cognizant of the cliché, delegate or die” a part of this academic performance of the students are embodied in their aptitude than the instructional leadership.

There are many schools that receive students of below average academic performance and they are expecting to create miracle in five years. The society expect principals of these secondary education institutions, having received those at the bottom of the academic rank on the GSAT examination, to effectively compete with those whom receive the highest GSAT scores. These institutions are told to employ instructional leadership to correct a problem that is endemic in the educational system, and one that has perplexed educational administrators and policy makers. While this secondary educational institution endeavours to employ strategies and programmes to combat the initial handicap, the results are usually dismally low. Instead for provide the necessary support programmes and mechanism, the teachers; students and principals are belittled by senior ministers of government. In fact, former Minister of Education (then Minister) classified those institutions has ‘failing schools’ and decry principals for the dismally low performance of students.¹¹ The challenge of many principals of these failing schools is how to modernize and transform poor performing students, using low GSAT scores, to effectively compete with those students whom are 1) from good parental background (including income), 2) good

support system and milieu, 3) proper nutrition, 4) high IQ and 5) all the social amenities including those at their schools and when they do not match up, the teachers and administrators are blame for the social inequalities in the educational system. Clearly, instructional leadership is unable to correct the social inequalities in the educational system as it has little to do with academic performance of students. The issue is do not blame principals for an educational system that is need of overall, urgent overhaul, modernization and social equities.

Conclusion

In summary, instructional leadership influence academic performance of students. The loft that is created about instructional leadership does not hold true in this study as it has a weak positive correlation with academic performance. While instructional leadership offers an explanation for greater academic performance among students in this research, it influence is still secondary to other factors and the justification is because it accounts for only 1.4% of the variability in academic performance of students.

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