
Effects of School Leadership on Students' Outcome: A Case Study of the School's Directors in Jerash

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Abstract. The last three decades have witness several education modifications projected to increase the standards of students' success. These modifications have brought about school leadership becoming of immense significance in global education. This significance arises from a perception that school leadership can considerably affect the value of teaching and learning in their schools, and accordingly, student success, by enhancing the working circumstances of their teachers, and the environment and ambiance of their schools. Many leadership theories have been put forward in academic related literature, with instructional and transformational leadership as the favorite models. This paper will evaluate the influence of both instructional and transformational leadership models on enhancing students' outcomes. This evaluation will be done through three vital points of focus - teaching and learning, the Joint development of schools' vision and goals, and knowledge of and engagement with external factors affecting their school.

Key words: School leadership, principals, students' outcomes, students' performance, transformational and institutional leadership.

Introduction .The last three decades have witnessed countless reforms in education seeking to increase the achievement standards of students. Due to the intricacy and continuously changing school conditions created by these reforms, school leadership have become an area of huge interest in global education as it is more and more recognized as playing an important role in improving students' performance (Mulford, 2008; Day Gu and Sammons, 2016). Applicable journals for instance, Dhuey and Smith (2014), Heck and Hallinger (2014), have established the influence of teachers' quality on students' success. Researchers' interest in school management arises from the thought that the pattern of leadership of principals can create a considerable disparity to the quality of learning and teaching in their schools, and consequently students' success, by

enhancing the environment and climate of their school as well as the working conditions of their teachers (Shatzer *et al.*, 2014, Pont, Nusche and Hunter, 2008). Researchers like Leithwood, Jantzi and McElheron- Hopkins (2006) has undeniably suggested that after classroom teaching, leadership pattern is the second most influential variable on students' learning. Furthermore, a review of empirical research on school leadership by Hallinger (2010) concluded that leaders can have mediated or indirect positive influence on students' performance by creating a mutual organizational learning traditions, and assisting in developing the leadership abilities of personnel and society. These stakeholders like teachers and parents and can subsequently help with the building of a serene school environment that encourages teaching/learning process, and consequently

student's performance. Transformational and instructional leadership are the most frequently cited theories in literature related to education (Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe, 2008). Both of these theories have been approved by researchers as suitable models of leadership for school principals (Hallinger, 2003, Shatzer *et al.*, 2014). Though there is a number of overlap between these theories, discrete differences exist between them as well. These conditions could puzzle leaders of school seeking the best model to advance their students performance. This paper will assess the benefits of both transformational and instructional leadership patterns for contributing to student performances. This investigation will take place via three main areas of interest: teaching and learning, the mutual setting of school objectives and visions, and knowledge of and engagement with peripheral factors affecting their schools.

Literature Review Jordanian Universities and the Education System

Universities are common institutions that are capable of making valuable and productive contributions to sustainable progress and increase the level of academic and scientific research, services and different problems that concern society in all facets, besides contributing efficiently to the replenishment of the life of society. Hence, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan holds these higher educational institutions in high esteem so as to become very much spirited and able to give the community enduring learning experiences in terms of its present and prospective needs (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2019). The majority of universities in Jordan make use of the American University model anchored in the credit hour system, which affords students plasticity in making choice

of the number of hours, Morning or Evening. There are ten (10) government universities, most of which affiliated with universities in the United Kingdom and the United States. Also there are seventeen (17) private universities recognized at the level of Arab countries and a few foreign universities, like the American University. Jordanian universities attract a huge number of Arab and non-Arab foreign students every year (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2019).

Instructional and Transformational Leadership Theories

The main hub of instructional leadership centers on the educational advancement of students. These include the importance of setting discrete academic goals, curriculum planning, and assessment of the quality of teachers and their instruction. This model assume that principals should concentrated their efforts on the advancement of improved performance for students, and the significance of improving the value of classroom learning and teaching (Day *et al.*, 2016). Hallinger (2003) puts instructional leadership more specifically in perspective, as "involving three key goals: 1) defining the school's goals, 2) supervising the delivery of the curriculum, and 3) encouraging a positive school learning environment". Studies on instructional leadership have established that instructional leadership has the ability to influence student success, principally via improvements to school culture and teacher's work conditions. These studies have established that it has the ability to have a greater evident effect on student success than transformational leadership, chiefly due to the fact that it places greater emphasis on the quality of teachers and their teaching (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008; Shatzer *et al.*, 2014).

Transformational leadership centers on building school traditions and idea to improve the quality of learning and school teaching, people's development, and organizational improvement (Shatzer *et al.*, 2014). Transformation schools' principals recognize and share school vision, inspire and lead others by example, create a learning tradition, and promote undertaking of professional development by employees. Shatzer *et al.*, (2014) noted that "transformational leadership theory focuses on four key areas: 1) inspirational motivation, 2) individualized consideration, 3) idealized influence (charisma), and 4) intellectual stimulation". Bogler (2005) and Griffith, (2004) stated that higher emphasis on individuals has been recognized to affect the behavior of teachers, school environment, and satisfaction positively. While transformational leadership is capable of greatly influencing teachers, several researches like Leithwood and Jantzi, (2006), Ross and Gray, (2006) have established that these positive effects have a far weaker effect on students' success. There are many key ways in which transformational leadership differs from instructional leadership. While instructional leadership employs a top down approach in which leaders are the principal decision makers; transformational leadership gives a more dispersed or bottom up approach (Hallinger, 2003). For instance, instructional leaders manage and reward their workers as they work towards achieving a set goal while transformational leaders involve their workers in building a general vision, and motivate them to accomplish it more independently. Also, instructional leadership makes making changes with fundamental curriculum a priority, while transformational leaders make use of the mutual vision they

have created with their workers to drive change and channel school reforms.

A Focus on Teaching and Learning

Dinham (2008) noted that a widespread focus on teaching and learning was explicit amongst schools where outstanding students' performances were observed. Principals' leadership represents a vital dynamic in creating and sustaining an atmosphere in which students could learn, teachers could teach, and outstanding performance could take place (Louis *et al.*, 2010). The quality of teachers is a chief focus of instructional leadership, and this model seems to support better this research. Certainly, transformational leadership has been condemned (e.g., Marks and Printy, 2003) for not adequately emphasizing education. Many researchers have agreed that the influence of school leadership could be indirect regardless of the influence of leaders of schools (Mulford, 2008; Witziers, Bosker & Kruger, 2003). The principals' influence can be regulated by organizational variables like classroom practice, school tradition and teachers. These factors can significantly diminish the direct impacts principals have on performance success by their students. Though numerous factors may moderate the influence of school leadership on the learning of their students, principals can affect the working environment and stimulation of their teachers, who do influence classroom practice and students' learning directly (Pont *et al.*, 2008). Transformational and instructional leadership models converge on areas including school traditions and teacher skills, and thus might both help leaders in advancing student performance through their impact over these dynamics. Involvement of staff in the creation of a mutual school vision might have positive influence on school traditions and teachers' experience alike.

Building and Sharing the School Vision

There is need for school principals to channel their efforts towards various scopes of leadership so as to make their schools successful. In their words, Leithwood and Day (2007) stated that "of all these leadership dimensions, building vision and setting school directions is the dimension that accounts for the largest proportion of leadership effects on student outcomes". Likewise, Robinson (2007) stated that "higher performing schools contained leaders who deliberately focused more of their time on communicating clear academic and learning goals". Such goals span through several contradictory demands to identify what is vital, and accordingly where to center effort and attention of students and staff. Leaders are capable of influencing both teachers and their approach to work through focusing their staff on improving the school's academic performance, and setting meeting the schools' goals a pivot focus of daily pursuit and process. Transformational and instructional leadership models equally center on improving school traditions so as to better student's performance, and could thus help school leaders seeking to advance in this aspect. In order be efficient in developing a school vision, school leaders require a capability to convene their vision for their school in a manner that stimulates other important stakeholders (Mulford & Edmunds, 2009).

External Awareness and Engagement

Several factors may affect the leadership pattern and efficiency of school leaders. Such factors may include individual's capacities and skills, district and school policies, interests of stakeholders, and the family conditions of the school students (Dhuey and Smith, 2014).

Leithwood and Day (2007) in like manner observed that location and size of school, and the students' socio- economic status (SES) are further considerations that can influence effects of leadership. Silins and Mulford (2004) has equally noted that "principals in higher-SES schools exercised more active instructional leadership than their counterparts in schools serving students of lower SES". The school mission and goals for instance, were characterized differently in high and low SES efficient schools, with low SES schools emphasizing the mastery of fundamental skills. SES can also affect the way leaders build community relationships (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986). The authors observed that there were much stronger relationship between homes and schools in high SES schools. This is vital in as some researchers have established that parents must be involved in their children's academics since they can have a significant impact on their education performance by aiding their learning at home (Leithwood, Sun and Pollock, 2017). In higher SES schools, principals frequently looked for ways to engage community members while in lower SES schools, principals regulated entrance into the school in an effort to guard the school's curriculum from outside factors that might decrease its usefulness. These factors indisputably affect students' achievement of academic performance; however, principals play a vital role in promoting the development of conditions favorable for effective instruction and learning.

Results and Discussions

There is no lone leadership model that is efficient for improving all students' and all schools' outcomes. This concept concludes that "improvement requires leaders to enact a wide range of practices" (Leithwood and Sun, 2012). Efficient leadership is a vastly

contextualized and responsive relational process (Hallinger, 2010). Before school principals choose the leadership methods and policies they will employ for improvement, it is important that they ensure they have acquired a strong understanding of the distinctive aspects of their school. Earlier research results have revealed that instructional leadership is capable of accounting for better achievements in student education success than transformational leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003). Nevertheless, Marks and Printy (2003) stated that, "concentrated instructional leadership had minimal impact if leaders only responded to external policy-driven demands of accountability and performance". They concluded that "when transformational and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students is substantial". This idea is maintained by other researchers who have used terms such as "leadership for learning" (Heck and Hallinger, 2014) and leadership "layering" (Day *et al.*, 2016). In spite of using diverse terms, this research agrees that effective leadership should consist both the capacity-building standpoint of transformational leadership, and learning and teaching foci of instructional leadership. Day *et al.* (2016) revealed that in schools where their students' academic outcomes improved, principals had employed an integrated leadership style to initiate and productively execute changes that enhanced teaching and learning. An integrated leadership approach is as well apt to be a good foundation for other principals looking to develop their students' academic outcomes of. Applicable texts like Mulford (2008) and Day Gu and Sammons (2016) have agreed

that school principals usually possess a measurable, but principally indirect influence on students' outcomes. The possible impact of school leaders on student education performance is usually regulated by other factors like classroom procedures, school environment and teacher quality. More especially, efficient instructional and transformational leadership is intimately connected to improve organizational culture and effectiveness, and as well amplified teacher dedication and appointment. These factors are largely coupled to enhance student outcomes Orphanos and Orr, (2014). Leaders can contribute to improvement of students' outcomes by affecting the environment in which teaching and learning take place, and by developing capacity for specialized change and learning. Leaders can take on the dynamic outside environments that capable of influencing their schools outside of the school (Pont *et al.*, 2008). This paper has propagated the view that school leaders can employ an integrated leadership method to enhance the success of their students by focusing more on jointly establishing school vision and goals, teaching and learning, and having a deeper understanding of and more thorough engagement with the external factors affecting their school.

Conclusion.

Although, there has been several studies on how school and classroom conditions influence students' learning, there has been limited focus on how principals can influence those conditions positively (Leithwood and Day, 2007), particularly, the function of school leaders in improving teachers' efficiency, and minimizing inconsistency in efficiency among their teachers. More attention should be focused on this subject matter, mostly longitudinal

research, since improvements in school can take many years to become obvious. While researchers like Heck and Hallinger (2014) have suggested integrating aspects of transformational and instructional leadership, additional proof is required that regards these two approaches within the same perspective and with the same yardstick for evaluating students' success. On the other hand, schools across a wide range of perspectives should as well be evaluated so as to discover the means and extent to which these perspectives influence leadership cultures. Several school factors can influence students' learning hence, schools need to build synergy across these factors so as to build tough positive changes (Day *et al*, 2016). Since school principals are inimitably placed to aid this synergy, determining the best leadership model and procedures for various perspectives should be a vital precedence for prospective research.

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