

Head Teachers' Instructional Leadership Practices and Students' Academic Achievement in Selected Public Lower Secondary Schools in Nyagatare District, Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of head teachers' instructional leadership practices on students' academic achievements in selected public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare District. The study's objective were to find out the instructional leadership practices of head teachers, and the challenges head teachers face while applying instructional leadership practices in the selected public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare District. A simple randomly sampling was employed to select 57 teachers from lower secondary schools, while 21 head teachers were purposively selected. The data were collected via questionnaires from the teachers and interviews from head teachers. The Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data whereas qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings indicated that instructional leadership was rarely practiced by most head teachers in the public lower secondary schools of Nyagatare district. Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended that lower secondary school head teachers apply instructional leadership practices daily to enhance students' academic performance. Training head teachers on the importance of these practices is crucial for effective teaching and learning, improving teachers' careers, and boosting student success.

Keywords: Head teachers, Instructional leadership practices, Students' academic achievements

I. INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership has long been recognized as a crucial component of effective educational systems worldwide. Globally, the role of instructional leaders has evolved significantly, especially in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019. The pandemic necessitated a rapid shift to online and hybrid learning models, placing unprecedented demands on school leaders to ensure continuity in instruction while maintaining educational quality (Azorín, 2020; Harris & Jones, 2020).

In the post-pandemic era, there has been a renewed focus on instructional leadership as a means to address learning losses and disparities exacerbated by the pandemic (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Leaders were required to not only manage the logistical aspects of education but also to support teachers

and students through professional development, technological integration, and emotional well-being (Hallinger & Wang, 2021).

In many African countries, instructional leadership practices have been shaped by efforts to improve educational access and quality in under-resourced environments. Leaders often face challenges related to large class sizes, limited resources, and inadequate infrastructure. Nonetheless, there is a strong emphasis on community engagement and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ochieng & Simatwa, 2021; Bush et al., 2020).

In Rwanda, one of the strategic priorities of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) is to have an effective school leadership in every Rwandan school (2018/2024 ESSP outcome 9.1). Having an effective leader in every school is a crucial strategic decision because strong school leaders are essential to improving teaching, creating outstanding institutions and improving student academic success. Furthermore, effective school leaders are significant in turning around failing schools (2018/19 to 2023/24 ESSP outcome 9.1). The key to achieving the goal of having effective students' academic performance for all students' rests on having influential school leadership in every school.

In the context of Nyagatare, most secondary school teachers are hardly ever in the classroom interacting with students or in the staffroom preparing their educational documents accordingly. Conversely, Nyagatare District Education Office 2021, articulated that a significant portion of secondary students' level in Nyagatare district has been performing inadequately for more than three years.

Table 1: 2019 to 2022 lower secondary' academic achievements in nation examination by the Nyagatare district is provided in the table below

Academic year	2019	2020-2021	2021-2022
PASS	58.5%	61.7%	64.8%
FAIL	41.5%	38.3%	35.2%

The table above illustrates high poor academic achievements [fail rate] in the academic year of 2019 (41.5%) Nyagatare education office, 2021.

This research agrees that students' academic achievement will improve when the head teachers' leadership practices are instructionally alert and positioned closely to the classroom activities within the Nyagatare district.

The following research questions of this study are formulated as below:

1. What instructional leadership practices do head teachers practice in the selected public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare district practice?
2. What challenges do head teachers face when applying instructional leadership practices in the selected public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare district?

II.LITERATURE REVIEW

Instructional Leadership Practices in Public Lower Secondary Schools

1. Defining School Goals

Instructional leadership involves setting clear, focused school goals that align with educational outcomes. Recent studies highlight that effective instructional leaders collaborate with teachers and stakeholders to develop shared goals that are specific, measurable, and reflective of the school's vision (Hallinger, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020). The process of defining goals has shifted towards a more

inclusive approach, incorporating input from the school community to ensure alignment with local needs and priorities (Murphy, 2021). This collaborative goal-setting process enhances commitment and accountability among staff, leading to improved student outcomes (Day & Sammons, 2021).

2. Managing Instructional Programs

Managing instructional programs is a core function of instructional leadership, emphasizing the coordination, supervision, and evaluation of teaching practices. Between 2020 and 2024, research has focused on the role of instructional leaders in adapting programs to meet the diverse needs of students, especially in the context of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Harris & Jones, 2020). Effective leaders are those who provide continuous support and professional development for teachers, enabling them to implement curriculum and instructional strategies that cater to varied learning needs (Hallinger & Wang, 2021). Leaders also utilize data-driven decision-making to refine instructional programs, ensuring that they remain aligned with school goals and student achievement (Spillane et al., 2022).

3. Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate

Promoting a positive school learning climate has been a critical focus of instructional leadership, particularly in fostering an environment conducive to both academic and social-emotional learning. Recent literature emphasizes the importance of creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive school climate where students feel valued and engaged (Khalifa et al., 2021). Leaders play a pivotal role in setting the tone for the school environment, addressing issues such as equity, inclusion, and student well-being (Day et al., 2021). Moreover, instructional leaders are increasingly recognized for their ability to build strong relationships within the school community, which is essential for sustaining a positive climate that supports student learning and teacher collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 2020).

Head teachers' Instructional Leadership Practices and Students' Academic Achievement in Public Lower Secondary Schools

Recent research consistently underscores the significant impact of head teachers' instructional leadership on students' academic achievement. Studies have demonstrated that head teachers who effectively set clear instructional goals, support teachers, and foster a positive learning environment contribute directly to improved student performance (Leithwood et al., 2020; Day et al., 2021). The link between strong instructional leadership and academic outcomes has been particularly evident in schools that face challenges such as socio-economic disparities, where leadership practices play a critical role in closing achievement gaps (Hallinger & Wang, 2021).

Effective instructional leadership practices include setting high academic expectations, providing targeted professional development for teachers, and ensuring that instructional time is protected (Smith & Bell, 2021). Research highlights that head teachers who are visible in classrooms, engage in regular instructional supervision, and use data to inform instructional strategies tend to see better academic results among students (Robinson & Gray, 2020). Moreover, fostering a collaborative culture where teachers feel supported and motivated has been linked to higher student achievement (Liu & Hallinger, 2022).

Challenges head teachers face while applying instructional leadership in public lower secondary schools

1. Balancing Administrative and Instructional Duties

One of the primary challenges head teachers face is balancing their administrative responsibilities with their instructional leadership roles. Research indicates that the increasing demands of school

management, including budgeting, compliance, and staff management, often leave head teachers with limited time to focus on instructional leadership (Liu & Hallinger, 2021). This tension between administrative tasks and instructional duties can hinder their ability to engage deeply in activities that directly impact teaching and learning (Robinson & Gray, 2021).

2. Managing Diverse Student Needs

Head teachers also face challenges in addressing the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students, particularly in multicultural and socio-economically diverse schools. The complexity of leading instruction in such environments requires head teachers to be adaptable and culturally responsive, which can be difficult without adequate training and resources (Khalifa et al., 2021). Additionally, the need to close achievement gaps while supporting all students equally remains a significant challenge (Day & Sammons, 2021).

3. Ensuring Teacher Collaboration and Professional Development

Fostering teacher collaboration and providing ongoing professional development are essential components of instructional leadership. However, head teachers often encounter resistance from staff who may be reluctant to change or who are fatigued by constant initiatives (Spillane et al., 2022). Moreover, limited resources for professional development and the pressure to produce immediate results can impede long-term instructional improvements (Harris & Jones, 2020).

4. Adapting to Technological Changes

The rapid advancement of educational technology, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has posed additional challenges for head teachers. Many have struggled with ensuring that both teachers and students effectively integrate technology into the learning process. The lack of adequate training and support in digital literacy has been a significant barrier, particularly in under-resourced schools (Leithwood et al., 2020).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study a mixed research design was employed to explain the variables accordingly. According to Creswell (2012), a mixed research design is a process for gathering, examining, and mixing quantitative and qualitative research and methods in one study to examine the research problem well. The target population of the study composed one District Director of Education, twenty one (21) lower secondary school head teachers and two hundred and sixteen (216) teachers from schools in different lower public secondary schools in Nyagatare District. In this study, to ensure that each school has same possibilities of being selected, the researcher exercised simple random sampling to select schools. All targeted head teachers were purposively included in this study. Regarding the selection of teachers, teachers from the selected schools were put in strata based on their gender in order to ensure that all genders are symbolized in the sample of the study. Lastly, simple random sampling was applied to choose the required number of teachers from each stratum. To assure the content validity of the instrument the expert judgment was employed. To check reliability of the instruments, test-retest method adopted, and the instrument was reliable as it computed 0.71 correlation coefficient.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first question guiding this study was about what instructional leadership practices do head teachers practice in the selected public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare district. To respond to this question, the respondents were expected to tick the box next to the one that most accurately describes his or her

response to the prompts. Where the letters **A** is for **always**, **S** is for **sometimes**, **R** is for **rarely** and **N** is for **never**. The following tables summarize the responses of teachers about instructional leadership practices.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of practices related to framing school goals

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Preparing and reviewing school goals with staff regularly.	0 0	24 42	21 36	12 21	57 100
Making a strong collaboration with other stakeholders.	0 0	21 36	22 38	14 24	57 100
Correcting and making a coherent analysis of students 'academic performance.	1 1	12 21	27 47	17 29	57 100

Primary data (2023)

Table 2, indicated that while most respondents agree that head teachers clearly frame school goals and sometimes collaborate with staff and parents, they do not consistently engage all stakeholders in this process. The results suggest that head teachers occasionally involve others in setting academic goals and analyzing student performance data. However, it highlights the need for regular and inclusive participation of all stakeholders in framing and reviewing school goals to ensure equitable involvement and effective goal-setting across schools. Through the interview, the most of head teachers said that they are used to frame school goals however they didn't have required both knowledge and skills for creating coherent school goals based on educational statistics. Additional to that due to the heavy work of administration, they did not get enough time reviewing school goals with staff regularly. In generally, the findings of the study from respondent questionnaire of teachers and interview of head teachers shown that the head teachers frame school goals and occasionally engage all stakeholders. According to Smith and Brown (2021), clearly articulated goals are associated with higher levels of student achievement, as they offer a focused framework within which instructional activities are planned and executed.

eTable 3: Frequency and percentage of practices related to communicating school goals

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
Communicating the school's goals to staff	2 3	23 40	20 35	12 21	57 100

members and all stakeholders through formal channels.

Using understandable language during developing academic goals. 3 5 10 17 28 49 16 28 57 100

Posting academic goals on different displays within the school. 2 3 19 33 26 49 10 17 57 100

Explaining academic goals to students and teachers clearly. 2 3 19 33 26 45 10 17 57 100

Source: Primary data (2023)

The table 3, revealed that a significant portion of respondents believe that school goals are communicated only occasionally or rarely to teachers, students, and parents. Specifically, 40% agree that goals are sometimes communicated, while 35% say they are rarely communicated. Additionally, 49% believe that academic goals are rarely posted on displays, and 45% say head teachers rarely explain these goals to students and teachers. The findings suggest a need for head teachers to improve their communication of academic goals through formal channels and visual displays, ensuring clearer and more consistent communication with both teachers and students.

During the interview, most of the head teachers said that they found it difficult to communicate school goals to students because they prepared in English yet most of our students and their parent did not understand it effectively. We knew that there were many formal channels for disseminating school goals but we did not have access to those that required financial funds because schools received financial funds.

For instance, Anderson and Johnson (2021) emphasize the need for school leaders to use multiple platforms, such as meetings, newsletters, and digital communication tools, to ensure that the goals are understood by all stakeholders. This multi-channel approach is particularly effective in reaching diverse school communities.

Table4 : Frequency and percentage of practices related to supervising and evaluating teaching

					Always	sometimes	Rarely	Never
F %	F %	F %	F %	F %				
Giving feedback to the teachers.	constructive	and	useful	2 3	23 40	24 42	8 14	57 100
Creating learning environment.				1 1	21 36	21 36	14 24	57 100
Checking documents.	regularly	pedagogical		2 3	19 33	25 43	11 19	57 100
Pointing out specific strengths and weaknesses, teachers are meeting during instructional.				0 0	15 26	32 56	10 17	57 100

Visiting the teachers' classroom.	1 1	11 19	37 64	8 14	57 100
Conducting informal classroom supervision and evaluation.	1 1	3 5	32 56	21 36	57 100
Using and applying different instructional supervision and evaluation skills.	1 1	7 12	30 52	19 33	57 100

Source: Primary data (2023)

The data in Table 6 revealed that most respondents believed head teachers rarely provide effective instructional leadership in supervising and evaluating teaching. Specifically, 42% reported that constructive feedback is rarely given, while 56%, 64%, and 52% noted that head teachers seldom point out specific strengths and weaknesses, visit classrooms to ensure curriculum coverage, or apply various supervision techniques. Overall, these findings suggest that head teachers are perceived as rarely managing instructional programs effectively. During the interview, most head teachers reported that their primary focus is on administrative tasks, while their deputies are responsible for supervising and evaluating teaching activities and submitting reports. For instance, a study by Lee and Parker (2023) reveals that schools with strong supervision practices tend to have higher student achievement scores.

Table5: Frequency and percentage of practices related to coordinating the curriculum

					Total	
					Always	Sometimes
					Rarely	Never
F %	F %	F %	F %	F %		
Ensuring clearly who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum.					1 1	7 12
Ensuring that learning materials are used effectively.					36 63	13 22
Checking that the curriculum goals are covered accordingly.					57 100	18 31
					0 0	2 3
					37 64	18 31
					57 100	17 29

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 5 revealed inconsistencies in curriculum coordination practices in selected public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare District. Specifically, 63% of respondents indicated that it is rarely clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum, and 64% reported that head teachers seldom ensure effective use of teaching and learning resources. Additionally, 52% of respondents find it challenging to supervise the curriculum to meet school objectives, while 29% never supervise it at all.

The findings indicated that most respondents believed head teachers rarely coordinate the curriculum effectively, including identifying responsible individuals, ensuring efficient use of resources, and overseeing classroom curriculum to meet learning objectives. Through the interview, smaller number of

head teachers said that they ensured that educational materials were used effectively and efficiently in the schools and verifying that the curriculum goals were covered by teachers accordingly. Smith et al. (2023) found that schools where instructional leaders work closely with teachers to align the curriculum with instructional practices tend to have better student outcomes.

Table 6: Frequency and percentage of practices related to monitoring students' progress

					Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
F%	F%	F%	F%	F%					
Meeting individual teacher to discuss students' progress.					1 1	10 17	29 50	17 29	57 100
Checking wisely teacher's different made examinations.					1 1	3 5	35 61	18 31	57 100
Ensuring that all pupils arrive at school on time and are present.					2 3	8 14	38 66	9 15	57 100
Giving assignments to students as well as mark and do correction for them accordingly.					3 5	5 8	34 59	15 26	57 100
Planning and administering for remedial lessons or courses.					2 3	9 15	34 59	12 21	57 100
Inspecting student's class work and individual studies.					1 1	5 8	36 63	15 26	57 100
Evaluating students' progress through examinations results.					3 5	18 31	22 38	14 24	57 100

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 6 revealed various challenges in monitoring students' progress in select public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare District. Specifically, 50% of respondents indicated that head teachers seldom meet with individual teachers to discuss students' progress, and 29% noted that this does not happen at all. Additionally, 61% reported that head teachers rarely verify the quality of teacher-made examinations, with 31% stating they do not do so. Moreover, 66% of respondents said that head teachers rarely monitor student attendance and punctuality, and 59% indicated that head teachers seldom ensure the proper assignment and correction of classwork. Lastly, 63% of respondents mentioned that head teachers rarely inspect students' classwork and individual studies. During the interview, most head teachers said that monitoring of students' progress was the practice of an instructional leader however due to both administrative and financial duties which are heavy to us, they found difficult to give and inspect assignments and other learning activities to students and check wisely teacher's different made examinations. Brown and Parker (2024) found that schools where leaders actively monitor and use

student performance data to inform instruction tend to see significant improvements in student outcomes.

Table 7: Frequency and percentage of practices related to controlling teaching time

					Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
F %	F %	F %	F %	F %					
Preventing the distractions of instructional time.					19 33	33 57	4 7	1 1	57 100
Ensuring that students are not out of the classroom during instructional time.					21 36	31 54	4 7	1 1	57 100
Encouraging teachers to use instructional time effectively and efficiently.					5 8	28 49	18 31	6 10	57 100
Ensuring that different co-curricular activities, do not consumer time for instructions.					2 3	6 10	28 49	21 36	57 100
Ensuring that teachers have well planned and completed timetable to follow.					1 1	2 3	31 54	23 40	57 100
Ensuring that trainings attended by teachers are consistent with the school's goals.					1 1	2 3	29 50	25 43	57 100

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 7 reflected teachers' views on how head teachers foster a supportive learning environment by controlling instructional time in select public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare District. About 33% of respondents indicated that head teachers consistently prevent and limit distractions during instructional time, while 57% noted this happens occasionally. Additionally, 21% stated that head teachers always ensure students remain in the classroom during instructional time, with 54% agreeing this occurs occasionally. Furthermore, 49% of respondents said head teachers occasionally encourage teachers to use instructional time efficiently, though 31% felt this rarely happens. The data also reveals that 36% of respondents believe head teachers do not prevent co-curricular activities from consuming instructional time, and 40% feel head teachers do not ensure teachers have well-planned timetables. Lastly, 43% of respondents indicated that head teachers do not ensure that in-service activities align with school academic goals. Overall, while head teachers are moderately effective in controlling teaching time, there are significant areas where improvement is needed, particularly in managing co-curricular activities, ensuring well-planned timetables, and aligning in-service activities with academic goals. Through the interview, smaller number of head teachers said that they ensured that students were not out of the classroom during instructional time and encouraged teachers to use instructional time effectively. They practiced these by buying electrical bell and putting out exist cards to students. Research consistently shown that a positive school climate is associated with better student outcomes, including higher academic achievement, improved attendance, and reduced behavioral issues. Instructional leaders

must therefore prioritize the development of a school climate that supports learning for all students, Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2018),

Table8: Frequency and percentage of practices related to maintaining visibility

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	
Providing time for casual conversations.	18 31	33 57	5 8	1 1	57 100
Taking part in extracurricular activities.	1 1	4 7	37 64	15 26	57 100
Covering students when teacher is late or absent.	2 3	6 10	27 47	22 38	57 100
Sharing school issues with staff members on regular basis.	1 1	4 7	28 49	24 42	57 100

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 8 highlighted teachers' views on head teachers' visibility in schools. Only 31% of respondents noted that head teachers engage in casual conversations with students and teachers during breaks, and 57% said this rarely occurs. Additionally, 26% reported that head teachers seldom participate in extracurricular activities, with 64% agreeing this is rare. Only 38% observed head teachers covering classes when teachers are late, and 47% said this seldom happens. Furthermore, 42% of respondents felt head teachers rarely visit classrooms to discuss school issues regularly. Overall, respondents find that head teachers infrequently maintain visibility and engage effectively in various aspects of school life. Most head teachers reported occasionally covering for absent teachers, participating in extracurricular activities, and engaging in casual conversations, but noted that their limited time due to extensive reporting responsibilities constrained their ability to do so consistently. According to, Brown and Parker (2024) demonstrated that schools with highly visible leaders tend to experience better student outcomes and improved school culture.

Table 9: Frequency and percentage of practices related to providing incentives for teachers

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	
Giving compensation to the teachers for their unique contributions to the school.	2 3	9 15	25 43	21 36	57 100

Reinforcing the best performers.	2 3	8 14	30 52	17 29	57 100
Complimenting teachers privately for their special efforts or performance.	3 5	3 5	29 50	22 38	57 100

Source: Primary data (2023)

Table 9 shows that most teachers feel head teachers in Nyagatare District rarely provide incentives for exceptional teacher performance. Only 36% believe head teachers offer rewards or professional development opportunities, and 43% feel such opportunities are seldom provided. Additionally, 29% report that head teachers do not recognize top performers, with 52% agreeing this recognition is rarely given. Half of the respondents noted that private compliments for special efforts are uncommon, with 38% stating they are not given at all. Overall, teachers find that head teachers infrequently implement effective incentive practices. During the interview, the most of head teachers said that they agreed that to provide incentives for teachers was the best practice of effective instructional leader to boost students' academic achievement. They wished to give compensation to teachers however our schools had limited financial funds due to funds received are being used in other urgent school activities. According to, Brown and Parker (2024) found that schools with robust incentive programs reported higher levels of teacher engagement and better student outcomes.

Table10: Frequency and percentage of practices related to providing incentives for students

									Total
F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	
Ensuring that instructors participate in training that is in line with the objectives of the school.					3 5	1 1	33 57	20 35	57 100
Preparing different assemblies to honors students for academic accomplishments.					4 7	22 38	26 45	5 8	57 100
Recognizing students who do superior work with formal rewards.					1 1	8 14	33 57	15 26	57 100

Primary data (2023)

Table 10 revealed that head teachers in Nyagatare District infrequently implement effective practices for providing incentives. Only 35% of respondents noted that head teachers ensure in-service activities align with school goals, and 57% said this happens rarely. Additionally, 45% of respondents reported that head teachers rarely organize assemblies to honor academic achievements, and 57% said head teachers rarely provide formal rewards for exceptional student work. Overall, most respondents find that head teachers seldom practice effective incentive strategies, such as recognizing student accomplishments and aligning professional development with school objectives. During the interview, the most of teachers said that they knew that this practice of giving incentives for students however they practiced rarely practically recognizing students who do superior work with formal rewards because they asked us to use

financial funds. According to, Brown and Parker (2024) found that schools with robust incentive programs often see improved student achievement and a positive school atmosphere. However, the effectiveness of these programs depends on their integration into the broader educational framework and their alignment with students' needs and values.

Challenges head teachers face while applying instructional leadership practices

In interviews with head teachers from specific public lower secondary schools in Nyagatare district, we identified recurring challenges they encounter. These included a lack of necessary knowledge and skills regarding instructional leadership practices, exacerbated by heavy workloads, inadequate school infrastructure, resistance from teachers to adapt and improve instructional practices, insufficient professional development opportunities, and some parents neglecting their roles and responsibilities in their children's education. The pressure of accountability and the high expectations placed on head teachers to deliver immediate results can lead to stress and burnout. This pressure often results in a focus on short-term gains rather than sustainable instructional leadership practices that promote long-term academic improvement (Dlamini, 2024).

V. CONCLUSION&RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that head teachers were tasked with implementing instructional leadership practices, defining academic goals, managing instructional programs, and promoting a positive learning climate to enhance student achievement. Despite challenges in applying these practices, it's crucial to raise awareness among educational practitioners about their importance as a support mechanism for academic improvement. However, it has been observed that instructional leadership is rarely practiced by most head teachers in the public lower secondary schools of Nyagatare district.

Recommendation

Based on the finding of the study the following recommendations were suggested; Lower secondary school head teachers should apply instructional leadership practices in their daily duties and responsibilities in an effort to raise students' academic performance. This should be done by training head teachers to comprehend the significance of instructional leadership practices for the effectiveness of leading both teaching and learning, which should help teachers to improve teaching career and boost students' success.

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