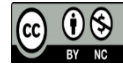


## Instructional Leadership Practices in Pakistani Schools: Pathways to Becoming a Learning Organization

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### Abstract

Instructional leadership prepares schools as learning organizations to remain relevant in this dynamic and interconnected world by promoting collaboration, a shared vision, and learning cultures within schools. This qualitative phenomenological study explores leadership practices implemented by the school leaders in public and private schools of Karachi, Sindh. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six principals from three public and three private schools of Karachi, Sindh, selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings indicated that although principals are aware of the instructional leadership approach and its importance to develop learning culture in the schools, but they do not explicitly practice instructional leadership, as most of the principals prioritize the managerial or administrative work over instructional supervision and support. Furthermore, the lack of professional training of principals highlights deficiencies in their knowledge about practical implication of instructional leadership. The study underscores the need to effectively implement instructional leadership in school to transform schools into learning organizations.

**Keywords:** *Instructional Leadership, Learning Organization, System Thinking, Shared Vision, Learning Outcomes*

### 1. Introduction

In this dynamic world, the educational landscape is continuously evolving, which leads to the transformation of leadership practices (Rizvi & Lingard, 2022; Beribe, 2023; Kareem, 2024). To respond to the swift changes in the field of education, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) proposes the concept of schools as learning organizations. The school, which promotes continuous learning culture and helps educators to be adaptable in the evolving world (Kullan et al., 2022). Fundamentally, learning organization

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encourages continuous learning, collaboration and sharing of knowledge (Rad & Bocoş, 2024). Scholars suggest that within this evolving context, the role of the school principal has undergone a substantial transformation, with a growing emphasis on instructional leadership (Akimov et al., 2020; Kullan et al., 2022).

An instructional leader is just like an anchor of school who not only works as administrator or supervisor, but also actively participates in the pedagogical or instructional activities of the school (Aureada, 2021). Advocating the approach of instructional leadership, research determines that teachers' pedagogical competencies are profoundly influenced by instructional leadership (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021). This is because the active engagement of an instructional leader in teaching and learning activities enables teachers to improve their pedagogical skills (Yasmeen & Tobawal, 2023). Broadly speaking instructional leader not only enhances teachers' pedagogical skills, but influence over all learning culture of school by maintaining minimum disruption in instructional activities and provision of resources (Aureada, 2021; Mughal et al., 2023; Ralebese et al., 2025). Scholars indicate that this learning culture ultimately transforms schools into learning organization by providing continuous support to the teachers, promoting continuous professional learning, teachers' collaboration, collective efficacy, and innovation in teaching practices. As a result, school develops a robust learning culture characterized by continuous professional development and innovative teaching practices, which ultimately help to improve student's learning outcomes and enhance school effectiveness (Hu & Duyar, 2024; Dorukbaşı & Cansoy, 2024).

Instructional leadership has emerged as a critical approach for developing schools into sustainable learning organization. However, there is limited understanding of how instructional leadership is practiced by the school principals in Pakistan and how these practices contribute to the development of schools as learning organization. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the current instructional leadership practices of principals of Pakistani schools, particularly focusing Sindh. Moreover, to understand how such practices transform schools into learning organizations, and the challenges encountered by the school principals.

The concept of instructional leadership arose in 1980, emphasizing on continuous learning culture and improved instructions (Noor & Nawab, 2022). Sustainable Development Goal 4 also requires schools to promote inclusive, equitable, and quality education (Ningsih et al., 2024; Kareem, 2024). To achieve that goal, instructional leadership is widely recognized as effective leadership and being promoted in different countries globally (Bellibaş & Liu, 2022). However, despite considering principals as agent of change, most of the time school leaders

are dedicated to the administrative tasks rather than instructional activities (Suryadi, 2025; Ikram et al., 2021).

Research also highlights a disproportion between Asian and Western countries in terms of adopting leadership approaches, because, limited empirical research is found in Asian context as compared to western countries. Furthermore, multiple Asian countries are in a nascent stage of adopting instructional leadership approaches. Whereas, Western countries are extensively practicing instructional leadership (Ikram et al., 2021). Although, Pakistan is a signatory to several educational declaration, yet gap is persistant in terms of low quality teaching, school performance and students learning outcomes. Overall, learning cultrue of schools are insufficient to meet the challenges of contemporary world (Noor & Nawab, 2022). Therefore, this study examines how instructional leadership is practiced in schools of Karachi, Sindh, and how these practices contribute to ongoing transformation of schools into learning organization, within the limitations of the local educational context.

Despite growing recognition of instructional leadership as a fundamental approach for improving learning culture, most of the school principals remain overwhelmed with the administrative tasks and are not able to adopt instructional leadership approach. Research indicates multiple problems as hindrance for effective instructional leadership practices such as; lack of resources, resistance to change, and inadequate training (Ralebese et al., 2025). Consequently, most of the principals keep prioritizing administrative tasks, while instructional or pedagogical activities, teacher's capacity building, and collaboration remain neglected. These uneven practices create a gap between the theoretical expectations of instructional leadership and actual practices (Aureada, 2021; Noor & Nawab, 2022). Moreover, collaborative learning cultures are essential for continuous school improvement and organizational learning, and enabling school to adapt the global educational demands and improve students' learning outcomes (Hu & Duyar, 2024).

Therefore, this study is needed to understand the gap and to explore how instructional leadership is practiced by school Principals, how they perceive its role in fostering school development and improvement, and the contextual challenges that influence its implementation in schools of Karachi, Sindh. Thus, this study seeks to examine the instructional leadership practices of school principals. Furthermore, to investigate the ways in which these practices influence learning culture of schools and transform it into learning organization.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

Objectives of the study included to;

1. examine how instructional leadership is practiced by school principals of public and private secondary schools of Karachi, Sindh.

2. explore how instructional leadership practices support the development of schools as learning organization.
3. identify the challenges faced by the school principals in practicing instructional leadership.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

Following research questions were formulated;

1. How do school principals practice instructional leadership in public and private schools of Karachi, Sindh?
2. How do school principals perceive that instructional leadership practices contribute to the development of schools as learning organization?
3. What challenges do school principals face in practicing instructional leadership?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant as it highlights the role of school principals as instructional leaders and the impact of instructional leadership practices on teacher's pedagogical competencies, collaborative learning, and overall improvement of school culture. By examining the school leaders' practices, particularly focusing on principal's role as instructional leader, this study aims to deepen the understanding of impact of instructional leadership practices, contribute the existing literature by providing context-specific from Sindh. Ultimately, the study may support efforts to improve teaching quality, organizational learning, and students' outcomes in schools.

## **2. Literature Review**

Instructional leadership and learning organization model are used as theoretical framework in the study. This study is grounded in the theory of Learning Organization and Instructional Leadership to explore how instructional leadership can transform schools into learning organization. Learning organization is defined as an organization that continuously learn, transform, and evolve itself along with the changing world to meet the long-term goals (Kareem, 2024). The model was introduced by Peter Senge in his book 'The Fifth Discipline (1990, 2006), (Kullan et al., 2022; Rad & Bocos, 2024). The Fifth Discipline is a prominent concept in management, yet in the field of education very limited literature is available about it (Pensieri, 2019). Similarly, Kareem (2024) highlight the scarcity of literature regarding Fifth Discipline in the field of education.

The five disciplines of Learning Organization are described as personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning, and system thinking. A school can emerge as forward-looking school and foster holistic growth by collective contribution towards the vision, teamwork, culture of learning, and sharing of knoweldge (Kullan et al., 2022). It focuses on holistic approach where

all stakeholders of school such as; teachers, students, and the whole community work synergistically. Learning organization suggests the ways for school growth and continuous learning by adapting change and transforming as per requirement of the organizational progress (Kareem, 2024).

Research suggests that leadership plays a critical role in achieving organizational learning by establishing a shared vision, promoting collaboration, supporting professional learning, and fostering a continuous learning culture (Nakanishi, 2025). In school settings, these responsibilities are often enacted through instructional leadership, which plays a significant role in developing learning culture and setting the academic direction of schools by clearly defining the school's mission and supporting the implementation of meaningful instructional practices (Ikram et al., 2021). Scholars suggest that backing teachers in instructional activities along with evaluation is one of the fundamental aspects of instructional leadership. If principals lack expertise in subject area, they can facilitate teachers in provision of resources for smooth instructional activities (Rigby et al., 2021).

The idea of instructional leadership first originated in elementary schools of U.S. (Ikram et al., 2021). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) defined multiple dimensions of instructional leadership, including shared vision, professional development, and improved learning outcomes (Ralebese et al., 2025). Particularly focusing on shared vision, Jemain et al. (2025) consider it as fundamental aspect to keep all stakeholders aware of the mission of the organization and strive collectively to achieve the common objectives. Research highlights three core dimensions of instructional leadership: explaining school mission, executing and supervising instructional program, and fostering a positive learning culture. In addition to this, Mughal et al. (2023) take a specific focus on supportive environment which is based on trust. Broadly speaking, the supportive positive culture empowers teachers for innovative instructional practices and creates a conducive learning environment (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021). Thus, to explore how principals enact the instructional leadership practices are crucial for the development of schools as learning organization (Ralebese et al., 2025).

The framework suggests that effective instructional leadership promotes a school culture that support collaboration, innovation, and reflective instructional practices. This supportive culture of an organization, in turn, supports the development of a learning organization by encouraging continuous learning, readiness to change and collaborative efforts to achieve common goal (Baydar & Demirci, 2026). This theoretical framework guide to explore the instructional leadership practices of principals of schools that enable schools to transition towards learning organization.

Lack of instructional capabilities, inadequate knowledge regarding instructional goals and limited content knowledge of teachers are some profound challenges faced by schools (Tadesse & Kenea, 2022). These challenges highlight the critical need for strong instructional support within schools. Recent evidence suggests that instructional leadership remains the most extensively researched leadership model in relation to students achievement, reflecting its continued importance in promoting teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Bush, 2024). In this regard principals are expected to play a pivotal role in providing support to teachers in all instructional activities such as; supervise instructions, coordinate the curriculum and monitor students' progress through feedback and support (Mughal et al., 2023). Similarly, Ahmad and Hamid (2022) emphasize that school principals should function as instructional leaders who are responsible for planning instructional programs and linking curriculum with the need of students. In addition to this Aureada (2021) identifies principals' role fundamental in professional development of teachers.

In the contemporary educational landscape, a pragmatic approach is required to improve learning culture of schools where teachers and students build their learning capacity, and learn to work in collaboration (Pensieri, 2019). However, developing school as a learning organization is a challenging task which require both personal commitments and leadership competences (Kareem, 2024). In this context, organisational cognition, shared vision, and collaborative learning process are considered essential to shaping schools as learning organization (Rad & Bocos, 2024). Scholars further highlight that school principals play a significantly important role in facilitating all learning activities including; support in instructional activities and professional development of teachers (Walker & Qian, 2022).

This transformation can be achieved through instructional leadership, which focuses on principal's role in managing curriculum, improving instruction, and creating a supportive learning environment (Ahmad et al., 2021). Research determines that schools with strong instructional leadership are better able to navigate emerging opportunities and attain sustainability to survive in the competitive environment (Rad & Bocos, 2024). However, literature also suggests that many school principals remain focused on managerial tasks which limit their capacity to focus on instructional practices and teacher development. Additionally, incompetence to align instructional programs with school policy and objectives are major challenges, which ultimately leads to poor instructional practices and hinder the learning culture of school (Sharafat et al., 2024; Ralebese et al., 2025).

Teachers' motivation is also considered as a crucial factor for effective and sustainable learning culture of schools (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021). One of the

suggested incentives is monetary benefit along with praise and recognition. Scholars prove the positive impact of instructional leadership on pedagogical practices, which ultimately influence students' academic performance. Zhang (2019) determines a substantial relationship between principals' instructional leadership and students' academic outcomes. According to Yasmeen and Tobawal (2023) students' learning get influenced by the principals' leadership approaches. Students' success may not directly get influenced by leadership, but plays a significant role in creating an environment for effective teaching and meaningful learning. Within this context, principals are considered accountable for school's culture to influence teachers' instructional practices and lead to improve students' learning outcomes (Aureada, 2021). Furthermore, the provision of instructional resources, professional guidance and continuous teacher support has been significantly important to improve pedagogical competences, which in turn positively influence students' achievement (Yasmeen & Tobawal, 2023).

Conclusively, principals' efforts to create a meaningful learning environment are a fundamental aspect of instructional leadership. Principals should also be able to recognize the achievements of students and help foster conducive learning environment (Mughal et al., 2023). Such leadership practices overall enhance the school learning capacity and build it as learning organization (Ahmad & Hamid, 202; Ralebese et al., 2025).

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Guided by the research questions, the qualitative phenomenological approach within the context of an interpretive paradigm was used for data collection. The study followed Denzin and Lincoln's (2008) recommendations and used a descriptive phenomenological research methodology to understand the lived experiences and challenges faced by the participants to practice instructional leadership. Qualitative approach is considerably effective to gain insight into people's beliefs and actions (Creswell, 2014).

#### **3.2 Population**

The population of this study consisted of school principals of public and private schools of Karachi, Sindh. These principals play a key role in shaping instructional practices and organizational learning within their schools.

#### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique**

From this population, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants for the study. The main objective of a purposive sample is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. This is often accomplished by applying expert knowledge of the population to select in a nonrandom manner a sample of elements that represents

a cross-section of the population (Lavrakas, 2008). Etikan et al. (2016) defined purposive sampling as the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses.

The sample size consisted of six participants, principals of public and private middle tier schools Karachi, Sindh. The reason for selecting these principals was their central position as leaders within educational institutions and direct involvement in interpreting and implementing educational policies and practices. Participants were selected based on their substantial experience to ensure that they possess sufficient knowledge and practical exposure to instructional leadership and school improvement initiative. Their level of education and experience were expected to provide meaningful information regarding the understudy phenomena. All principals were in age bracket of 40 to 50, postgraduate and having professional qualification of B.Ed. or M.Ed.

As the main decision-makers, principals are at the leading position to navigate challenges and responses related to instructional leadership approach and developing learning culture in the schools. These principals represented schools of varying management types and socio-economic contexts, offering a broad perspective on the challenges and responses related to learning organization in school settings.

### **3.4 Instrumentation**

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with school principals. The interview protocol was developed using the instructional leadership framework proposed by Hellinger and Murphy (PIMRS) in 1985, which conceptualize instructional leadership around three core domains of instructional leadership: defining the school mission, managing and supervising the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning culture. These dimensions served as a guide for developing open-ended interview questions to explore principals' experiences, practices, and challenges in enacting instructional leadership within their school to transform school into learning organization.

The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth insight into principal's perspectives regarding instructional leadership and development of learning culture in the schools. To maintain data integrity, interviews were recorded and transcribed to capture the participants' voices and perspectives as accurately as possible (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

### **3.5 Data Collection**

The participants were interviewed face-to-face for approximately 40 minutes. The interview guide was used that helped to explore, probe and ask questions within the subject area. According to Patton (2012), this approach helps researcher to ask unstructured questions and establish a conversational style

approach to the interview. Moreover, interviews were descriptive and narrative in nature.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

A systematic approach to data analysis was used to explore the leadership approaches used by school principals and the strategies used by them to enable school a learning organization. The data collected through semi-structured interviews, were analyzed using thematic analysis. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), thematic analysis involves identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. The purpose of this analysis was to get key themes that can help to address the research questions or provide insights into the issue being studied. To ensure the credibility of the study, member checking was conducted by allowing interviewed participants to review the transcriptions and provide feedback on the accuracy of their responses.

RQ1. How do school principals practice instructional leadership in public and private schools of Karachi, Sindh?

#### Theme 1: Principals’ Leadership Identity and Instructional Practices

Table 1  
*Summary of Themes and Findings of Research Question 1*

Themes	Participants Quotes	Key Findings
<b>Theme 1:</b> Principals’ Leadership Identity and Instructional Practices	<i>"I am not a manager, I am a leader" (P2, "I directly get involved in lesson planning" (P4, Private School)</i>  <i>"Collaboration is essential" (P3, Public School)</i>  <i>I don't know about the objectives of the lessons" (p3, public school)</i>	Principals of private schools predominantly perceived themselves as leaders who guide and support teachers in instructional activities, Whereas principals of public school also emphasize on collaboration, but instructional leadership practices varied across public and private schools

The theme is aligned with first research question. The data revealed principals’ self-conception regarding leadership identity. Participants consistently mentioned themselves as leaders rather than managers and emphasized on guidance, collaboration, and direct pedagogical involvement.

Principal of a private school explicitly named her leadership approach as democratic and named herself as democratic leader.

*“I consider myself as a democratic leader... I am not a manager; I am a leader. I listen to others and face challenges.”* (Principal #2, Private School)

Principals who view themselves as leaders rather than managers prioritize guidance, listening, and the creation of a positive school environment. Principals’ self-conception as leaders fosters a culture of trust and guidance.

Participant of a public school described leadership as an act of keeping balancing among different stakeholders explaining,

*“Leadership is balancing the student, teacher, parent triangle... collaboration is essential.”* (Principal # 3, Public School)

This perspective shows that principals facilitate the essential collaboration among all stakeholders directly linking to instructional leadership approach.

A principal of private school reported direct involvement in the core academic process, stated that;

*“I directly get involve in teaching and learning. I prepare lesson plans myself and guide teachers to use them.”* (Principal # 4, Private School)

This practice demonstrates that principal is aware of instructional practices, beyond administration. Principals reported certain practices such as democratic leadership approach by listening and facilitating all, encouraging collaboration, and direct involvement in lesson planning proves instructional support provided by the principal.

This theme also condenses the principal’s instructional practices such as; active involvement in classroom teaching, lesson planning and class observations to guide teaching practices.

One principal of a private school stated that;

*“Teacher make lesson plan themselves, but if there are areas, they need guidance we do them first... then we check and guide them.” (Principal # 2, Private School)*

One of the government school principals, stated entirely different statement. The school is adopted by an NGO and most of the instructional practices are run by the NGO.

She stated that;

*“NGO provides prepared lesson plans... teachers are supposed to use it. I don't know about the objectives of the lessons; I think teachers also don't know what the objectives are and how to use it.” (Principal #3, Public School)*

Principals who are directly involved in instructional planning and classroom support ensure that teaching is aligned with learning goals. In contrast, principals without any autonomy, cannot exercise instructional leadership effectively, which may reduce teacher engagement and negatively affect student outcomes.

Regarding monitoring only two principals of private schools narrated about proper monitoring mechanism and provision of constructive feedback.

*“We have different criteria and competencies... we let them know their areas to work on... I always get 60% change.” (Principal # 6, Private School)*

Most of the schools do not have any established accountability mechanisms to ensure effective teaching and student achievement. Only one principal of private school mentioned about it.

*“Performance reports of teachers are shared... pedagogy sessions are conducted... impact of feedback is measured through student achievement.” (Principal # 4, Private School)*

In contrast principal of a public school stated that;

*“Teachers just follow planners... I am excluded from monitoring instructional methods, as I told you school is adopted by an NGO.” (Principal # 3)*

Thus, principals’ ability to help teachers in their instructional practices is crucial for improving the quality of teaching.

RQ2. How do school principals perceive that instructional leadership practices contribute to the development of schools as learning organization?

Table 2  
*Summary of Themes and Findings of Research Question 2*

Themes	Participants Quotes	Key Findings
<b>Theme 2:</b> Teachers' Professional Growth and Capacity Building	"we have made B.Ed and CPD sessions compulsory in our school" (P6, Public School )	Principals of private schools perceived professional growth, feedback and monitoring as compulsory strategies.
	"NGO provide lesson plans, I am excluded from planning and instructional methods" (P3, Public School) "we counsel underperforming teachers" (P5, public school)	The findings indicate contrasting roles of principals within public schools, where some experience exclusion from instructional plannings, while others engage in instructional improvement through providing counseling and guidance of underperforming teachers.
<b>Theme 3:</b> School as Learning Organization	"we involve parents in remedial planning" (p6, private school) "Community undervalue Education" (p1, public School)	The findings indicate that development of learning organization is encouraged through stakeholders collaboration. Wherease, in public schools, limited support from different stakeholders was identified.
<b>Theme 4:</b> Student Achievement and Inclusive Learning	"Peer learning is encouraged" (p6, private schol)	The findings reveal that students' achievement and inclusive learning are supported in private school. While no scuh evidence was found in public school

### Theme 2: Teachers’ Professional Growth and Capacity Building

Principals claimed that they provide continuous support to the teachers through monitoring and mentoring. Principals also stated about the opportunities of professional development provided to the teachers for their professional grooming. One of the principals of private school talked about different training programs;

*“We have made B.Ed. compulsory for all teachers... CPD sessions are mandatory, subject-wise and pedagogical training is provided.” (Principal # 6)*

Timely and continuous feedback is another way to support teachers and help them grow professionally. Furthermore, teachers are also helped with counselling in case of any problem being faced by a teacher.

*“We counsel teachers to address underperformance... we guide them to improve weak areas.”* (Principal # 5, public school)

The theme highlights that recognition of teachers’ work is very important. It is also very effective to help them counselling whenever teacher need it.

### **Theme 3: School as Learning Organization**

Along with support in pedagogical activities principals mentioned about the shared objectives, which is always explained to the teachers. Teachers are not only informed about school objectives, but also work for common goals. Principals also emphasized that parents and community involvement is very important to develop a learning environment in the school.

Principal of a private school stated that;

*“We involve parents in remedial planning... share learning materials... collaborate for student support.”* (Principal # 6, private school).

While principal of a public-school complaint about the reluctant attitude of parents towards their children’s learning

*“Community undervalues education... parental cooperation is weak... impacts student learning.”* (Principal # 1, public School)

Principals’ engagement with parents and the community strengthens collaboration, accountability, and student learning outcomes. Where engagement is weak, educational goals are harder to achieve.

#### **Theme 4: Student Achievement and Inclusive Learning**

Principals implement certain strategies to add inclusivity and help students to meet the benchmark; such as remedial classes, mixed-ability grouping, and motivational sessions to support student learning and achievement.

Principal of private school narrated multiple strategies to improve students learning outcomes. She stated that;

*“We identify weak students... remedial classes and extra instructional time... individual counseling if required.”* (Principal # 2)

In school certain mechanism are introduced to help slow learners, having concept that no child should be left behind.

*“House-wise system... mixed groups for slow and good performers... peer learning encouraged.”* (Principal # 6)

While public school adopted by an NGO follow mechanistic teaching simply by following readymade planners as provided by the authorities.

*Teachers follow planners... may negatively affect learning outcomes.”* (Principal # 3)

Participants also mentioned about the support provided to students by facilitating their individual needs. The data demonstrates that effective instructional leadership in public and private schools in Karachi, Sindh is multi-dimensional, direct involvement of principals in lesson planning and execution and provisions of structured professional development opportunities for teachers are certain practices beneficial for learning organization. Similarly, structured professional development, continuous monitoring and performance feedback and strong system for teachers to improve pedagogy, ultimately leave positive effect on students learning.

RQ.3. what challenges do school principals' face in practicing instructional leadership?

Table 3  
*Summary of Themes and Findings of Research Question 3*

Themes	Participants Quotes	Key Findings
<b>Theme 5:</b> Resistance to Change and Low Motivation	<i>"Senior teachers resist new methods (p4, private school)</i>	The findings reveal that both public and private schools experience resistance to change due to absence of recognition and incentives
	<i>"Resistance to change... teachers unaware of lesson objectives" (P3, public school)</i>	
<b>Theme 6:</b> Structural and Administrative Constraints in Instructional Leadership	<i>"multi-role leadership is challenging." (Principal # 4)</i>	The findings from the public school indicate that principals face significant structural and administrative constraints. such as; lack of clerical support, inadequate budget allocation, and limited resources.
	School is still waiting for the budget... we don't have enough chairs for teacher's staffroom.	

Although, multiple practice related to instructional leadership was executed, as narrated by principals, yet there were certain challenges which were still existing such as resistance to change, fixed mindset, and lack of motivation.

### **Theme 5: Resistance to Change and Low Motivation**

The findings reveal that both public and private schools experience resistance to change. Lack of incentives, personal growth and absence of recognition limit their willingness to adopt new instructional practices or get involved in professional development.

One of the private school principals stated that;

*"Senior teachers resist new methods... they know their salary will not be affected, so they are reluctant to learn." (Principal # 4)*

Similarly, public school teacher also mentioned that;

*“Resistance to change... teachers unaware of lesson objectives... they just teach what NGO gives.”* (Principal # 3)

One of the reasons of resistance to change can be the lack of incentives or entirely absence of incentives.

Some participants admitted that rewards and counseling improve teachers’ motivation level and help to foster teacher’s engagement in teaching practices.

*“We appreciate teachers through certificates, gifts, and salary increments... recognition motivate better performance.”* (Principal # 6)

Principal of public school which was adopted by an NGO mentioned the constraints and low morale of teachers due to workload.

*“Teachers overburdened with six-seven periods... lack chairs and respect... morale is low.”* (Principal # 3 Public school)

Teachers overburdened having no facility and prestige is less responsive to leadership interventions, indicating the importance of supportive work environments.

### **Theme 6: Structural and Administrative Constraints in Instructional Leadership**

Limitations such as lack of budget, absence of clerical staff, and instructional autonomy affect principals’ ability to implement effective leadership. Public school principals were facing similar problems of lack of resources and staff.

One of public-school principal discussed the constraints;

*“No clerical staff... I type and print question papers myself... multi-role leadership is challenging.”* (Principal # 1)

Another public-school principal mentioned the same issues, even lack of resources is scary;

*“School is still waiting for the budget, NGO also do not provide us any, and even we don’t have enough chairs for teacher’s staffroom. I feel powerless.”* (Principal # 3)

Resource scarcity and administrative burden hinder instructional leadership. Principals struggle to focus on teaching and teacher development when administrative duties are overwhelming or authority is restricted. While private school principals did not report major structural or administrative constraints; however, resistance to change among teachers was commonly highlighted in both public and private schools.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings of the study revealed that although school principals reported themselves as supportive instructional leaders who provide guidance to teachers in different instructional activities, the findings indicate gap between perceived instructional leadership and its actual practices, particularly in relation to instructional monitoring and mentoring. When interpreted through instructional leadership approach, the findings suggest that dimensions of supporting teachers are partially evident, but the core function of instructional leader which include, defining school goals, support in curriculum implementation and shared vision are weak or neglected. Similar findings have been reported in previous research which highlight that school principals frequently remain engaged in administrative work due to lack of clerical staff and resource (Noor & Nawab, 2022; Sharafat et al., 2024).

This challenge is particularly visible in public school, where principals are overwhelmed with administrative workload due to lack of administrative support, limited resources, and systemic constraints. All principals mentioned the importance of classroom supervision important. However, this priority was not reflected in practice particularly in public schools. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that school leaders are often diverted from instructional leadership toward managerial tasks due to resource constraints (Aureada, 2021; Sharafat et al., 2024; Ralebese, 2025).

From the perspective of learning organization theory, the finding suggests that key element such as system thinking, share vision, and continuous professional learning are not fully developed in participating schools. Although participants emphasized collaboration and teacher development, but the actual schools’ culture do not reflect continuous learning process. The findings are aligned with previous research which highlight that there are still substantial barriers preventing adoption of systems thinking as an approach within education. The largest barrier is likely the unwillingness of educational professionals to change from a method of using

traditional, vertical hierarchical management structures. As such, many educators do not engage in collaborative planning or reflective practice (Jemain et al., 2025).

Furthermore, public schools are particularly facing multiple challenges and one of the reasons is lack of professional development. Research support this finding that the development of the learning organizations within schools, need ongoing professional development, risk-taking, an open and honest approach to collaboration, a shared vision for the organization (Kareem, 2024). Additionally, resistance to change among teachers and low motivation due to lack of recognition and incentives were identified as major challenge affecting both public and private schools. The findings reinforce previous studies that highlight how teachers' motivation and organizational culture significantly influence the success of instructional leadership practices and school improvement efforts (Sharafat et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings suggest that instructional leadership can support schools in collectively working toward a shared mission and vision. However, the results also indicate that many schools lack culture of collaboration and continuous learning. Particularly public schools lack continuous professional development, reflective practices, and enforcement of continuous learning as a culture of school. Strengthening these elements may help schools to start functioning as effective learning organization. The findings imply that principals should prioritize their instructional leadership role over administrative duties.

## **6. Recommendations**

The findings of the study suggest the following recommendations for school principals to strengthen instructional leadership practices and promote schools as learning organization:

1. Schools may set targeted professional development for principals focusing on instructional leadership, classroom supervision, feedback mechanism, and system thinking to enable principals to shift their priorities from administrative work to instructional improvement.
2. School may arrange Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for teachers. A structured professional learning system is essential for strong learning organization.
3. School management or authorities may reduce the administrative workload of principals by providing adequate human resource. This will allow principals to focus more on instructional practices rather than routine administrative work.
4. Schools may also develop professional learning communities to encourage collaboration and shared learning among different stakeholders to strengthen systems thinking share vision within schools.

5. Incentives, such as; recognition, appreciation, and financial incentive may be introduced to reduce resistance to change in instructional practices.

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