

Exploring the Instructional Leadership Practices of Junior High School English Teachers of Joji Ilagan International School

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Abstract. Instructional leadership has traditionally been associated with school administrators; however, emerging perspectives recognize teachers as active instructional leaders who influence teaching quality, student learning, and school improvement. This study explored the instructional leadership practices of Junior High School English teachers at Joji Ilagan International Schools, focusing on how teachers enact leadership, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ to sustain instructional practices. Using a descriptive phenomenological research design, the study examined the lived experiences of five purposively selected Junior High School English teachers through semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. The findings revealed that instructional leadership among English teachers is a multidimensional and evolving process embedded in everyday classroom practices. Five themes emerged: Holistic Leadership, Student Empowerment, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Adaptive and Reflective Practice, and Distributed and Collaborative Leadership. The findings showed that teachers exercise instructional leadership by supporting students' academic and personal development, promoting learner participation, adapting instruction to diverse needs, reflecting on teaching practices, and collaborating with colleagues and stakeholders. Despite challenges related to learner diversity, time constraints, classroom management, and limited resources, teachers demonstrated flexibility and innovation in sustaining effective instructional practices. The study contributes to the growing discourse on teacher-led instructional leadership by highlighting teachers' voices within the Philippine private school context. It emphasizes that teachers are not merely curriculum implementers but active leaders who shape meaningful learning experiences and contribute to continuous school improvement. The findings suggest the importance of professional development programs, collaborative school structures, and institutional support in strengthening teachers' capacity to lead instruction effectively.

Keywords: adaptive practice; instructional leadership; teacher leadership; thematic analysis; teacher collaboration

Introduction

Instructional leadership has become a central focus in efforts to improve educational quality worldwide. Research consistently demonstrates that effective instructional leadership enhances teaching practices, strengthens classroom management, fosters student engagement, and ultimately raises academic achievement. While this concept has traditionally been associated with school administrators, recent scholarship underscores that teachers themselves also serve as instructional leaders within their classrooms, shaping learning experiences and influencing student success (Hallinger, 2020; Shaked, 2022).

In English education, instructional leadership is particularly significant. English teachers are entrusted with the development of students' communication, comprehension, and critical thinking skills—competencies essential for academic and professional growth. Learner-centered and interactive strategies have been shown to improve engagement and language proficiency (Bautista & Chua, 2022). Globally, institutions encourage teachers to be innovative, reflective, and adaptive in addressing diverse student needs. In the Philippines, the Department of Education advances this vision through the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasize learner-centered instruction, professional growth, classroom management, and collaboration (DepEd, 2020).

Despite these reforms, Filipino teachers continue to face persistent challenges such as large class sizes, diverse learner needs, limited resources, and time constraints (Ocampo & Villanueva, 2021). English teachers, in particular, struggle with varying proficiency levels and sustaining active participation. While

professional development programs and mentoring initiatives exist, much of the existing literature has focused either on administrators' leadership roles or on quantitative outcomes such as test scores (Hallinger, 2021; Gumus et al., 2020).

This creates a clear research gap although instructional leadership is widely studied, scholarship has disproportionately emphasized administrative perspectives and measurable outcomes, leaving underexplored the *lived experiences of teachers themselves* as instructional leaders. In particular, private secondary schools in the Philippine context remain largely absent from the discourse. Existing studies rarely capture how teachers enact, sustain, and adapt instructional leadership in practice, especially in English education where diverse learner needs and language proficiency challenges are most pronounced.

By exploring the experiences of Junior High School English teachers at Joji Ilagan International Schools, this study directly addresses that gap. It provides a contextualized account of how teachers describe their leadership practices, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ to sustain them. In doing so, it contributes to the growing discourse on teacher-led leadership in private education, foregrounding teacher voices, offering insights for professional development, and strengthening the understanding of instructional leadership as a dynamic, teacher-driven practice.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the instructional leadership practices of Junior High School English teachers in selected private schools in General Santos City.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do Junior High School English teachers describe their instructional leadership practices?
2. What challenges do teachers encounter in practicing instructional leadership in their classrooms?
3. How do teachers develop, implement, and sustain instructional leadership practices in their teaching context?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the instructional leadership practices of Junior High School English teachers in selected private schools in General Santos City. It involved five (5) purposively selected participants with relevant teaching experience. The scope was limited to qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews, which provided rich, descriptive insights into teachers' leadership practices (Baldera, 2025). The findings are therefore context-specific and cannot be generalized to all educational settings, as qualitative research emphasizes depth over breadth (Silverman, 2021). The small sample size and purposive sampling method further limit the extent to which conclusions can be applied to other contexts (Saunders et al., 2021). Despite these delimitations, the study offers valuable insights into instructional leadership practices within the cultural and institutional setting of General Santos City, contributing to the broader discourse on teacher-led leadership in private education.

Literature Review

Instructional Leadership as a Driver of Teaching Quality

Instructional leadership has traditionally been viewed as a responsibility of school administrators; however, recent scholarship has expanded the concept to include teachers as active contributors to instructional improvement. Contemporary perspectives emphasized that leadership in education was not limited to formal positions but could also emerge through teachers' professional decisions, classroom practices, and commitment to improving learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2020; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). This evolving view positioned teachers as instructional leaders who influenced teaching quality through curriculum implementation, assessment practices, collaboration, and continuous professional development. Hallinger (2020) identified instructional leadership as a process involving the supervision of instruction, alignment of curriculum goals, and improvement of teaching practices. Similarly, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) explained that effective leadership influenced student achievement by strengthening teachers' professional capacity and instructional effectiveness. These perspectives suggested that the impact of leadership was largely mediated through teachers' classroom practices rather than through administrative actions alone. Further supporting this view, Leithwood (2020) emphasized that professional learning opportunities and supportive organizational environments enabled teachers to develop stronger instructional practices. While these studies established the importance of instructional leadership in

improving educational outcomes, they primarily focused on leadership frameworks and organizational influences. Less attention had been given to how classroom teachers themselves enacted instructional leadership, particularly in subject-specific contexts. This limitation highlighted the importance of examining teachers as instructional leaders who directly influenced classroom instruction and student learning.

Teacher-led Instructional Leadership in English Education

The role of teachers as instructional leaders was particularly significant in English language education, where effective teaching required adaptability, creativity, and responsiveness to diverse learner needs. Studies indicated that English teachers influenced student achievement not only through content delivery but also through instructional innovations, data-informed decisions, and learner-centered approaches. Cabansag (2021) emphasized that English proficiency served as an essential foundation for students' academic success because language skills influenced performance across various learning areas. This highlighted the critical role of English teachers in developing meaningful instructional practices that supported communication skills and literacy development. Extending this perspective, Bautista and Chua (2021) found that data-driven instructional leadership contributed to improved academic performance in English by enabling teachers to utilize assessment information in refining their teaching strategies. Their findings demonstrated that instructional leadership was reflected in teachers' ability to analyze learning evidence and make informed instructional decisions. Similarly, Bautista and Chua (2022) emphasized the effectiveness of differentiated and interactive teaching strategies in improving student engagement and learning outcomes. These approaches required teachers to exercise professional judgment, innovate classroom practices, and respond to individual learner differences. Gumus et al. (2020) further supported this perspective by demonstrating that instructional leadership enhanced teaching quality and student engagement through effective instructional practices. Although previous studies highlighted the relationship between teacher practices and student outcomes, much of the existing literature examined instructional strategies or leadership effectiveness separately. Limited research had explored the broader process of how English teachers integrated leadership behaviors into their daily instructional practices.

Contextual Factors in Private Schools

Instructional leadership practices were shaped by the context in which teachers worked. School culture, organizational expectations, available resources, and institutional structures influenced how teachers developed and applied leadership behaviors. Therefore, understanding instructional leadership required consideration of the specific educational environment where teachers performed their roles. Ng and Nguyen (2021) emphasized that instructional leadership practices varied depending on institutional contexts, particularly in private school settings where organizational structures and expectations differed from public education environments. This suggested that instructional leadership could not be examined independently from the conditions that supported or constrained teachers' practices. In the Philippine context, studies highlighted the importance of collaboration, mentoring, and innovation in strengthening teacher leadership. De Leon and Palma (2021) found that English teachers who engaged in mentoring and innovative instructional practices contributed positively to literacy development. Similarly, Castillo and Lopez (2022) revealed that collaboration and shared instructional goals improved English subject performance. These studies indicated that teacher leadership developed through both individual classroom practices and collective professional engagement. However, existing Philippine studies had largely focused on instructional strategies, teacher collaboration, or student outcomes rather than examining instructional leadership as experienced by English teachers themselves. The limited exploration of teachers' perspectives created a need for further investigation into how contextual factors influenced their leadership practices.

Challenges in Practicing Instructional Leadership

Although instructional leadership contributed to improved teaching practices, teachers continued to encounter challenges that affected their ability to fully exercise leadership in instruction. These challenges included limited resources, diverse learner needs, time constraints, and institutional demands. Such conditions required teachers to demonstrate flexibility, creativity, and resilience in maintaining instructional

effectiveness. Ocampo and Villanueva (2022) identified resource limitations and diverse student needs as significant challenges affecting instructional leadership implementation. These findings indicated that teachers' ability to lead instruction depended not only on individual competence but also on the availability of institutional support and learning resources. Across the reviewed literature, several common themes emerged: instructional leadership promoted teaching improvement, teachers served as important instructional leaders, and contextual factors influenced leadership practices. However, existing studies had primarily examined instructional leadership from administrative perspectives, measured its relationship with student outcomes, or focused on specific instructional strategies. Fewer studies had explored the lived experiences, practices, and challenges of English teachers as instructional leaders within their own classrooms.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Junior High School English teachers in practicing instructional leadership. Through participants' narratives, the study identified the essence and meaning of instructional leadership practices, including holistic leadership, student empowerment, culturally responsive pedagogy, adaptive and reflective practice, and distributed collaboration. By foregrounding teachers' voices, the study revealed their beliefs, strategies, challenges, and coping mechanisms, while also identifying common themes that emerged from their narratives (Silverman, 2021). In doing so, it provided a holistic understanding of how instructional leadership was manifested in real classroom settings, echoing Baldera's (2025) emphasis on the relational nature of leadership and Sumena Jr.'s (2025) call for contextualized accounts of professional practice.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected campuses of Joji Ilagan International Schools, a private educational institution committed to quality education and holistic student development. The school offered Junior High School programs where English teachers played an important role in developing students' communication and literacy skills. Its emphasis on instructional quality and professional development made it an appropriate setting for examining instructional leadership practices among English teachers.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were Junior High School English teachers employed at Joji Ilagan International Schools. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the study. To be included, participants had to be currently teaching English at the Junior High School level, possess at least one (1) year of teaching experience, and demonstrate willingness to participate and share their professional experiences. A total of five (5) participants were selected to ensure in-depth data collection while maintaining the manageability of qualitative analysis. These participants provided rich and meaningful insights into their instructional leadership practices.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide, which provided flexibility in exploring participants' responses while ensuring that essential topics related to instructional leadership were adequately addressed. The interview guide comprised open-ended questions designed to elicit comprehensive descriptions of the participants' experiences, including their understanding of instructional leadership, the strategies they employed in teaching English, the challenges they encountered in their roles, and the ways in which they supported student learning and development. Furthermore, follow-up questions and probing techniques were utilized to clarify responses and obtain deeper insights. To ensure the quality of the instrument, the interview questions were validated by experts in education and research, establishing their clarity, relevance, and appropriateness.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process followed a systematic and ethical procedure. First, the researcher sought permission from the school administration of Joji Ilagan International Schools to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researcher identified and invited qualified participants based on the established criteria. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their informed consent was obtained prior to

participation. Interviews were scheduled at a convenient time and place for the participants. Each interview was conducted using the semi-structured interview guide and lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. With the participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data collection. Notes were also taken during the interview to capture non-verbal cues and important observations. After the interviews, the recordings were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Results and Discussions

Interpretation of Findings

The responses of the participants revealed a nuanced and multifaceted understanding of instructional leadership among Junior High School English teachers. Their perspectives demonstrated that instructional leadership extended beyond the delivery of academic content and encompassed mentoring, collaboration, innovation, and continuous professional growth. The findings indicated that teachers perceived themselves not only as instructors but also as facilitators, mentors, and leaders who influenced both the academic and personal development of their students. This interpretation was consistent with Hallinger (2020), who emphasized that instructional leadership focused on improving teaching and learning while fostering students' holistic development.

Theme 1: Holistic Leadership

In describing their instructional leadership practices, participants emphasized that their roles extended beyond the delivery of academic competencies. They perceived themselves not only as teachers responsible for improving students' academic performance but also as mentors who guide learners' personal, emotional, and social development. Participants highlighted that effective instructional leadership involves building meaningful relationships with students, providing encouragement, developing confidence, and creating a learning environment where students feel supported and valued.

One participant explained that instructional leadership involves responsibilities beyond classroom instruction:

"Instructional leadership is more than simply teaching academic content; it includes guiding students both academically and personally."

Similarly, another participant emphasized the importance of establishing a supportive and emotionally safe classroom environment:

"Leadership inside the classroom means helping students feel confident, safe, and motivated to learn."

These narratives demonstrate that participants conceptualized instructional leadership as a holistic process focused on the overall development of learners. Teachers recognized that effective instruction requires more than knowledge transmission; it also involves understanding students' individual needs, providing emotional support, and developing their confidence and communication skills. This finding supports Hallinger's (2020) assertion that instructional leadership encompasses not only the improvement of teaching and learning but also the nurturing of learners' intellectual, social, and emotional dimensions.

Theme 2: Student Empowerment

Participants identified student empowerment as a central component of their instructional leadership practices. Teachers described their efforts to create opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process through collaborative activities, inquiry-based learning, storytelling, role-playing, literacy projects, and technology-enhanced activities. These approaches reflected teachers' belief that students learn more effectively when they are actively involved, encouraged to express their ideas, and given opportunities to take ownership of their learning.

One participant highlighted the collective responsibility of educators in supporting students' growth by stating:

"It takes a school to raise students."

Another participant emphasized the importance of collaboration in promoting meaningful learning experiences:

"Collaboration is the key."

These statements revealed that participants viewed students as active contributors rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Teachers promoted empowerment by encouraging communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and independent learning. Through learner-centered practices, students were provided opportunities to develop confidence and responsibility for their own learning progress. This finding aligned with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasized that meaningful learning occurred through interaction, collaboration, and shared experiences. It also supported Cabansag's (2021) finding that participatory learning environments strengthened learner engagement and ownership.

Theme 3: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Participants highlighted the importance of recognizing students' diverse backgrounds, abilities, experiences, and learning preferences when implementing instructional practices. They described instructional leadership as requiring sensitivity to learners' individual differences and the ability to adjust teaching approaches to ensure meaningful, inclusive, and equitable learning experiences.

Teachers emphasized the importance of knowing students personally in order to design relevant and contextualized instruction. One participant explained:

"I make learning more meaningful and relatable by knowing my students personally."

Another participant described the use of differentiated strategies to address varying learner needs:

"I use visual aids, simplified instructions, peer support, and enrichment activities for advanced learners."

These responses demonstrated that participants practiced culturally responsive pedagogy by adapting instruction based on students' contexts and learning requirements. Teachers recognized that learners differed in their experiences, abilities, interests, and learning styles; therefore, effective instructional leadership required flexibility and responsiveness. By contextualizing lessons and implementing differentiated strategies, teachers promoted inclusion and ensured that students received appropriate support. This finding supported Leithwood's (2020) view that effective educational leadership recognized contextual differences and promoted equitable learning opportunities.

Theme 4: Adaptive and Reflective Practice

Participants identified several challenges encountered in practicing instructional leadership, including limited instructional time, diverse learner needs, maintaining student engagement, classroom management concerns, and limited instructional resources. However, rather than viewing these challenges as barriers, teachers demonstrated adaptability by reflecting on their practices, modifying instructional strategies, and developing innovative approaches to respond to classroom realities.

One participant described her approach to addressing instructional challenges:

"I address challenges through flexibility, patience, differentiated instruction, and continuous self-improvement."

Another participant shared an experience of modifying an instructional activity when students became less engaged:

"I noticed students losing interest, so I changed the activity to keep them engaged."

These accounts revealed that participants practiced instructional leadership through continuous reflection, decision-making, and instructional adjustment. Teachers demonstrated the ability to evaluate classroom situations and modify their strategies according to learners' responses and needs. Their willingness to revise teaching practices reflected flexibility, creativity, and commitment to professional growth. This finding supported Shaked's (2022) adaptive leadership framework, which emphasized responsiveness, innovation, and flexibility in addressing complex educational challenges.

Theme 5: Distributed and Collaborative Leadership

Participants emphasized that instructional leadership is strengthened through collaboration and shared responsibility among teachers, administrators, parents, and students. They viewed leadership as a collective practice that requires professional communication, teamwork, knowledge-sharing, and stakeholder involvement. Participants highlighted that improving teaching and learning cannot be achieved through individual efforts alone but requires cooperation within the broader educational community.

One participant emphasized the importance of teamwork:

"Collaboration is the key."

Similarly, another participant explained:

"Collaboration among educators contributes to improved teaching practices and better learning experiences for students."

These responses suggested that participants viewed instructional leadership as a shared process rather than an individual responsibility. Teachers demonstrated leadership through peer discussions, professional learning activities, exchange of instructional strategies, and collaboration with parents and school leaders. Such practices strengthened collective capacity and contributed to improved educational outcomes.

This finding reflected Leithwood's (2020) distributed leadership model, which viewed leadership as a shared responsibility among members of the educational community. Furthermore, the involvement of parents and other stakeholders supported Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasized the interconnected influence of family, school, and community environments on learner development. Participants recognized that sustaining instructional leadership required collective support and collaboration beyond the classroom.

Overall Synthesis of Findings

The findings demonstrated that instructional leadership among Junior High School English teachers was characterized by Holistic Leadership, Student Empowerment, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Adaptive and Reflective Practice, and Distributed and Collaborative Leadership. The participants' narratives revealed that teachers exercised leadership through meaningful classroom interactions, responsive instructional decisions, continuous reflection, and collaboration with educational stakeholders.

The use of a descriptive phenomenological research design was appropriate for this study because it enabled an in-depth exploration of Junior High School English teachers' lived experiences, perceptions, and practices related to instructional leadership within their natural educational contexts. Through the descriptive phenomenological approach, the study captured the essence of participants' experiences and provided a deeper understanding of how teachers perceived, practiced, encountered challenges in, and sustained instructional leadership. Consistent with phenomenological inquiry, the participants' narratives served as the foundation for identifying common meanings and themes that reflected their instructional realities. The findings contributed to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of instructional leadership in enhancing student learning, strengthening teacher professional growth, and supporting continuous school improvement.

Discussions

The findings of this study revealed that instructional leadership among Junior High School English teachers is a complex and multidimensional practice that extends beyond traditional classroom instruction. The themes generated from the participants' experiences—Holistic Leadership, Student Empowerment, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Adaptive and Reflective Practice, and Distributed and Collaborative Leadership—demonstrate that teachers enact leadership through instructional decision-making, learner-centered practices, professional reflection, and collaborative engagement.

The emergence of Holistic Leadership indicates that participants viewed instructional leadership as encompassing more than the delivery of subject content. Teachers perceived their leadership role as involving mentoring, emotional support, confidence-building, and the development of students' social and personal competencies. This suggests that effective instructional leadership is relational in nature, where teachers influence learners not only through academic instruction but also through supportive interactions that promote student well-being. This finding supports Hallinger's (2020) perspective that instructional leadership involves improving teaching and learning while considering the intellectual, social, and emotional dimensions of learners. The results further reinforce the idea that teachers serve as facilitators of holistic development by creating classroom environments where students feel valued, supported, and motivated. In the context of English language education, such leadership is particularly important because communication skills, confidence, and active participation are closely connected to learners' personal growth.

The findings regarding Student Empowerment demonstrate that participants promoted instructional practices that positioned learners as active participants in the learning process. The use of collaborative activities, inquiry-based learning, storytelling, role-playing, literacy projects, and technology-supported activities reflects a shift from teacher-centered instruction toward learner-centered approaches. This finding is consistent with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs through interaction, collaboration, and shared knowledge construction. The results also support Cabansag's (2021) assertion that participatory learning environments enhance student engagement and ownership of learning. Through empowerment-oriented practices, teachers encouraged students to develop independence, confidence, and responsibility for their learning outcomes. The findings suggest that instructional leadership is demonstrated not only through instructional planning but also through teachers' ability to create opportunities for students to exercise agency in the classroom.

The findings on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy highlight teachers' awareness that effective instruction must consider students' diverse backgrounds, abilities, experiences, and learning needs. Participants demonstrated responsiveness by contextualizing lessons, differentiating instruction, and applying inclusive strategies to ensure meaningful learning experiences. This finding supports Leithwood's (2020) view that effective educational leadership requires sensitivity to contextual factors affecting teaching and learning. Teachers who recognize learner diversity are better positioned to create equitable learning environments where students can participate and succeed. The findings also reflect principles of culturally responsive teaching, which emphasize connecting classroom instruction to students' lived experiences and cultural contexts. Thus, instructional leadership among English teachers involves not only selecting appropriate teaching strategies but also understanding learners as individuals with unique identities, strengths, and challenges.

The findings revealed that teachers experienced various challenges, including time constraints, diverse learner needs, classroom management concerns, limited resources, and difficulties sustaining student engagement. However, participants demonstrated adaptability by modifying instructional strategies, reflecting on classroom experiences, seeking improvement, and implementing innovative approaches. This finding aligns with Shaked's (2022) adaptive leadership framework, which emphasizes flexibility and responsiveness when addressing complex educational challenges. Teachers' ability to evaluate instructional effectiveness and modify their practices reflects the characteristics of reflective practitioners who continuously seek improvement. The findings further suggest that instructional leadership is not a fixed practice but an evolving process shaped by classroom realities. Teachers become effective instructional leaders when they are willing to examine their practices, respond to emerging needs, and develop innovative solutions to improve learning experiences. The findings indicate that instructional leadership is sustained through collaboration among teachers, school leaders, parents, and students. Participants emphasized the

importance of teamwork, professional conversations, sharing of strategies, and stakeholder involvement in strengthening instructional practices.

This finding supported Leithwood's (2020) distributed leadership model, which conceptualized leadership as a collective responsibility rather than an activity performed only by individuals holding formal positions. The results suggested that teachers exercised leadership by contributing knowledge, supporting colleagues, and participating in collaborative processes that improved teaching and learning. The involvement of parents and community stakeholders further reflected Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which explained that student development was influenced by interconnected systems, including family, school, and community environments. Instructional leadership therefore operated within a broader educational ecosystem where shared commitment contributed to student success.

Additionally, the participants' use of experiential learning activities supported Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasized learning through active participation and meaningful experiences. By incorporating interactive activities, teachers demonstrated their ability to sustain student engagement and adapt instruction according to learners' developmental needs. Overall, the findings demonstrated that instructional leadership among Junior High School English teachers was a learner-centered, adaptive, and collaborative process. Teachers enacted leadership through mentoring students, empowering learners, responding to diversity, reflecting on instructional practices, and building professional partnerships.

The descriptive phenomenological approach provided deeper insight into the lived experiences of teachers and revealed the meanings they attached to instructional leadership within their educational contexts. The findings suggested that instructional leadership was not limited to formal leadership roles but was embedded in teachers' everyday practices and interactions. This study contributed to the growing literature on instructional leadership by emphasizing the role of teachers as classroom leaders who influenced student learning, professional collaboration, and continuous school improvement. The results highlighted the importance of supporting teachers through professional development opportunities and collaborative structures that strengthened their capacity to lead instruction effectively.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles and standards in educational research to ensure the protection of participants' rights, dignity, privacy, and welfare throughout the research process. Prior to the conduct of the study, permission was secured from the administration of Joji Ilagan International School to undertake the research and gather data from the identified participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after providing a clear explanation of the study's purpose, research procedures, expected participation, and potential benefits. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty or adverse consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study. Participants' identities were protected through the use of codes or pseudonyms, and no personally identifiable information was disclosed in the presentation, analysis, or reporting of findings. The interview responses and other collected data were handled confidentially and were utilized solely for academic and research purposes. All research data were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher. Data collection, management, and storage procedures were conducted in accordance with the principles of privacy protection and the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). The study also ensured that participants were not subjected to physical, psychological, emotional, or professional harm during the research process. The researcher upheld fairness, objectivity, and academic integrity by accurately representing participants' lived experiences, maintaining transparency in data interpretation, and properly acknowledging all sources of information. These ethical practices ensured that the study was conducted responsibly while recognizing and respecting the valuable contributions of the participants.

Conclusion

This study explored the instructional leadership practices of Junior High School English teachers at Joji Ilagan International Schools using a descriptive phenomenological research design and thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with five purposively selected participants. The approach enabled the study to capture teachers' lived experiences, perspectives, and practices in enacting instructional leadership within their professional contexts. The study concludes that instructional leadership among Junior High School English teachers is a multidimensional and evolving process that extends beyond the traditional responsibilities of classroom instruction. Teachers demonstrated leadership through their commitment to

improving learning experiences, responding to learner diversity, engaging in reflective practice, and fostering collaborative relationships within the school community. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on teacher-led instructional leadership by highlighting teachers' voices within the Philippine private school context. The study demonstrates that teachers are not merely curriculum implementers but active leaders who shape student development, influence instructional improvement, and contribute to a culture of continuous learning. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of institutional support in strengthening teachers' instructional leadership capacities. Professional development opportunities, collaborative school structures, and supportive leadership environments are essential in enabling teachers to sustain adaptive, reflective, and innovative practices. Overall, the study affirms that effective instructional leadership is learner-centered, collaborative, and context-responsive. It is sustained through teachers' ability to integrate pedagogical knowledge, professional reflection, and shared responsibility toward improving teaching quality, student learning, and continuous school development.

Reccomendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen instructional leadership practices among Junior High School English teachers. For teachers, it is recommended that they sustain holistic and learner-centered instructional practices that address not only students' academic development but also their confidence, communication skills, and emotional well-being. Given that instructional leadership extends beyond content delivery, teachers are encouraged to continuously develop mentoring practices and create supportive classroom environments that promote students' overall growth. They may also enhance their adaptive and reflective practices through regular self-assessment, peer observation, professional dialogue, and reflective teaching activities, enabling them to respond effectively to challenges such as diverse learner needs, classroom management concerns, and student engagement difficulties. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to strengthen their implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy by contextualizing lessons, applying differentiated strategies, and considering students' backgrounds, abilities, and learning preferences, while also integrating technology, experiential learning, and collaborative approaches to foster active participation and learner empowerment. For school administrators, it is recommended to develop sustained professional development programs that focus on instructional leadership, reflective practice, differentiated instruction, and adaptive teaching strategies. Since teachers continuously modify their approaches to address classroom challenges, structured capacity-building initiatives can further enhance their instructional decision-making. Administrators are also encouraged to establish collaborative learning structures such as professional learning communities, mentoring programs, and teacher-sharing sessions to support distributed leadership practices. Providing opportunities for collaboration can strengthen teamwork and promote continuous school improvement. In addition, administrators should ensure the provision of adequate instructional resources, technological support, and organizational assistance to help teachers address constraints related to time, resources, and learner diversity, thereby fostering a supportive environment for innovative teaching practices. For policymakers and educational stakeholders, it is recommended to strengthen policies and programs that recognize and support teachers as instructional leaders. Since teachers play a critical role in influencing student learning through classroom-based leadership practices, initiatives that promote teacher empowerment, professional growth, and collaborative leadership should be prioritized. Investments in continuous professional development, instructional resources, and inclusive education programs are also essential to support culturally responsive pedagogy and equitable learning opportunities. Moreover, policies that encourage partnerships among schools, families, and communities can further strengthen shared responsibility and distributed leadership in education. For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the scope of instructional leadership studies by including participants from diverse school contexts, grade levels, subject areas, and educational settings to generate broader perspectives. Comparative studies between public and private institutions may provide deeper insights into how different contexts influence leadership practices. Researchers may also employ mixed methods approaches to examine the relationship between instructional leadership and measurable outcomes such as student achievement, teacher development, and school performance indicators. Longitudinal studies can further explore how instructional leadership evolves over time, while future investigations may also examine the role of emerging technologies, digital learning environments, and innovative teaching approaches in shaping contemporary instructional leadership practices.

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