

Instructional Leadership Role of Primary School Principals in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: This study explores the instructional leadership (IL) role of primary school principals in Sri Lanka. The purpose of this study was to examine the practices of primary school principal's role as instructional leader. The main research questions of the study were to find out what roles principal's play as instructional leader in primary schools; Identify how primary school principal fulfill his/her instructional leadership role? And which activities do principals as instructional leaders engage in promoting the education of students and upgrading the pedagogy of teachers in primary schools. The multiple case study method was used in the current study. Accordingly, Semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, observation and document analyses were used as data collecting tools. As the study sample four principals, and four teachers were selected using purposive sampling for interviews. The study found that all principals in the sample experienced in implementing instructional leadership roles. Also, the study shows that the traditional role of principals as school leaders has been changed to instructional leaders. All the primary school principals mentioned that they implement innovative methodologies to overcome challenges that they face when implementing instructional leadership roles in their schools. Also the study found that a significant attention was paid on instructional supervision, giving feedback on instruction, provision of instructional materials and incentives for teaching and learning and protection of instructional time by primary schools principals as instructional leaders. The study further revealed that the opportunities available for primary school principals to acquire leadership training at an appropriate stage in their career are limited. It was further revealed that Irrespective of education Zone the management of curriculum and instructional programs is a shared responsibility of principals and teachers in schools. However, principals should engage in all the roles related to instructional leadership in order to promote effective teaching and learning and thereby transform the school as an organisation into an environment where teachers and students reach their full potential. Therefore it is recommended that the primary school principals need to be trained in school management and leadership in order to be further competent as instructional leaders in primary schools in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership roles, primary Schools, Perception, Motivation,

I. Introduction

The success of the school is mostly dependent on the principal's ability to engage in instructional leadership roles and work as a team to improve the quality of classroom instruction. (Blasé, Blasé & Philips, 2010; Smylie, 2010, Kumari 2014, 2019). Anderson et al., (2008) and Kumari (2022e) recognized instructional leadership of the school principal as one of the most important tools that can be used in building effective professional development of teachers. They further emphasized that there is a direct relationship between instructional leadership and the professional development of teachers. The researchers stated that principal's leadership role is critical to the effectiveness of the school toward educating its students. School principals must be effective instructional leaders and be able to provide support, guidance and mentoring to teachers to bring about improvement in school performance and student learning achievements. Also, it has been found that the main purpose of engaging in instructional leadership role is to support teachers to improve their pedagogical skills which directly benefit students' high level of educational performance (Bush 2008, Kumari 2022a, 2022b,). There are widespread beliefs that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes. Southworth, (2004) carried out a research focusing on leading small, medium and large size schools in England and emphasized the importance of instructional leadership in schools. According to him efficient and effective leaders exercise both direct and indirect influence in implementing reforms and improving students' levels of achievement. Researchers found that classroom observation is one of the most common ways of reflecting on pedagogical practices which can help teachers evaluate their strengths and weaknesses (Farrell 2011, Kumari 2022c, 2022d).

Leithwood et al., (2008) found that all school members and other stakeholders are influenced by leadership of higher- achieving schools to a significantly greater degree than that of lower achieving schools. Mulford et al.,(2003) carried out a study to identify the effects of leadership on student learning and found that there are two main factors that affect to improve student outcomes. According to Waters et al., (2004) and Pillegedara et,al (2021) effective leadership of school principals can significantly enhance pupil achievement. As mentioned by them when principals engage in instructional leadership roles such as monitoring the

teaching learning process, holding post observation conferences and providing feedback and support, providing incentives and resources on time, coordinating curriculum, evaluate students progress, protect instructional time, provide incentives for teaching and learning will directly affect improving the quality of the teaching learning process. Similarly, Quinn (2002) shows that the leadership role of the principal is important in creating a happy working environment and thereby achieves exceptional educational outcomes. Anderson et al., (2008) and Kumari (2022e) recognized instructional leadership of the principal as one of the most important tools that can be used in building effective professional development of teachers. They further emphasized that there is a direct relationship between instructional leadership and the professional development of teachers.

Teole (2013) emphasized instructional leaders' role as setting clear school goals, providing incentives and resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, monitoring and evaluating instructions and providing feedback for teachers. As stated by UNESCO (2005) the major tasks of the school principal as instructional leader include: determining school goals, curriculum coordination, organizing diverse programs particularly for professional development of teachers, engaging in school supervision and evaluation, monitor students' progress, taking remedial actions, and creating a conducive school climate. Similarly, order to fulfill all these instructional leadership roles school principals need to have the theoretical knowledge, practical skill, experiences and adequate trainings on school leadership and management (Kumari 2020, 2021). The success of the school is mostly dependent on the principal's ability to engage in instructional leadership roles and work as a team to improve the quality of classroom instruction. (Blasé, Blasé & Philips, 2010; Smylie, 2010, Kumari 2014, 2019). These references are very cogent for the current study which focuses on instructional leadership roles of principals working in primary schools in Sri Lanka and critically explore the extent to which more effective adoption of instructional leadership practices by primary school principals enhance learning and teaching performance. In this connection primary school principals can use instructional leadership as an effective tool or leadership model in terms of enhancing the school success. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the role of instructional leadership of principals working in primary schools in Sri Lanka.

Statement of the Problem

Instructional leadership roles of school principals has been identified as one of the most important roles in terms of the professional development of teachers and their motivation. It was further highlighted that all school leadership tasks should be aimed at improving school performance results and professional development of teachers (Kumari 2021a, 2021b, 2022e). As stated by Blasé & Blasé (2010) instructional leadership focuses on the instructional process and the principal's influence is aimed at improving student learning and teacher motivation. Researchers believe that principals as instructional leaders in the school be supposed to engage in the role of instructional leadership (Sothworth 2004, Bush 2008, Hallinger & Murphy 1986, Kumari 2019, 2020, Malkanthi 2021, wickramanayake 2022a, 2022b). Therefore, the principal as an instructional leader of the school should engage in instructional leadership roles such as supervision of instruction, holding post observational conferences and providing the feedback necessary for teachers to enhance skills with regard to classroom teaching, providing incentives, coordinating the curriculum and protecting instructional time. Accordingly, it is clear that the main purpose of instructional leadership is to support teachers to improve their pedagogical skills which directly benefit students' high level of educational performance. However, there is a growing concern about the less attention to instructional leadership roles by school principals particularly there was dearth of research conducted on practices of primary school principals' role as instructional leader. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the role of instructional leadership of primary school principals in Sri Lanka.

Purpose and objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the practices of primary school principal's role as instructional leader. Therefore the specific research questions of the study were built as follows.

1. What roles primary school principal's play as instructional leader ?
2. How primary school principal fulfill his/her instructional leadership role? And
3. What activities do primary school principals as instructional leaders engage in promoting the education of primary students and upgrading the pedagogy of teachers in primary schools.

II. Methodology

Research Method

As stated by Bogdan et,al (2007) in qualitative research the data are collected in verbal form rather than numerical, data are analyzed inductively and researchers are concerned with the entire process. The qualitative multiple case study approach was used in the current study. The qualitative research discovers attitudes and behavior, experience through multiple forms of data such as interviews, observation and documents as it doesn't rely on a single data source. A case study is thus appropriate for the current study as it attempts to describe a particular situation.

Sampling Method

The quality of any research depends on careful sampling (Cohen et al., 2013). Therefore, researchers need to ensure the size of the sample and also its accessibility, as the accuracy of data needed is determined by the sample selected. Therefore, considerable attention needs to be given to selecting a reliable study sample. As explained by Cohen et al., (2013) careful and effective sampling helps researchers in order to overcome challenges in terms of time, resources and also access. They further stated that the size of the sample depends on purpose and the nature of the research. In particular the nature of the research can be quantitative, qualitative or mixed method. Therefore, according to them there are no clear cut rules for correct sample size. However, Cohen et al., emphasize the importance of considering methods of sampling when choosing an appropriate sample for a study. As mentioned by them under the purposive sampling method sampling is deliberate, depending on the needs of the researcher and the purpose and scope of the study. As Cohen et al., describe the central aim of qualitative studies is not generalization. However, qualitative studies direct themselves to engage in more in-depth analysis of the phenomena pertaining to a particular context. Therefore, purposive sampling method was chosen as the best suitable sampling method for the current study

Study Sample

The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. Therefore, purposive sampling was used as the sampling methodology in the current study. Accordingly, four primary school principals and four primary school teachers were selected as the study sample for data collection. The researcher's chosen schools were from two different educational Zones from the Colombo District in order to see the similarities and differences of instructional leadership roles played by primary school principals.

Study Site

According to Cohen et al. it is appropriate to conduct the study in naturalistic settings in qualitative research. Thus, the site for the study was selected as Colombo and Jayawardenapura Education Zone as it has number of primary schools and also has easy access. Accordingly, the current study was limited only to the Colombo and Jayawardenapura Education Zone in the Colombo District, Western province Sri Lanka. In order to conduct the research a letter of permission was sent to primary schools. After I got acceptance to conduct the research the purpose and ethical considerations of the study were clearly explained to respondents. Then, the principals and the teachers signed consent forms to indicate that they were not pressured to take part in the study and that they agreed with all the conditions set by the researcher.

Data collection tools

As qualitative data collection tools in the current study interview, observation and document analysis were employed. Accordingly, interview was conducted with principals and teachers. Teachers were interviewed as they can give adequate information in terms of instructional leadership role of the primary school principal in their school.

Interview as data gathering tool

As stated by Numan (2007) there are various types of interviews in social science research known as structured, semi structured and unstructured interviews. In the current study the researcher used semi-structured interview mainly because the researcher wanted to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews. In order to fulfill this, the same guiding questions were asked in each interview schedule. Accordingly, individual interview was conducted with school principal and teachers. The researcher was responsible for no interview took longer than 30 minutes.

Document analysis as data gathering tool

The term document in qualitative research refers to materials such as records, photographs, video films, memos, letters, diaries and souvenirs etc (Bogdan, 2007). In this study documents such as; vision and mission of the school, time tables, instructional programs, attendance of teachers' and students', records of supervision and evaluation of instruction, records of students' progress monitoring, protecting of instructional time, maintaining high visibility of Principal and remedial actions taken were analyzed.

III. Observation

There are two types of observations; direct and indirect (Bogdan, 2007). In the current study the researcher engaged in direct observation as it helps the researcher the opportunity to gather live data and information in terms of availability of instructional materials that supports the instructional process. Accordingly, text books, play grounds, school building, staff room, sanitary facilities, class room conditions etc were observed.

Data collection procedure

invitation letters and information sheets and participants' consent letters were posted to the selected schools after developing the data collection instruments. After two weeks the researcher visited to schools selected and obtained permission, contact details and a date to hold the initial meeting. Obtaining permission was quite easy as the researcher had posted the invitation letters to the selected school in advance and the principals were made aware of the study when the researcher was visiting the schools. Therefore, once they agreed to participate in this study, the researcher set an appointment with each of them. The researcher herself followed certain procedures mentioned below before starting the field work.

Initial Meeting

After obtaining permission from the principals, an initial meeting was held with the teachers to introduce the researcher review the information sheet and discuss about the study in depth. The initial meeting lasted around 45 minutes. At the initial meeting the participants' consent form was discussed. In addition, the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. At the end of the meeting all the participants agreed that they understood the aim of the research and agreed to participate by signing the consent form. After a week all the participants without withdrawing their consent confirmed their decision by phone.

Conducting Interviews

In order to conduct successful interviews there are some basic guidelines identified in the literature. As mentioned by Leary (2001) there are four such guidelines that can be used by interviewers. According to them the first one is making a friendly environment. As Leary (2001) further highlighted a good relationship with interviewees can be established through a friendly environment. Also a mutual relationship helps interviewees to respond without any hesitation. The second guideline is, adhering to the interview schedule. In this guideline they require the interviewer to follow the prepared interview schedule without any change. Accordingly it is expected to ask all participants each question in the same manner. The third guideline is stay away from supporting to obtain answers from the interviewees. It is believed that the success of data collection depends on the extent to which researchers pay attention to implementation of data collection tools. As explained by Kvale et al., (1996) when interviewers support the interviewee to obtain answers this will lead to interrupt the interviewee's flow of thought. Therefore they advised interviewers to refrain from supporting to get answers. The last guideline is about organizing interview sections. Under this guideline it is expected that the interviewer will organize the interview questions in a logical manner. In particular they are advised not to begin with sensitive or emotional questions. Following these guidelines, the researcher conducted eight interviews with the four primary school principals and four teachers.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research data analysis involves collecting open ended data provided by respondents. Accordingly, the interviews were conducted in Sinhala which is the working language of the selected education zone and the interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. Once the interview was concluded, each audio file were transcribed and translated to English language. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the main data obtained through different interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing, reporting patterns or themes within data. The transcripts were studied and, in the process, units, categories and themes were identified. After that the interpretations of the results were done. The data collected from different interviews were closely examined so that organizes into categories on the basis of themes and similar features.

In this process the researcher first listened to the recordings of each interview. Then the transcripts were read several times to get general idea of the interview, identify categories and units of meanings. Accordingly, similar categories were then grouped together and arranged into themes. Grouping related categories that show interrelationships helped reduced themes. Most of the themes that emerged from the interviews matched with the literature available for instructional leadership roles. Accordingly, five themes such as; principal role in framing and communicating the school vision and mission, principal's involvement in managing of curriculum and instructional programs, principal's role in organizing professional development programmes for staff, principal's role in creating positive climate for teaching and learning; and principals' training. The themes that have been identified were discussed and supported with relevant quotations from the interviews.

Validity and Reliability

The importance of validity and reliability in qualitative research was emphasized by Cohen et al., (2007). Similarly, issues of validity in research can be addressed (Basit, 2010). Validity in qualitative study has to do with being truthful. It refers to the bridge between a construct and the data. They stated that an invalid research is worthless. Therefore, in order to address validity concerns researcher in this study used triangulation strategy and thick descriptions. Reliability in qualitative research deals with the consistency and dependability of the research findings. Dependability will be obtained through triangulation as well as a detailed

report on the processes followed in the study so that future researchers may repeat the work. The taped interviews and transcription of the interviews will be stored and kept safely for verification purposes. Accordingly the issue of validity and reliability in qualitative research may be addressed through honesty, richness and scope of the data achieved. Accordingly it is clear that the validity and reliability of a research depend on several factors. They have been identified as the ability of the researcher to obtain real data and the extent to which the research explains the phenomenon. Further, the generalizability in terms of usefulness is also important. Hence, the researcher tried to enhance validity and reliability in her study through various aspects such as exploring the issue in detail and triangulating data.

Ethical Consideration

As highlighted by Rubin and Rubin (2011) it is vital for every researcher to be careful about what the respondent says or provides. It is therefore the researchers' responsibility to protect their participants. In order to protect participants' identities Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest researchers use pseudonyms in their research reports. The individuals who participated in a research also have moral and legal rights to receive privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. In particular if the participants do not feel secure and comfortable they will not fully contribute to providing accurate information. Therefore the quality of the research findings on the one hand depends on the level of security and comfort of the research participants. Therefore, in order to avoid any implications on the reputation of the schools and participants the researcher decided not to use their real names when writing her report.

Further, it is believed that obtaining informed consent from the participants is also one of the basic requirements of any research. Accordingly, the researcher prepared a straightforward consent form for the participants including important information with regard to the current research. Each participant signed the consent form before the researcher started the data collection. Accordingly, relevant permission was obtained to conduct interviews and observations from primary school principals and teachers. In any research trustworthiness is one of the key aspects which is frequently questioned. Lincoln and Guba (2004) stated that there are several ways to judge trustworthiness of a research. The first one is achieving the credibility of the research. For this every researcher needs to show that the subject was appropriately identified and described. Due to this, every researcher is required to give a description about every stage of his/her research in order to convince readers. Therefore, in the current study, the researcher provided a complete explanation in order to achieve credibility. According to them the second way of judging trustworthiness is transferability. Transferability is the researchers' ability to show the usefulness of findings to other similar situations even though every research is different in its nature. They believe that some aspects of a research are applicable to other situations. Therefore, in this current study this was also considered and the necessary effort was made to give sufficient information. The third way of judging trustworthiness is conformability. The conformability shows that the data and their explanation are not creations of the researchers' thoughts. In the current study the researcher provided a detailed description of the procedure of data collection and analysis. Also the current study was further reinforced by audio-recorded data and their transcription.

IV. Findings

Data Analysis from Document:

Schools' vision and mission, timetables, teachers' and students' attendances, lesson plan, yearly plan for curricular and extracurricular activities and school improvement program were analyzed and discussed under document analysis.

The analysis revealed that all four primary schools had the vision and mission statements. With regard to time tables all four schools had displayed instructional dates, exam times and sports days in the office of the principals, staff room and the class rooms. In terms of teachers' and students' attendance irrespective of education zone it was observed that there was a less number of teachers' and students' absenteeism in all four schools. This implies that principals as instructional leaders of these schools have made sufficient effort to motivate their teachers and students to engage in instructional process and thereby protect instructional time in their schools. It was further observed that the principals in all four schools distributed the responsibilities related to monitoring instructional process among teachers in their schools. The document analysis further revealed that a significant number of students in both educational zones (68%) have successfully completed the year five scholarship exams. In addition, all four schools had several extra-curricular activities organized and implemented during last five years. This indicates that the implementation of both curricula and extra-curricular activities in all four schools was satisfactory.

Data analysis from Observation

The discussion of the observations presented as follows:

The school provides the instruction from 7.30am to 12.30 pm in primary schools of both Educational Zones. Two primary schools out of four had not enough blocks for class rooms and the classrooms were packed with a large number of students. There were

different teaching aids such as, pictures, charts and graphs in the classrooms. Two schools out of four had not play grounds and sport fields. There was a library in all four schools with limited number of books. In all four schools there was a one computer in the Principal's office. The most important information such as students' academic progress, sports achievements of the students were displayed in the office. Overall, the observation result revealed that the instructional resources that support instructional activities were adequate in all four schools.

Interview data

In this section, data obtained from the principals and teachers interviewees were analyzed and discussed. Accordingly, the main five themes such as principal role in framing and communicating the school vision and mission, principal's involvement in managing of curriculum and instructional programs, principal's role in arranging staff development programmes, principal's role in creating positive teaching and learning atmosphere and the training needs for the principals' were developed. All five themes that have been identified were discussed and supported with relevant quotations from the interviews.

Findings of the Interviews

In this section the researcher presented the following major findings of this study based on the interviews data

1. Primary school principal's role in framing and communicating the school vision and mission.

Irrespective of education zone all four principals and teachers stated that vision and mission statements are available in their schools and they pay attention in revising the vision and mission statements and regular communication of the vision and missions to teachers, students and the school community. This was supported by teacher I from primary school 2.

"The vision and mission statements are available in my school and I have read it. I think we need to make aware of our parents about the vision and mission Teacher (1)

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) stated that one of the most important instructional leadership roles is formulating and defining a clear mission, goals and objectives together with the staff members and communicating them to stakeholders to realize effective and efficient instructional process.

2. Primary school principal's role in managing and monitoring curriculum and instructional program.

Irrespective of education zone the interviews held with principals revealed that the management of curriculum and instructional programs is a shared responsibility of principals, and teachers in schools. This view is highlighted by principal 1 from primary School 4

"Planning and managing curriculum is a big responsibility and hence principal him or herself cannot take the responsibility. To be honest most of the times I get support from most experience teachers in my school to fulfil this task" (Principal 1)

Supporting to above quote Teacher 4 from primary School 3 highlighted that,

"...Senior teachers in my schools support principal to make time tables and conducted instructional observation programmes according to grades and subjects. I am happy to mention that after a lesson is observed our senior teachers and also principals give constructive feedback in order for teachers to identify their strength and the areas that they should further develop in terms of regular pedagogical practices." (Teacher 4)

According to Hallinger et al (1985) one of the principal's role as instructional leader is to engage in instructional supervision and evaluating instruction on a regular basis and ensuring that classroom objectives are consistent with the stated goals of the school. In the current study the interviews revealed that the supervisory role of primary school principal's and teachers were satisfactory as they succeed to provide constructive feedback for teachers' professional development.

3. Primary school Principal's role in staff development program

It revealed from the interview that primary school principal as instructional leader pay significant attention on teachers professional development. As responded by Teacher 2 from primary School 3

"There are several school based teacher training programme and workshops have planned and organized within the school. Further, I got an several opportunities to participate for seminars organized by the Zonal Education Office during last five years....." Teacher (2)

Supporting to the above quote one of the primary school principals highlighted that "...School Based Teacher Development Programmes (SBTDP) require adequate budget ...we haven't sufficient budget to organize and implement trainings programmes and workshops within the schools however we hardly manage" Principal (1)

It is evident from the above findings that the professional development of teachers which is the most important aspect of the instructional leadership roles payed satisfactory attention by primary school principals. Hallinger and Heck too (1996) emphasized that the principal as an instructional leader in the school should create opportunities for teachers to obtain professional development and thereby enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

4. Principals' role in creating positive climate for teaching and learning.

4.1 Primary school Principals' role in providing instructional resources:

In order to achieve instructional goals principals as instructional leaders in schools need to provide physical and trained human resources for the effective management of the instructional programs (Andrews et. al., 1994). However the findings of this study revealed that the availability of instructional resources in all four schools need careful attention. As mentioned by Teacher 3 in primary school 3,

....."There are no adequate trained teachers to teach core subjects such as Science, Mathematics and English in our schools...." Teacher (3)

It is clear from the findings of this study that the primary school principals as instructional leaders in their Schools need to take necessary actions to provide train teachers on time.

4.2 Motivating teachers and students

One of other most important roles of instructional leader is to provide rewards for both students and teachers for their best performance and thereby creating a positive school climate. The data obtained from interviews showed that the rewarding of teachers has recently started in primary schools. Responding to this the teacher 3 stated that

"...A reward system for teachers those who performed well in pedagogical practices and all other extra-curricular activities were started recently in our schools and" Teacher (3)

In terms of students reward system all of the respondents mentioned that students are rewarded based on their educational achievements and performance exhibits on extra-curricular activities. Accordingly, the findings revealed that primary school principals as instructional leaders motivate teachers and students for successful teaching and learning to take place in their schools.

4.3 Protecting teaching time:

Protecting instructional time is also a one of the most important instructional leadership roles of a principal (Hallinger et, al; 1985). The findings of the current study depicted that the instructional time was not disrupted in the sample primary of schools. This was evidenced by Teacher 4 from primary School 4 and Tecaheer 3 from primary School 3.

"...Instructional process in our schools is not interrupted and it is implemented as planned. Teachers were not called for meetings and several other activities in schools during the instructions" Teacher (4 & 3)

This idea was confirmed by the primary school principal 3 and 4 as stated "...We are very keen on smooth function of the instruction in our school as we know that the interruption of instructional time can negatively affect for the quality teaching and learning process.... Principal (3 and 4)

Accordingly, it is clear that the interruption of instructional time was not a serious issue in primary schools in both the educational zones as principals are so keen on protecting the instructional time and support for maintaining the quality of education.

5) Principals' training needs:

With regard to primary school principal training irrespective of the education zone all the principals in the sample confirmed that there were less training opportunities for them to acquire or update new knowledge and skills pertaining to leadership skills. They further highlighted that lack of training can hinder principal's roles as instructional leader in primary schools. This was supported by the principal 3 interview in the following extracts.

“ There should be more opportunities available for primary school principals to acquire training on time as school leadership is becoming more complicated and competitive and” Principal (3)

Hallinger (2008) stated that the all school principal should be trained so that they can play instructional leadership roles which supports professional development of teachers and students higher level of educational achievements. Similarly Bush (2008) stated that the principalship is a expert profession that requires specific training on time so that they can engage in instructional leadership roles successfully. From the data obtained through interviews, observation and document analysis it was found that eventhough there were lack of on time training opportunities for primary school principals they dedicated in implementing instructional leadership roles to a satisfactory level.

V. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the instructional leadership role is mostly played by principal and teachers in the sample of primary schools. However, The study further revealed that the opportunities available for primary school principals to acquire leadership training at an appropriate stage in their career are limited. Therefore it is concluded that the primary school principals need to be trained in school management and leadership in order to be further competent as instructional leaders in primary schools in Sri Lanka.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions the researcher suggests following recommendations so that primary school principals as instructional leaders could further improve the quality of instruction in primary schools in Sri Lanka.

1). Staff Development

The study found that there was several school based teacher training programmes and workshops organized withing the primary schools. However, principals mentioned that it was very difficult for them to plan, organize and implement such training programmes for teachers within the school as it requires more funds. Therefore, I recommended that the primary school principals as instructional leaders in the school should aware about the power and authority that they have been given under the Programme for School Improvement (PSI) related to fund raising activities and obtaining support from the resource persons and school stakeholders in terms of developing schools..

2). Principal training.

It was revealed from this research that the primary school principals do not have adequate training opportunities to acquire or update new knowledge pertaining to leadership skills and lack of training can hinder principal's roles as instructional leader in primary schools. Therefore I recommend Faculties and Department of Education and relevant authorities to invest more on school leadership rtraining programs and plan and implement new leadership training programmes so that primary school principals should be competent enough to further lead the primary schools effectively.

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