



**Instructional Leadership in Malaysia:  
Roles, Practices and Challenges in High Performing School**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The theory and practice of the role of instructional leadership continues to be an important issue for those at the crossroad of scholarship and practice (Quah, 2011). Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013 reported that principals in Malaysia split their time fairly evenly across instructional and administrative activities. Further, principals generally understand the importance of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is a vital force for school transformation. The Ministry envisions that every school, regardless of location and performance level, will have a high-quality principal and supporting leadership team to provide instructional leadership and drive overall school performance (MEB 5-12, 2013). Hence, leaders of HPS in Malaysia have always been looked up by other school as exemplars, hence, the focus in this problem statement is to ascertain if instructional leadership practices is evident among HPS leaders. If it is, to ascertain the Instructional leadership domains which are core to their leadership. Further, to determine the challenges that would be faced by other school leaders who wish to adopt or emulate HPS instructional leadership practices.

## **2. HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

In Malaysia, High Performance Schools (HPS) are highly regarded due to their consistent excellent performance in public examinations. There are one hundred and thirty four high

performance schools located in urban and rural areas throughout Malaysia. HPS is defined as schools with ethos, character and a unique identity in all aspects of education. Usually, these schools has a tradition of high culture and excellent with the national human capital that develops holistic and sustainable and competitive in the international arena and become a public school choice. HPS has been recognized in the Malaysian Education System as lifting best quality schools, producing outstanding students and also to bridge the gap between schools in the system. All the schools that have been selected as HPS are in Band 1.

Selected and approved based on stringent criteria set by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE), these schools have earned respect for being the hallmark of quality education in Malaysia and having the potential to improve to match global standards of education.

### **3. SCHOOL LEADER ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS**

The role of instructional leadership has been highly acclaimed to have both direct and indirect effect on teacher effectiveness and student learning. Fullan (2002, p.6) stated “principals must be instructional leaders if they are to be effective leaders for innovation”. The statement acknowledges instructional leadership as the key task of a principal in order to improve student achievement. Between 2010 and 2015, instructional leadership has become the most critical aspect of a principal’s job. This is true because Hallinger (2011, p.271) stated “Thirty years later, ‘instructional leadership’ is widely accepted by policy makers as essential elements of management practice in schools”. Hallinger and Heck (2011) theorized that instructional leadership of a principal has reciprocal effect on organizational variables. Hallinger and Murphy (2013) addressed instructional leadership based on the concepts of time and capacity to lead others. According to Hallinger and Murphy (2013) school principals face conflict between their intentions to lead learning and the daily professional practice that they are engaged in. School principals’ leadership indeed is a critical component of school improvement as they are entrusted to lead schools (Bryk, Sebring & Allensworth, 2010). Leonard (2010) has rightly pointed out that 21st century school principals are to emphasis more on their professional core in lieu of schooling management. Consequently, school principals are to maximize the time spent in organizing learning activities in schools. They are expected to spend more time in ensuring and monitoring teachers’ professional duties and students’ learning activities (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2010). School principals that are safe guarding instruction oriented activities are able to ensure all students

reach ambitious targets of performance, including those with disabilities outline the demands for greater accountability (Billingsley, McLeskey & Crockett, 2014).

Owens (2015) research on principals' and teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership in United States showed that principals rated their own instructional leadership highest for the Hallinger's (2014) PIMRS subscale of framing school goals, while rating themselves lowest on the subscale of supervising and evaluating instruction. The teachers rated their principal's instructional leadership highest for the PIMRS subscale of framing school goals, while rating their principal lowest on the subscale of maintaining high visibility. Nevertheless, in a situation where conflicting views are available about instructional leadership of school principals, the research on instructional leadership role of the principals in Malaysian HPS is warranted to understand their prominent roles, practices and challenges as leaders.

## **6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- i. What are the Instructional Leadership domains that are prominently practiced by High Performing Schools' principals?
- ii. To what extent the practice of Instructional Leadership domains in High Performing Schools?
- iii. What are the main challenges faced by High Performing Schools' principals when practicing Instructional Leadership?

## **7. METHODOLOGY SECTION**

This study employs the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative approach. For the quantitative approach, survey method is employed to explore teachers' views pertinent to the role of school administrators as instructional leaders. The instrument in this study is based on Quah's (2011) instrument which has already translated, adapted and tested from three sources such as "Principals Instructional Management Rating Scale" (PIMRS) by Philip Hallinger (1987), model Krug's model (1992) and Hussein Mahmood (1997). Whereas, for the qualitative approach, semi structured questions via focus interview and in-depth interview are employ to explore teachers' and administrators' views pertinent to the role of the school administrators as instructional leaders. Clustered-stratified-random sampling was used to determine the sample representing the population of High Performance Schools in the study involving of 60 schools.

## 8. FINDINGS

### 8.1 What are the Instructional Leadership domains that are prominently practiced?

Figure 1 shows the mean score on the principals' role as instructional leaders. The finding indicates that principals have successfully implemented all the seven dimensions of instructional leadership. All the seven dimensions of instructional leadership have a higher mean score from the range of 4.17 to 4.36. Among all the seven dimensions, framing school goals has the highest mean score of 4.36, followed by monitoring student progress. Contrary, supervising teaching and learning has the lowest mean score of 4.17. Hence, the finding shows that three salient dimensions of instructional leadership are framing school goals followed by monitoring student progress and developing staff.

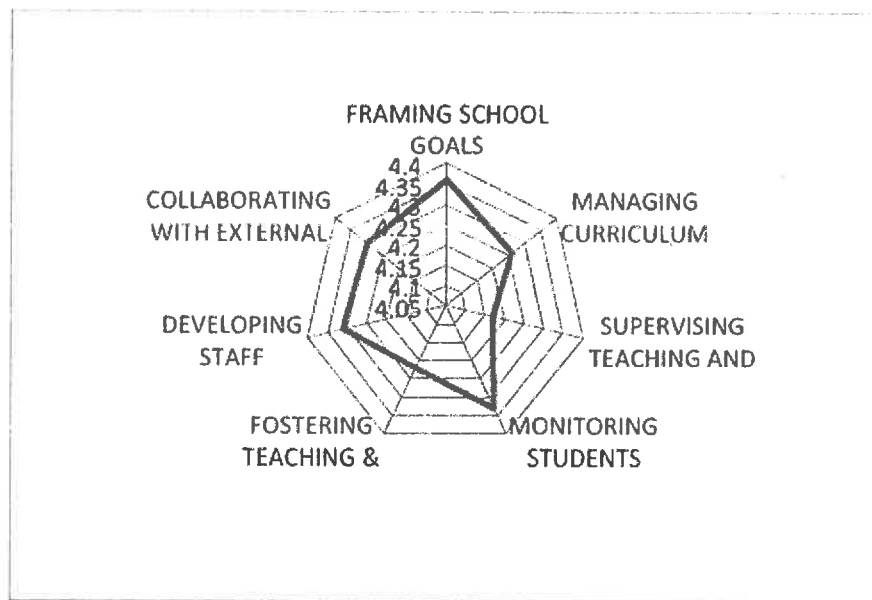


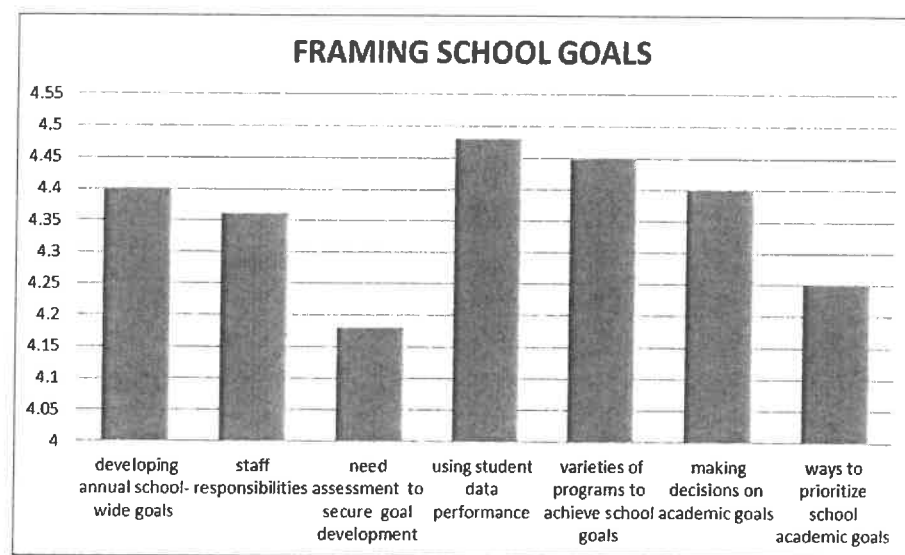
Figure 1 Mean score on principals' role as instructional leaders

### 7.2 To what extent the practice of Instructional Leadership in High Performing Schools?

#### 7.2.1 Framing School Goals

Figure 1 shows the mean of framing school goals. Each item shows relatively high scores of mean at the range of 4.18 - 4.48. It can be seen from Table 1 that principals using student data

performance to develop school's academic goals have the highest mean score of 4.48. In fact, about 55.2 percent of teachers strongly agreed that their principals are more inclined to use student data performance to develop schools' academic goals. The second highest of framing school goal is varieties of programs to achieve school goals with the mean of 4.45. A total of 52.8 percent of teachers strongly agreed that their principals implement varieties of programs to achieve school goals.



**Figure 2 Framing School Goals**

Moreover, from the focus group interview of 441 teachers, finding discovers that 94.6 percent of the respondents confirmed that their principals request teachers to give their input in framing school goals. In addition, a total number of 654 responses from Table 2 showed that HPS principals initiated various programs in order to achieve school goals. The main goal of instructional leadership is to improve student's academic achievement. Hence, these programs can be categorized into six broad domains, namely student motivation programs, student academic improvement programs, technology integration programs, thinking skills programs, teacher quality programs, and parent involvement programs. Almost 30.0 percent of the teachers' responses showed that the HPS principals initiated morning speeches, student spiritual activities and student camps that were targeted at enhancing student motivation to learn. Another 20.6 percent of the responses showed that the programs such as extra-classes, remedial classes, special classes, peer mentorship, foster-parent program, academic excellence program, and acceleration program were initiated by the principals to tackle student achievement issues. 18.7 percent of the

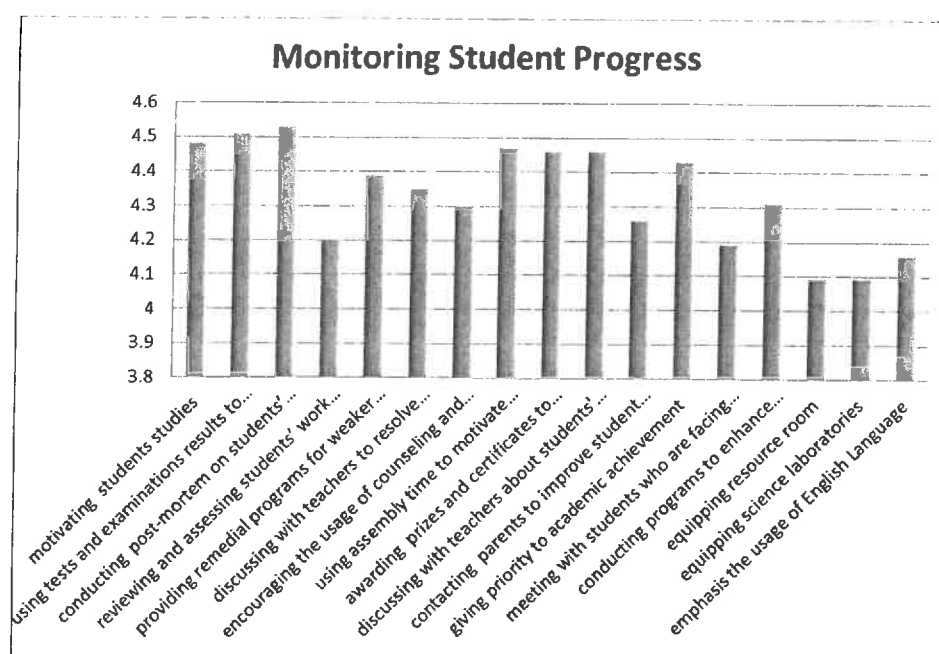
total responses showed that the principals also initiated programs to ensure technology integration in teaching and learning. 17.0 percent of the responses showed that the principals initiated programs for improving students' higher order thinking skills through the use of iThink maps. Teacher responses (10.5%) also showed that the HPS principals took effort to improve teacher quality by involving teachers in programs such as workshops, PLC activities, headcount, benchmark visits, performance dialogues, postmortems, and 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning. A small proportion of the teacher responses (3.2%) showed that there were programs such as collaboration activities and inter and intra school parent dialogues to engage parents to improve student academic results.

**Table 2 Various programs initiated by HPS principals to achieve school goals**

No	Various programs initiated by principals	Number of responses	Themes
1	Morning speech; motivation	8	Motivating students 196 (30.0%)
2	Motivation Program; Spiritual Program, Perkampungan ilmu	188	
3	VLE	110	Technology integration 122 (18.7%)
4	Kahoot	2	
5	resources: smartboard, internet kiosk, ICT, Apmodo technology	10	
6	i-Think/HOTS	111	Thinking skills 111(17.0%)
7	Academic Excellent Program	43	Student Academic improver 135 (20.6)
8	Extra Class/Remedial /Special	68	
9	Mentor-Mentee/ 'Anak Angkat'	15	
10	Speed/'Pecutan'	8	
11	Face to face	1	Parental involvement 21(3.2%)
12	Collaboration Parents, dialog , Townhall, international, other school	21	
13	21st T&L, Effective T&L	26	Teacher quality 69 (10.5)
14	PLC Learning Walks	6	
15	School KPI, Performance dialog, headcount, halatuju	17	
16	Workshop: Teaching and learning	12	
17	Postmortem	2	
18	Benchmarking	3	
19	Rewards, Awards	3	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>654</b>	

### 7.2.2. Monitoring Student Progress

Figure 3 depicts conducting post-mortem on students' achievement have the highest mean score of 4.53 followed by using tests and examinations results to assess student progress (4.51). A total of 59.4 percent respondents strongly agree that their principal tend to conduct post-mortem on students' achievement followed by using tests and examinations results to assess student progress (57.5%) when monitoring student progress.



**Figure 3 Monitoring students' progress**

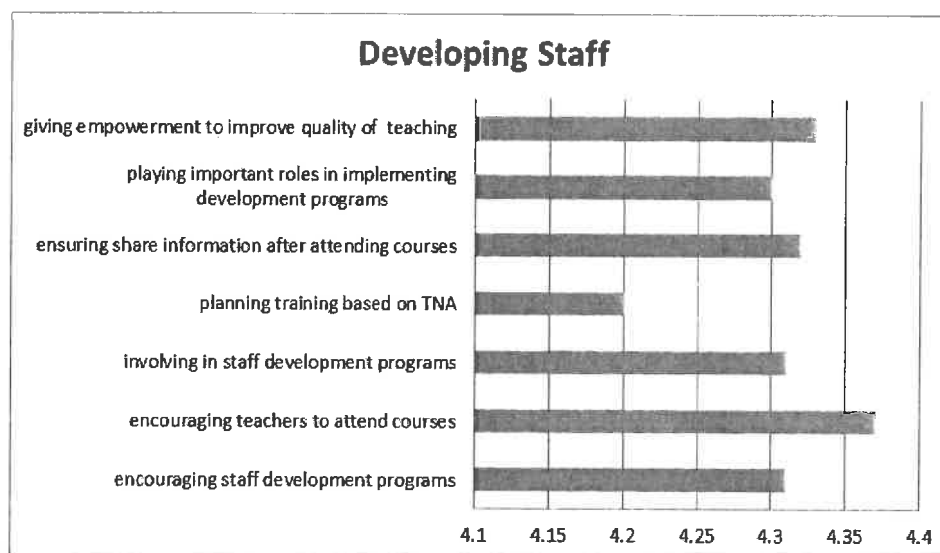
Some experience examples on how principals ensure students' academic improvements were gathered during the focus interviewed. The HPS principals showed their concern for students' progress by organizing several activities which directly or indirectly targeted at improving students' academic improvement. These activities primarily consisted of two categories; programs for students and programs for teachers. Out of 498 teachers' responses, 41.4 percent showed that HPS principals ensured student academic improvement by organizing special programs for students such as special classes, special learning programs, answering techniques workshops, and motivation programs. Another 58.6% responses showed programs were also organized for teachers in order to help increase teacher competency and consequently improve student academic achievement. These programs included headcounts, benchmarking visits, ICT integration, 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching strategies, and supervision.

### **7.2.3. Developing Staff/ Professional Development**

Figure 4 shows the percentage and mean of the principals in developing staff. Each item shows relatively high scores of mean at the range of 4.20 - 4.37. Principals encouraging teachers to attend courses have the highest mean score of 4.37. In fact, about 47.5 percent of teachers strongly agreed that their principals are more inclined to encouraging teachers to attend courses. The second highest of developing staff is giving empowerment to improve quality of teaching with the mean of 4.33. A total of 43.6 percent of teachers strongly agreed that their giving them



empowerment to improve quality of teaching.



**Figure 4 Developing Staff**

Based on the focus group interview data, 95.4 percent of the respondents have revealed that their school heads encouraged them to attend courses on teaching and learning matters which are conducted outside of school. Only 20 respondents or 4.56 percent of the total interviewed divulged that they were not encouraged to do so.

Moreover, from the focus group interview data (Table 3), most of the principals create various professional development and learning opportunities for teachers. The activities were categorized into three themes namely managing self, others and system; improving teaching and student learning; and appreciating educational policies and procedures. Out of 484 responses about teacher development programs that teachers had attended, 62.2 percent were meant for helping teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching and consequently student learning.

Another 30.6 percent of the responses showed that teachers were involved in professional development programs in order help them manage themselves, others and the system. The other 6.5 percent of the teacher responses showed that teachers participated in professional learning activities that allowed them in grasping understanding and knowledge about latest national educational policies and procedures.

**Table 3 Various professional development and learning opportunities**

No.	Various professional development and learning opportunities	Number of Responses	Themes
1	KSSR	6	Appreciating government policies
2	PBPPP, HRMIS, SPSK, PPPM, PBS, SKPM	29	35 (7.2%)
3	Team building, KIK	49	Managing self, others and system
4	Parenting, Child psychology	2	148(30.6%)
	Personal dev (Root cause analysis, strategic planning, Soft skills. Moral imperative, Motivation, spiritual dev)	58	
5			
6	School management, Leadership (BOS, OPPM)	39	
7	21st Century i-Think, HOTS, Apple iPad Training	102	
	Assessment, marking scheme, answering techniques, headcount	26	Improving Teaching and Learning
8	Pedagogy (Smartboard, teaching strategy, teaching aids)	52	301 (62.2%)
9			
10	LDP	3	
11	PLC (lesson study)	43	
12	Benchmarking	4	
13	Action Research	3	
14	Coaching & Mentoring	1	
15	Frog VLE	58	
16	MYP Workshop, Trust School Workshop. LeapEd	9	
	TOTAL	484	

The principals ensured that the teachers who attended courses or any other professional development programs had to conduct in-house training for other teachers in the school. 97.9 percent of the 428 teachers confirmed this fact.

#### 7.2.4. Managing Curriculum and Instruction

Finding from Figure 5 shows that principals ensuring instructional time punctually has the highest mean (4.49) followed by informing teachers about new developments with the mean of 4.46. A total of 54.8 percent strongly agree that their principal ensure instructional time punctually while managing curriculum and instruction. Conversely, principal giving attention to teachers who are facing teaching and learning problems has the lowest mean score of 4.04. In regard of this, only 26.7 percent of teachers strongly agree that their principal giving attention to teachers who are facing teaching and learning problems.

From the focus interview, majority of the principals support their teachers in trying out new teaching and learning strategies in their classes. The expressed views showed the majority of principal's support for teacher capacity building, direct input including verbal encouragement or advice, facilitating ICT in teaching and learning, having structured programs and working with

outside bodies. Direct inputs by principals were given during sharing sessions or even through the simple act of recognition of teacher initiatives.

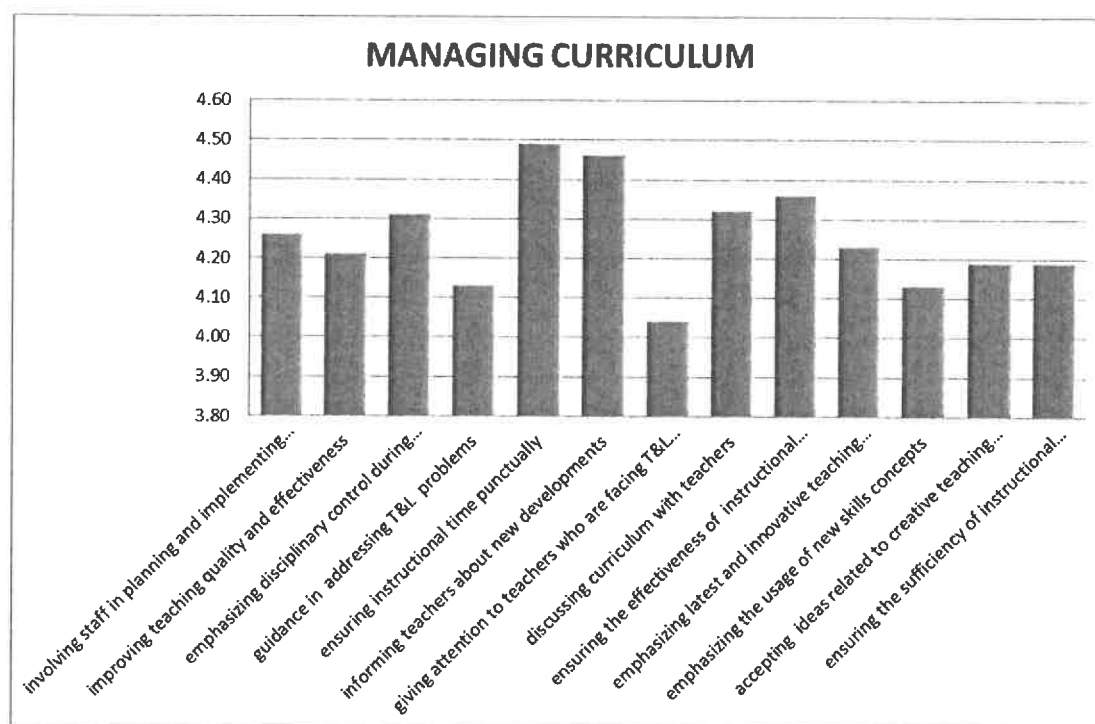
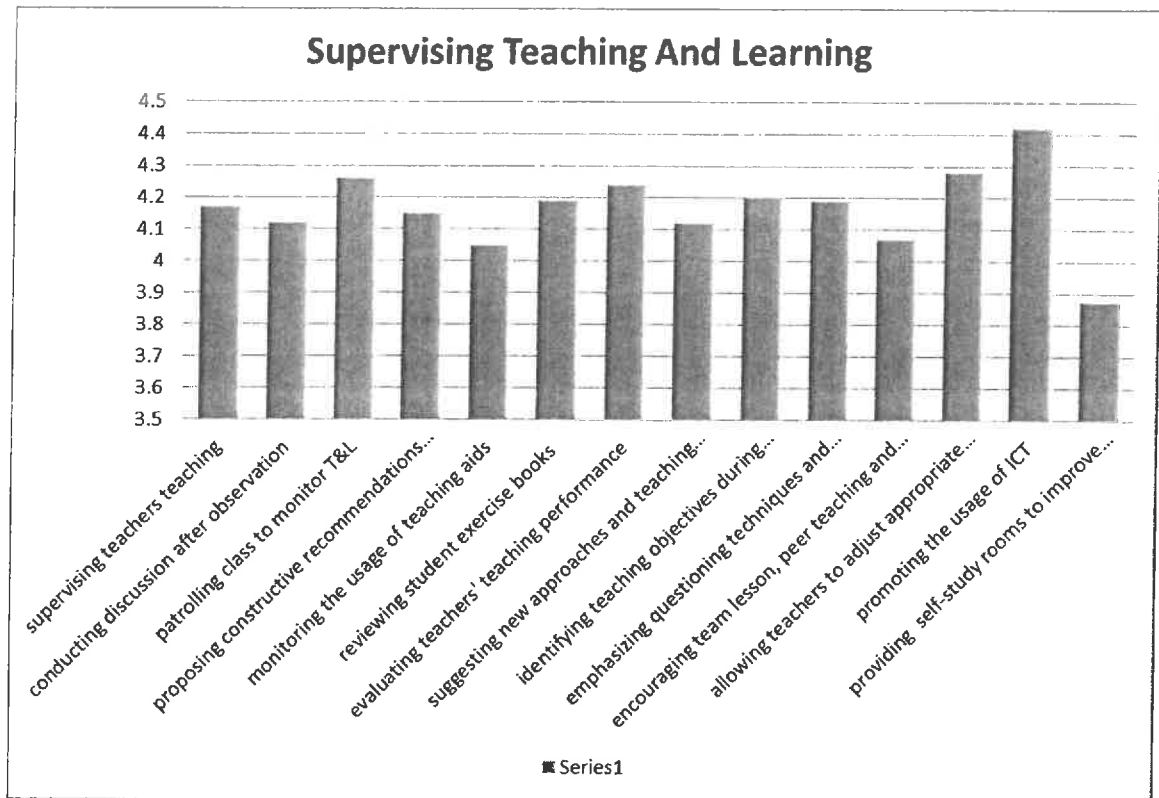


Figure 5 Managing curriculum

#### 7.2.5. Supervising Teaching and Learning

Finding from Figure 6 shows that principals tend to allow teachers to adjust appropriate teaching and learning techniques and patrolling class to monitor teaching and learning. These two items have the highest mean score of 4.28 and 4.26. While item "principal providing self-study rooms to improve students' language skills "has the lowest mean of 3.87 with the lowest percent (24.9 %), respondents that strongly agree to this matter.

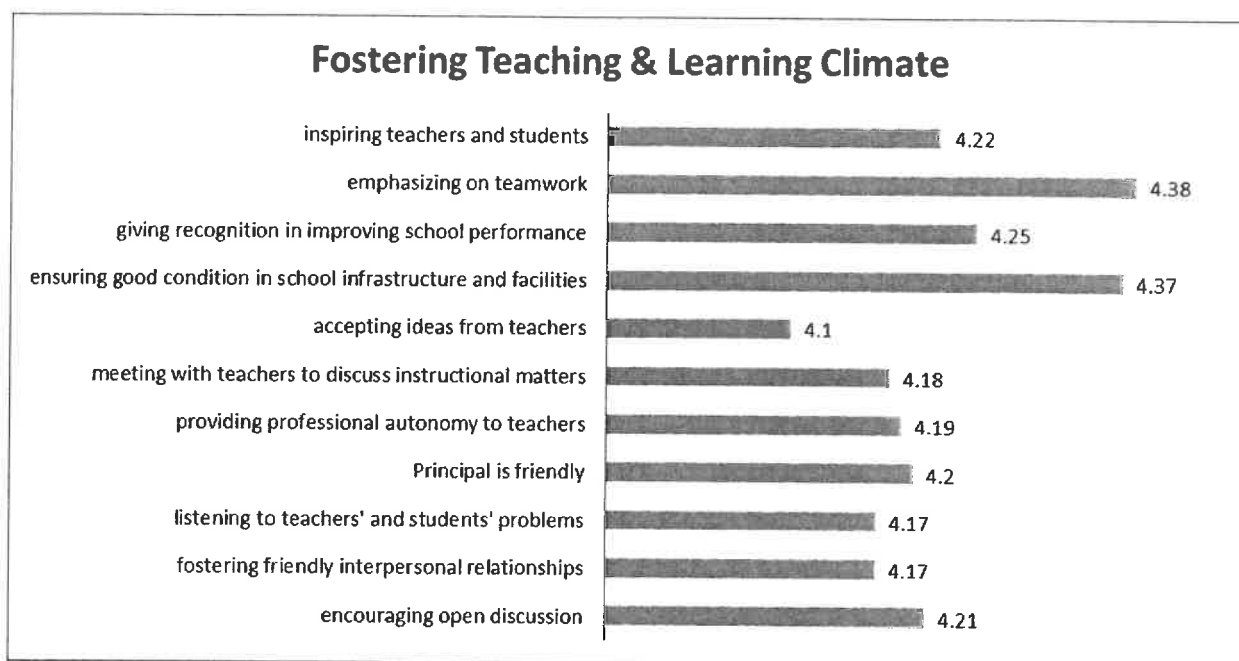


**Figure 6 Mean of principals in supervision of teaching and learning**

From the focus interview data, majority of the respondents indicates that 87.50 % (378) from total 441 teachers agree their principal visit the classroom while teaching. Meanwhile 12.50% (54) teachers disclosed that their principal never visit the classroom during teaching.

#### **7.2.6. Fostering Teaching & Learning Climate**

Finding shows that emphasizing on teamwork has the highest mean (4.38) followed by ensuring good condition in school infrastructure and facilities with the mean of 4.37. A total of 49.7 percent strongly agree that their principal emphasizing on teamwork in terms of fostering teaching and learning climate.

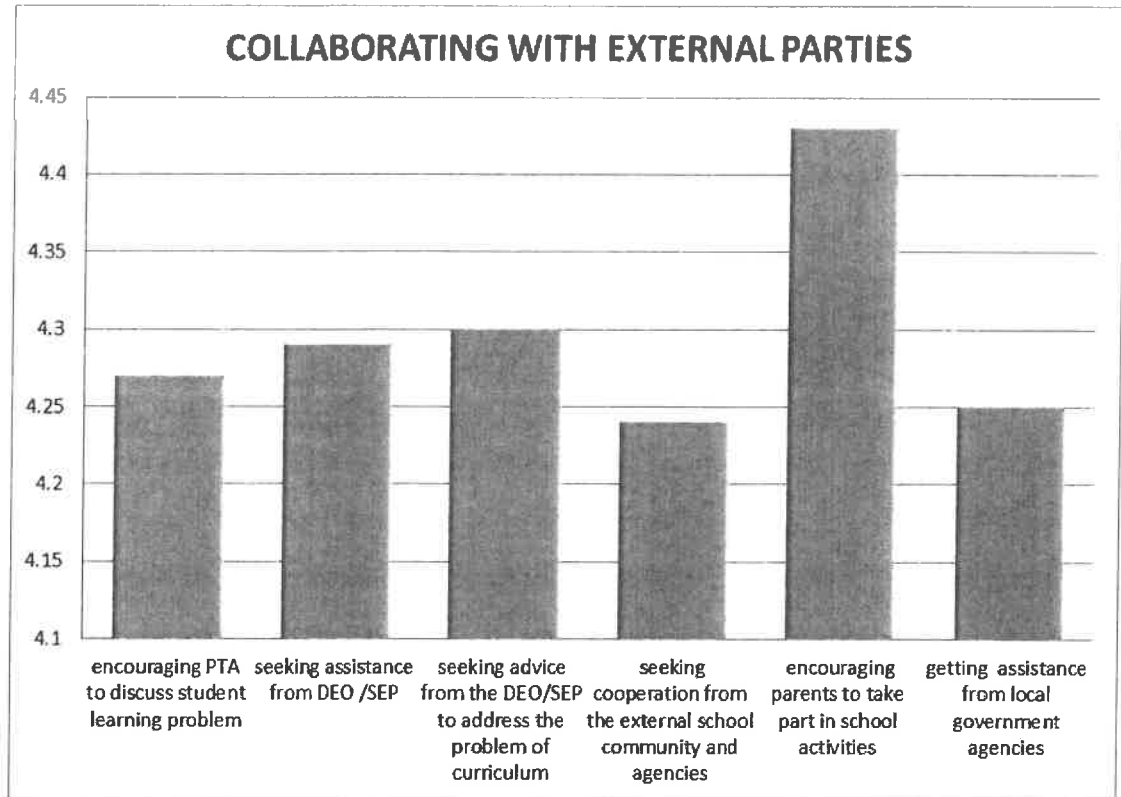


**Figure 7 Mean of principals in fostering Teaching & Learning Climate**

From the focus interview data, majority of the respondents indicates that emphasis on quality teaching also is evidenced by principals ensuring that teachers have adequate teaching resources and facilities in classrooms, sharing of teaching and learning strategies and PLCs.

#### **7.2 7. Collaborating with External Parties**

Figure 7 shows the percentage distribution and frequency of the principals in collaborating with external parties. Each item shows relatively high scores of mean at the range of 4.24 - 4.43. It can be seen from Table 1 that principals encouraging parents to take part in school activities have the highest mean score of 4.43. In fact, about 50.8 percent of teachers strongly agreed that their principals encouraging parents to take part in school activities. The second highest of collaborating with external parties is seeking advice from the DEO/SEP to address the problem of curriculum with the mean of 4.30. A total of 40.7 percent of teachers strongly agreed that their principals seeking advice from the DEO/SEP to address the problem of curriculum.



**Figure 7 Mean of principals in collaborating with external parties**

From the focus interview data, majority of the respondents indicated that there are some form of ongoing cooperation between the school head and the PTA. Only a few teachers indicated that they were not sure of any ongoing cooperation between their school head and PTA. Eight themes emerged from the data regarding the ongoing cooperation between school head with PTA. The eight themes are academic programmes, financial support and expertise, *gotong-royong\**, school facility and learning environment, student support, co-curricular program, religious programme, and other school programme. The most frequently mentioned ongoing cooperation from PTA is in the form of contribution towards student academic programmes ( $f=108$ ). Respondent linked the cooperation of PTA in various academic programmes that supported students learning directly such as assisting teachers in teaching, coaching students in reading and stand in for classes where teachers were required to attend other official duties. The next frequently mentioned theme is financial support and expertise. PTA is a pertinent source of funding and expertise for many school programmes.

### **7.3. What are the challenges encountered by HPS leaders when practicing**

## Instructional Leadership?

The main challenge in framing school goals encountered by head schools are related to developing annual school-wide goals followed by staff responsibilities. Two respondents (R3 and R52) emphasized that the main issue faced is setting up the school goals. Moreover, four principals (R3, R35, R33 and R53) also stated that they have issues to make the teachers to understand the school goals and make sure that everybody is willing to achieve the goals set up. For example; one of the Principal (R35) mentioned that *"the school goal is to be emphasized to all but not everybody is willing to walk abreast"*. In addition, issues that related to staff responsibilities are also a main concern among school heads when framing school goals. Another problem used to face by school heads is the need assessment to secure goal development. One respondent stated that the issue is to determine the need area of training for teachers (R34).

In terms of managing curriculum and instruction, the most challenging issue was informing teachers about new developments. Five principals (R1,R23,R26,R48,R52) stated that the issues are the attitude and the difficulties for the teachers to adapt to the globalization and the rapid technological changes. This is supported by the fact that teachers are difficult to adapt with the characteristics of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning. For example; one principal (R23) admits, "senior teachers still use chalk and talk". This statement is underpinned by another respondent (R48) mentioning that "teachers' resistance to change. Teachers often find change difficult especially in the implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching." Moreover, some school heads admit that they do have issues when involving staff in planning and implementing curriculum in terms of managing curriculum and instruction. Two principals (R9 and R26) stated that the issues arise in making sure the competencies of teachers are adequate to the need of the HPS and the implementation of the new subjects. Moreover, another respondent (R43) responded that the number of teachers are insufficient that hampers planning and implementing curriculum and instruction as they are burdened with heavy time-table.

Four respondents (R4, R33, R39, R57) encountered problems in supervising teachers teaching. They discovered that they face time constraint to supervise the teachers teaching. When the school heads tried to suggest new approaches and teaching methods, three respondents (R52, R55, R56) face difficulties in suggesting new approaches and teaching methods especially to the senior teachers who are in the comfort zone with the conventional teaching style of chalk and talk. Furthermore they are afraid of changes and using new technologies in their teaching.

Most of the HPS leaders encountered problems when they monitor student progress. In terms of motivating students' studies, the school has problem with students' motivation towards learning because efforts had been put in place to provide incentives for teachers and students who face low motivation. They even face problems when they tried to use tests and examinations results to assess student progress, They talked about the teachers being exam orientated and tests and examinations results were heavily rely on to assess student progress. According to respondent R4; *"Exam orientated – as headcount, post-mortem, TOV and GPS concerned teachers very much especially in these five subjects, namely Bahasa Malaysia, English Language, Mathematics, Science and Chinese Language"* (R4). In providing remedial programs for weaker students three respondents (R3, R13, R49) concurred that though their schools are high performance schools, but it is usual to find weaker students with poor academic performances that require remedial program. According to respondent R13; *"Academic performance at worrying stage for full boarding school and high performance school"*. Furthermore, in terms of giving priority to academic achievement, six respondents R17, R22, R31, R32, R33 and R39 have expressed concern of the need to give priority to academic achievements. Four out of the six respondents R31, R32, R33 and R39 shared similar concern challenges with problem to sustain academic excellent.

In terms of meeting with teachers to discuss instructional matters, nineteen respondents mostly expressed encouraging open discussion as the focused issue. This is because of circumstances beyond their control to manage instructional time. Moreover, two respondents even claimed teachers are not well prepared for teaching and learning. This statement is supported by the statement below:

*"Teachers not doing teaching and learning effectively; no variations in teaching method and techniques; no proper preparation."* (R50)

*"Less preparedness and focus among the students before the class starts."* (R39)

*"Some of the instruction are not been followed by few teachers because they have been in a comfort zone."* (R 42)

This is in line with another respondent (R48) tried to relate on congruency between educational philosophy and pedagogy.

In terms of ensuring good condition in school infrastructure and facilities, respondents feel



that high performance school should have adequate facilities. Moreover two respondents agreed lack of facilities might lead to hampering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning.

In terms of encouraging staff development programs four respondents (R1, R35, R46, R37) claimed that they are facing challenges in implementing staff development programs such as senior teachers are lacking of motivation and understanding for the need of personal development as well as difficulties in juggling heavy workload. Besides, they also faced time constraint to run staff development programs.

When collaborating with external parties, school heads tends to seek assistance from DEO/SEP. However, they do encountered problems such as imbalance of supply and demand for teachers when dealing with DEO/SEP. Eight of the school heads complained about insufficient supply of quality teachers. Besides that, three respondents complaint that teachers' instructional time are wasted due to attending activities organized by SED and DEO and other programs out of the school period (R31,R26,R51). Another issue highlighted by two respondents (R46,R61) is about their schools are not fully supported by the Department of Education in terms of budget for the purpose of running these personal development programs.

## **8. DISCUSSION**

The present study ascertained that instructional leadership practices are evident among HPS leaders. This finding support the arguments of Murphy and colleagues (2007) pertinent to school leaders in productive schools are knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the schools' curricular programs. Moreover, findings revealed that three prominent dimensions of instructional leadership that were practiced among HPS school leaders are framing school goals followed by monitoring student progress and developing staff. Their instructional practices, in line with the school goals and mission for all students learning influence the norms and attitudes of teachers, students and parents in a school (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Murphy, 1990; Fullan, 2005; Hicks et al., 2012; Brezicha et al., 2015). Likewise, this finding underpinned the notion of researchers such as Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Heck & Hallinger, 2010, 2014; Leithwood et al., 2006, 2010 indicated that shaping the purpose of the school and articulating the school's goals are one of the key core component in school effectiveness. Moreover this finding also in line with Louis & Wahlstrom, 2010 that emphasized that principals are expected to spend more time in ensuring and monitoring teachers' professional duties and students' learning activities.

In terms of activities that were implemented to enhance instructional leadership practices, finding revealed that principals are more inclined to use student data performance to develop schools' academic goals and implement varieties of programs to achieve school goals. Moreover, principals also request teachers to give their input when framing school goals. This findings concur with study done by Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, (2003) and Murphy et al., (2007) mentioning that there is considerable evidence that a key function of effective school leadership concerns shaping the purpose of the school and articulating the school's mission.

In terms of monitoring student progress, findings found that HPS principals tend to conduct post-mortem on students' achievement followed by using tests and examinations results to assess student progress when monitoring student progress. This finding underpinned the notion of researchers such as Weber, (1996); Marzano, (2001); Donaldson, (2007) and DuFour (2005) stated that arm with student achievement data, they plan, design, administration and analysis instructional programs. These assessments of evaluation are effective in monitoring student progress. Moreover, HPS principals showed their concern for students' progress by organizing several activities which directly or indirectly targeted at improving students' academic improvement. These activities primarily consisted of two categories; programs for students and programs for teachers. These leaders work with colleagues to ensure that schools are defined by rigorous curriculum programs and that each student's program, in particular, is of high quality (Newmann, 1997; Ogden & Germinario, 1995). Learning-centered leaders ensure that all students have adequate opportunities to learn rigorous content in all academic subjects (Boyer, 1983).

The results of this study reflect that HPS principals are more inclined to encourage teachers to attend courses and giving empowerment to improve quality of teaching. Moreover, from the focus group interview data, findings reveal that most of the principals create various professional development and learning opportunities for teachers to pave way in helping teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching and consequently student learning. This finding is congruent with Darling-Hammond, 1997; Fullan, 2004; Donaldson, 2007 perspectives that underscore the importance of instructional leaders in enhancing teaching and learning experience in differentiation of instructions, delivery strategies and learning challenges. On the contrary, the finding is in contrast with Grissom, J.A. & Loed, S , 2013 that argued principals' time spent on instructional activities does not predict student learning. For example, the informal classroom walkthrough did not predict student learning.

In terms of managing curriculum and instruction, principals ensuring instructional time

punctually and informing teachers about new developments when managing curriculum and instruction. Moreover, principals do support for teacher in trying out new teaching and learning strategies in their classes. The findings were in line with those of Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004 who reported that curriculum that is rigorous and viable, is not enough to safeguard student learning without proper delivery mechanism. Hence, effective pedagogy is needed to ensure the quality of instruction.

In terms of supervising teaching and learning, principals tend to allow teachers to adjust appropriate teaching and learning techniques and patrolling class to monitor teaching and learning. The finding is in line with Banach,(2015) study reflecting that principals actively worked to create intentional environments within their schools in which the principals expected and supported teachers to continuously refine their instructional practices to meet students' needs and create an environment of deliberate practice for students.

Finding also shows that emphasizing on teamwork followed by ensuring good condition in school infrastructure and facilities can enhance fostering teaching & learning climate. Experts (Weber, 1996; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2005; Stone-Johnson, 2014) over the years have reported that school leaders create an orderly learning environment with clear expectations and working toward fostering higher teacher commitment to school.

Results of the study demonstrated that principals encouraging parents to take part in school activities and collaborating with external parties (DEO/SEP ) to address the problem of curriculum. The most frequently mentioned ongoing cooperation from PTA is in the form of contribution towards student academic programmes .This supports the notion that external communities that support school goals such as positive parental involvement in recent research has reported positive relation for student learning (Marzano et al., 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Additionally, Blankstein (2010) has shared his view about the important of focusing on results and student achievement.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

This study has provided insight for the educational leaders that instructional leadership practices are evident among HPS leaders. However, this study affirmed that school leaders of HPS schools encountered challenges in every domain when practicing instructional leadership in their respective schools. One of the important issues that must be focused on in the process of

developing and improving a school is school principals need to establish a cadre of talented teachers performing their professional responsibilities to produce more high-performing schools. They establish a focus on learning by helping the teachers clarify their instructional goals, nurture a culture of learning by shifting the focus to student learning and lastly, foster working collaboration among teachers. They create a vision of academic success for all students where learning is the most important goal (Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Smylie, 2010). The bottom line pertinent to the practice of instructional leadership is that schools are centrally about teaching and learning that vitally pave way to student academic achievement. Thus, the practices and challenges of instructional leadership can also be extrapolated to other school leaders and not only high performing schools' leaders.

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