

## An Investigation of the Impact of Instructional Leadership Practices and School Culture on Staff Performance in Singapore Schools

David Ng Foo Seong and Serena Luo Wenshu

### KEY IMPLICATIONS

- To explore the relationships between instructional leadership and teacher outcomes.
- To explore the relationships between school culture and teacher outcomes.

### BACKGROUND

This study investigates the impact of Instructional Leadership practices and School Culture on staff performance in Singapore schools. The programmatic study builds on the previous MOE funded baseline study on school leadership and organization change.

### FOCUS OF STUDY

The purpose of this study on Instructional Leadership and School Culture is to investigate the nature, causes and consequences of the constructs and variables and how interrelated factors involving teacher and organizational capacities in Singapore's context might affect teaching effectiveness and ultimately affect student learning.

### KEY FINDINGS

**Research Question: What are the relationships between instructional leadership and teacher outcomes?**

The findings suggested the positive correlation between all instructional leadership dimensions and teacher outcomes. The four dimensions in instructional leadership include (1) Aligning Teaching Practices to School Vision, (2) Leading Curriculum and Teaching, (3) Developing a Positive Climate for Teaching and Learning, and (4) Promoting Professional Development.

The five dimensions in teacher outcomes include (1) Curriculum Content Competency, (2) Pedagogical Competency, (3) Assessment Competency, (4) Knowledge on Student Learning, and (5) Teacher Engagement in the School. Specifically, to improve teacher outcomes, school leaders need to put more emphasis on “developing a positive climate for teaching and learning” and “promoting professional development” in their instructional leadership practices.

**Research Question: What are the relationships between school culture and teacher outcomes?**

The seven dimensions in school culture include (1) Collegiality, (2) Independence, (3) High versus Low Hierarchy, (4) High versus Low Holistic Development, (5) Emphasis on People Orientation, (6) Emphasis on Task Orientation, and (7) Strong versus Weak Nurturance. In general, school culture

dimensions and teacher outcomes were found to be significant at  $p < .01$  level (2-tailed) and at  $p < .05$  level (2-tailed). The findings further suggested that in general, school leaders can possibly achieve greater teacher outcomes through promoting nurturance and people orientation in the school.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

A study of participants' perceptions of Singapore principals' instructional leadership practices and the nuances on the ground can help to provide clues for such an understanding of stakeholders' perceptions. This in turn needs to be read by policymakers to help them review and refine policies relating to leadership for learning, and hence enabling better practices of leadership at the school level. In addition, the findings will add value to existing practitioner practices pertaining to collective learning contexts that take place in schools. The findings from the study will help both school leaders and teachers make timely informed decisions on effective leadership practices that support collective learning within school organizations.

## PARTICIPANTS

A total of 58 school leaders, 225 key personnel and 468 teachers participated in the questionnaire survey and were represented in all zones (north, south east and west), levels (primary schools only), and school types (Government and Government-aided only). From the sample of schools identified for the questionnaire survey in Stage One, a total of eight Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions were conducted in six schools.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Stage One of the study uses survey design and data is collected using rating scales and questionnaires. Stage Two of the study uses FGDs.

### Analysis

#### (i) Rating Scale Analysis

Rating scale is calibrated using Rasch analysis.

#### (ii) Focus group Discussions (FGDs)

Data analysis and interpretation is iterative and supplemented with investigators memos. We carried out open coding and then systematically identified and grouped into categories and themes.

## About the authors

David NG Foo Seong and Serena LUO Wenshu are with the National Institute of Education, Singapore.

Contact David at [david.ng@nie.edu.sg](mailto:david.ng@nie.edu.sg) for more information about the project.

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