



## Instructional Leadership : Principal's Challenges and Solutions in Enhancing Students' Academic Performance

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the principal's challenges and potential solutions for improving students' academic performance through instructional leadership. The qualitative approach is implemented by applying fragmentary observations, documents, and individual and group interviews. The informants of this research were principals and teachers from two schools and one of the Indonesian community learning center. The data analysis technique used is thematic content analysis using ATLAS.ti software. The findings indicated that the principals' responsibilities in developing instructional leadership were categorized into five primary themes: concept, planning, program and execution, supervision, evaluation, and learning implication design. Challenges identified include schools' limited budget and the lack of teachers, students, and parents' problems. Some solutions discovered encompass optimizing the schools' budget, staff, and teachers, stakeholder collaboration and bipartite cooperation, student-teach-student, role modeling, counseling guidance, inspiring talks, and smart parenting. The principals recommended designing the school instructional leadership concept, formulating the planning, coordinating the program and its implementation, organizing the supervision and evaluation, constructing the learning implications, and identifying the challenges to secure solutions.

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## Introduction

The role of a school principal is crucial to achieving educational objectives, which include enhancing students' learning achievements. The responsibilities of school principals encompass a wide range of areas, such as controlling student disciplines, organizing the school programs, conducting teacher assessments, and enhancing student outcomes as indicators for educational success (Thaher & Saied, 2020). To accomplish these duties, principals must have instructional leadership competence, which is an essential aspect of leading a school. The effectiveness of implementing instructional leadership relies on the principal's ability to effectively lead the educational institution (Dahiru & Gbolahan, 2022) since students' performance serves as a benchmark for instructional leadership success.

Likewise, the principal should create a positive environment and engage in passionate communication with all parties involved in the school regarding the performance of the students and the teachers' instruction (Carrier, 2014). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) state that a proper learning environment plays a significant role in determining academic success. It is reasonable and arguable since all activities involving teachers and students are conducted considering the environment. Besides, establishing a favorable learning climate is contingent upon the school principal's attentiveness in cultivating an educational setting that facilitates



effective instruction, enhancing students' accomplishment (Saad & Sankaran, 2021). In this matter, Iqbal et al. (2021) argue that the principal has five tasks in creating a positive school climate: safeguarding instructional time, offering teachers' incentives, promoting intensive learning, improving teachers' professionalism, and preserving school high visibility. A proper environment provided by the school principal can inevitably be crucial for the teachers' teaching management and students' learning effectiveness.

In relation to the school environment, Pierre and Cyprien (2024) argues that the provision of school facilities in secondary schools is a high priority that the stakeholders must meet to enhance the teaching and learning process. Hence, improving school facilities and infrastructures is a crucial strategy for enhancing school quality and ensuring long-term benefits (Nurabadi et al., 2020). Osaigbovo et al. (2021) also claim that school facilities play a crucial role in fostering both academic and non-academic activities within the school. However, Akomolafe and Adesua (2016) argued that inadequate facilities can harm student motivation and academic Achievement. The insufficient facilities in the school pose a challenge for the principal and hinder the ability of classroom teachers and other staff to optimize learning activities.

The further problem hindering students' learning achievement is the lack of teacher's professionalism (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The issue of insufficient teacher numbers in schools has been identified as a factor that negatively impacts the quality of teaching and learning (Koc & Celik, 2015). According to LeBlance (2022), a shortage of teachers can hinder the promotion of students' learning activities. Mwesiga et al. (2018) elucidate that in this scenario, the limited number of instructors are burdened with several obligations and responsibilities within schools, which impede their ability to optimize their instruction for pupils. Similarly, Jomoad et al. (2021) argue that when teachers are responsible for teaching multiple courses and classes, it burdens them and affects their ability to fulfill their tasks and perform well in teaching. It illustrates that teachers responsible for teaching a large amount of material experience stress, which diminishes their level of professionalism in teaching.

The third issue is the parents' negligence in their children's education. Durisic (2017) posits that familial involvement is essential to children's successful education in establishing their educational levels and accomplishments. However, it has been discovered that certain parents neglect their children's education, as they depend on the guidance and supervision of the principal and teachers at the institutions. Ahmed et al. (2021) also assert that certain parents are preoccupied with other responsibilities or work, which results in a lack of involvement in their children's education at home. Besides, according to Moneva et al. (2020), there is a strong correlation between the financial assistance provided by parents and students' learning. When parents allocate their financial resources toward their children's education, it motivates students to engage in learning (Fomby P & Kravitz-Wirtz N., 2019).

Furthermore, students are exposed to social media, cases of bullying, and skipping school, which decrease their performance in learning. Evidence indicates that social media usage results in social isolation, which can have various consequences, including physical, emotional, mental, and psychological problems among young people (Noori et al., 2023). Meanwhile, UNICEF (2020) reports that Indonesian kids at the age of 15 experience a range of bullying perpetrated against both males and females. A study conducted by KPPPA (2018) revealed that Indonesian children and adolescents aged 15 and above encountered various forms of bullying monthly. In addition, skipping school also becomes a big issue among students since it can affect the success of their academic Achievement (Schlesier et al., 2023).

This study examines the implementation of instructional leadership programs in which the principal has three key duties: assuring the curriculum, monitoring and evaluating



the program, and measuring the academic progress of the students (Al-Mahdy & Al-Kiyumi, 2015). The level of effectiveness in implementing instructional leadership is contingent upon the principal's ability to effectively guide the school institution (Murphy, 1985). Overseeing the school program requires the principal to collaborate with stakeholders in specific domains such as educational technology, curriculum, and instruction (Vally et al., 2016). Moreover, establishing an optimal learning atmosphere is closely linked to the school principal's focus on nurturing a school environment that facilitates efficient teaching and enhances students' academic performance (Saad & Sankaran, 2021).

Building upon the theories and prior research discussed in the preceding paragraphs, this study sought to establish a correlation between the implementation of instructional leadership, the challenges, and solutions for improving students' learning accomplishment. It became a new framework of instructional leadership in enhancing students' academic performance. This area has received less attention in previous research. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing various Indonesian schools in Malaysia that differ in their geographical location and institutional background.

### Research Method

This study utilized a qualitative research approach to extensively investigate the outcomes of instructional leadership as a means of improving students' learning achievements at Indonesian schools in Malaysia known as *Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur* (SIKL), *Sekolah Indonesia Johor Bahru* filial SIKL, and *Sekolah Indonesia Kota Kinabalu*. This research approach facilitates the exploration of novel ideas and concepts by studying the interactions of individuals through interviews, discussions, and observations (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the researcher aimed to apply constructivist theory in a qualitative study to gain insight into the challenges and solutions that principals encounter while enhancing students' academic Achievement through instructional leadership. Constructivist research generates scientific knowledge by drawing on individual experiences and observations (Mulyana, 2003).

This study included interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), document analysis, and partial observation as a combination of data collection methods and employed triangulation by utilizing many data sources relevant to the study's concerns (Fusch et al., 2018). In detail, the researcher conducted individual interviews to gather data on the involvement of several principals in Indonesian schools in Malaysia. A focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted with five teachers. According to Patton (2009), utilizing a combination of interviews and documents as data sources is highly effective for gathering valuable information. In addition, using observation and documentation as integral components of the researcher's direct observation of genuine phenomena can enhance the credibility and reliability of the collected data.

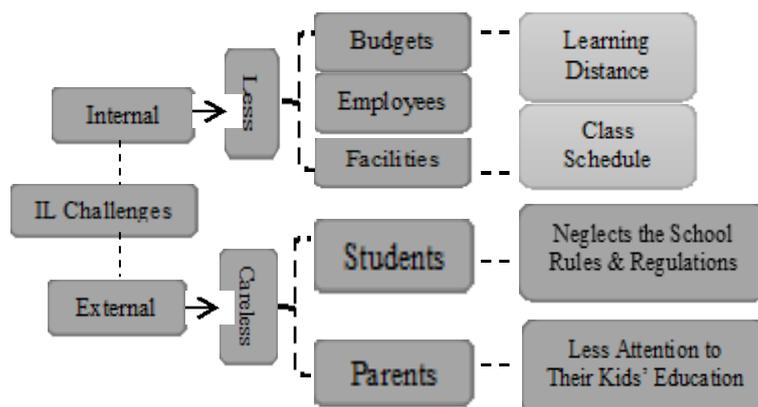
Moreover, this study utilized data analysis techniques derived from Braun & Clarke (2006), who outlined a six-step methodology for qualitative data analysis using theme analysis. This method analyzes data collected from interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, and other qualitative sources. The initial stage consists of acquainting oneself with the gathered data. The researcher engaged in extensive reading and repetition to comprehend the facts. The data collected from interviews, focus groups, video, and audio are transcribed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the instructional leadership practices in the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) and Kota Kinabalu (SIKK) Sabah. The next phase involves the generation of the code in which the researcher arranges a systematic and significant analysis of the phenomenon under investigation using the obtained

data. Likewise, open coding as a means of adopting reflective, analytic approaches is also conducted as a result of the analysis procedure.

The third stage involves the identification of the underlying theme. A theme is a discernible pattern that emerges from an intriguing element or a focal point within the data. The fourth step entails evaluating the theme in which the researcher thoroughly examines all discovered topics and establishes connections between each theme. Moreover, the fifth phase involves delineating the theme, wherein the researcher precisely identified and explained all the themes. All discourse, conversations, and content across various topics have been found and evaluated. In addition, it is necessary to establish a connection between each subject and its interaction with the other themes to derive the intended significance. The final phase in the theme analysis approach, typically employed in any research, is the composition of the report. During this step, the researcher documented all collected data that has been integrated into the conclusive conclusions of this study.

## Results and Discussion

The data analysis presented in the subsequent figure illustrates school principals' obstacles in implementing instructional leadership to improve students' academic performance.



**Figure 1. Analysis Result of the Principal's Challenges in Implementing Instructional Leadership**

As illustrated in Figure 4.1 above, the principal's instructional leadership faces internal and external challenges. The principal is responsible for the school's management as an internal challenge. It is referred to as the weaknesses of the school programs. These weaknesses include a lengthy distance of learning that prevents students from studying at the school, an irregular class schedule, insufficient budgets, a lack of school facilities, and limited employment. The principal is also confronted with the external challenge from students and parents. The students are rarely involved in school programs, inside and outside the classroom, and their comprehension of the material is weak. Furthermore, the student's academic performance and character development may be adversely affected because their parents fail to prioritize and devote adequate attention to their children's education.

### A) Internal Challenges

#### School Management and Budgeting

Essentially, the school's principal needs help to manage the school resources. According to Hamad (2021), managing school resources involves the principal's instructional leadership in accurately allocating money for the school's needs and growth. In this situation,



considering constraints on available funds, the principal demonstrated inadequate financial management in allocating resources to support various school activities and programs. Oboegbulem (2013) argues that the limited financial resources allocated to the school pose a significant problem for principals. They were expected to effectively manage the budget to support the seamless implementation of school programs. Indeed, the school budget is predetermined in an annual budget plan to cover all necessary program expenses. Nevertheless, the unanticipated costs need to be improved to ensure a smooth running of school activities.

### **Irregular Class Schedule**

An unpredictable school routine greatly affects how well students study in school and how smart they are. Schedule changes get in the way of this process, leading to gaps in understanding and memorizing the learning materials which cause bad impacts on students' learning outcomes (Kim, 2017). Also, those who have classes scheduled at times that are not in harmony with their internal clocks exhibit diminished academic performance (Williams & Shapiro, 2018). Hence, academic success is often harmed by having inconsistent schedules. Moreover, regular study habits are strongly linked to better school performance since students are more likely to engage with the material more deeply with a routine, which in turn boosts their grades and helps them understand the material better (Moral et al., 2023). On the other hand, unpredictable schedules often lead to cramming at the last minute, which is bad for long-term memory and comprehension.

### **Limited School Facilities**

As an instructional leader, a school principal must ensure that the school is a good place to learn and teach. It is clear from the fact that schools have the right and necessary tools to help teachers' programs grow. Numerous studies have also shown that having the right technologies in the classroom can make it livelier and more interesting and keep students from getting bored during lessons (Kingsley, 2021). The fact is that giving teachers the right tools for their jobs, like libraries, classrooms, and parks, makes them better teachers and more professional, which leads to more effective and fun learning and teaching programs (Gakii Murungi et al., 2018). This study found that the principal often has to deal with problems like labs, school buses, and hostels that are not good enough to support the students' learning.

### **Limited Employment**

The principal also has to deal with problems within the school regarding hiring employees. In some cases, school programs planned and run by the school leader cannot be carried out because there are not enough teachers and other workers to do the work. Le Fevre (2015) says that the principal should try to build good communication with staff members so that they can do their best work for the school program's success as a means to support employment. Timperley (2005) also states that one common issue affecting employment is the small number of teachers and staff at school parties. Hamad (2021) clarifies that employment is the principal's problem when implementing instructional leadership only with a few workers, which affects the hiring process and output.

### **Distance between School and Students' Houses**

Students' educational experiences are greatly affected by how far away their homes are from their schools. Commutes that take too long may negatively impact students' grades, physical and mental health, social life, and general well-being. One of the clearest and important effects of long commutes is a drop in academic Achievement. Long journey times may make it harder for students to do extracurricular activities, finish assignments, and study, leading to worse academic performance if they are too tired to focus on their studies when



they get home. Long journeys can also make it harder for students to attend class on time. Traffic delays, transportation problems, and other things that make students late to school or miss lessons can mess up the learning process and lead to gaps in education.

## **B) External Challenges**

### **Challenges from Students and Parents**

This challenge is associated with the issues faced by school pupils and their parents. According to the SIKL and SIKK principals, the school encountered difficulties providing education due to psychological well-being, family dynamics, and living conditions. These three factors contribute to the primary difficulties encountered during the implementation of instructional leadership because pupils cannot focus on their academics and exhibit a lack of discipline during classroom instruction (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015). Several pupils were absent from the classroom instruction, indicating a lack of concentration and disregard for their academic pursuits. This issue significantly affects kids' learning, character, and academic performance.

Moreover, certain students often need help concentrating and properly attending their everyday classroom activities during the learning process since they have motivation (Singh, 2011). In addition, the participation of students in the extra-curricular program, which aims to enhance their abilities, knowledge, character, and experience, is seldom. The pupils will encounter challenges in excelling academically, including difficulty achieving high grades on tests and the necessity of exerting significant effort to pursue higher education at the university level. Encouraging pupils to excel in non-academic activities is integral to the school's instructional program since it helps develop their Achievement (Chan, 2016).

Similarly, the role parents in helping students' learning achievement is crucial by motivating and supporting the students (Lestari, 2020). They should have notified their children's absence from the classroom for various reasons. However, several factors contribute to their lack of caution, including parents needing more time to closely supervise their children at home. The parents needed a stronger educational foundation to support their children's learning achievement (Kashahu et al., 2014). In addition, the challenging transportation infrastructure and limited phone signal provide significant obstacles to efficiently sharing information, particularly for students and parents residing in the Palm Oil Plantation in Sabah and Sarawak. The children and parents face challenges visiting the school institution due to transportation limitations and related issues, which are part of their concerns over the living environment.

## **C). Principal's Solutions to Resolve the Challenges**

### **Solutions for School Management and Budgeting**

Strengthening the school management is an excellent way to address the challenges experienced by the principal in managing the school. To enhance the management of the school, the principal created robust collaboration and engagement with other school teachers and staff (Naidoo, 2019). The principal can establish collaboration with stakeholders to maximize the school's budget allocation efficiency. The budget includes more than just monetary figures; it allows stakeholders to improve various educational infrastructures. The stakeholders can incentivize some personnel to work concurrently at the school to achieve the goals and objectives (Mohajeran & Ghaleei, 2008).

Meanwhile, to handle the budgeting challenge, the principal allocated additional funds to meet the limited budget and financing of the school programs. The principal collaborated with various stakeholders to optimize the allocation of funds and financial resources for the school. Collaborating with Indonesian institutions and industry stakeholders can help engage students in actively participating in school programs, including in-school and out-of-school



activities. In addition, collaborating with the stakeholders can catalyze encouraging parents to actively participate in developing their children's education. To be more precise, school principals have implemented several strategies to address budgeting difficulties as follows:

First, the budget is optimized by the principals, who utilize the budget already established annually from the budget plan to fund all of the implemented programs. The second category is stakeholder collaboration, in which the principals and all stakeholders collaborate with an organization or institution and the public and private sectors to subsidize the programs (Cranston, 2001). The principals coordinated the curricular and extracurricular programs, including class learning, long-distance learning, active movement learning, Pramuka, and other school activities, to expedite the yearly programs' financing plan and optimize the budget. The second approach to address the issue involves facilitating a coordinated collaboration between school stakeholders, organizations, and individual funders to provide support for the programs (Ubaidah et al., 2021). The collaboration between schools and other organizations can be seen as a type of direct sponsorship support.

Direct financing assistance involves providing monetary resources to the program coordinator to support the successful implementation of the program, which includes offering amenities such as accommodation and other essential resources required for the program. Another approach in this collaboration involves sponsorship, when an organization provides funding by supplying the required supplies to help achieve the program's goals. For example, the Pramuka movement may require tents to support student activities. In this scenario, the sponsor will contribute the tools and utilities the program coordinator requires. The allocation of cash from sponsors is contingent upon the specific requirements of the student programs.

#### **Solutions for Irregular Class Schedules**

An irregular class schedule, which is characterized by academic requirements and unpredictable or inconsistent class times, can have a significant impact on students in a variety of ways. Inconsistent schedules can disrupt regular study routines, leading to inadequate preparation for exams and assignments, a lack of understanding of the subject matter, and subpar grades (Onyper et al., 2012). Students may need help managing their study time effectively due to non-standard class schedules, frequently leading to rushed assignments and last-minute cramming. In this investigation, the principals overcame this obstacle by rescheduling the school learning time. It is primarily contradicted with the findings of Uddin et al. (2023) in which rescheduling class learning time addresses students' low motivation resulting bad outcomes. Meanwhile minimizing the learning hours, effectively solving the irregular class and improve students' Achievement as also found by Mark Anderson and Walker (2015).

#### **Solutions of Limited Employment and School Facilities**

To address the obstacles such as inadequate facilities and employment issues, the principal established a robust collaboration with many stakeholders, notably Indonesian institutions and industries. Due to the centralized control of staff and teacher appointments by the general directorate of Indonesian education and culture, schools lack the power to hire additional personnel despite many pupils enrolling each year. The schools are facing a growing issue due to a substantial increase in student enrollment, particularly at SIKK school in Sabah. In 2021, the SIKK principal reported that the school, which caters to children at the SIKK and around 45 Community Learning Centres (CLC), has a total enrollment of more than 8000 pupils. With 53 instructors and staff members serving the children, the principal faces the difficult challenge of coordinating all the many tasks and responsibilities.

Therefore, in addressing this problem, the principal emphasized optimizing the school's staff and teachers (Margahana, 2021). The principal optimizes allocating the staff



and teacher's time, tasks, and responsibilities. The principal effectively coordinated the schedules of all the instructors, ensuring they were present at the SIKK school and the Community Learning Centre (CLC) at the designated times. The entire staff should actively participate in the teaching and learning activities at the SIKK school and the CLC. Each individual has their timetable during the entire week to ensure a higher quality education for Indonesian youngsters.

Likewise, the school principals should also oversee and manage the tasks and obligations of all teachers and staff members (Margahana, 2021). The head of the accomplishment division at the SIKK school and Community Learning Centre (CLC) oversees all programs related to enhancing students' academic performance. Their primary duty is to ensure that all kids have the opportunity to excel academically, both in indoor and outdoor learning environments. Additionally, they are required to commute between SIKK school and the CLC according to a predetermined schedule. Put simply, the teacher's time, position, and task are all utilized to guarantee that pupils attain both academic success and develop excellent character.

Meanwhile, the idea that governs the restricted facilities is to arrange for two-way cooperation between the school and outside parties. According to the principal, the school collaborates on certain programs with other organizations and institutions to run the teaching and learning activities smoothly and provide Indonesian children living in Malaysia with a better education. These institutions include the Community Learning Centre (CLC) in Sabah and Sarawak and the Pusat Pendidikan Warga Negara Indonesia in Klang, Selangor (PPWNI Klang). To continue the educational paradigm, the PPWNI Klang institution receives book material, modules, and certain professors from the SIKL. The Community Learning Centre (CLC), whose proprietor and originator is the Palm Oil Company in Sabah and Sarawak, collaborates with the SIKK School. To ensure students were studying at the CLC, the SIKK school oversaw the instructors, modules, and book materials and ran several other programs, including extracurriculars (Pramuka, Tahfidz). The school works closely with the Indonesian community in Malaysia to guarantee their children's education.

In essence, how the schools and other organizations collaborate might be seen as direct money from the sponsor for direct financial support, such as providing the program coordinator with cash to help the program. An additional approach to this partnership is sponsorship, which is when the program's supporting organization receives funding in exchange for providing supplies necessary to meet the program's objectives (Reinhard et al., 2008). For example, the Pramuka movement requires tents to support student activities. In this instance, the program coordinator will receive some necessary tools and utilities from the sponsor. Sponsor financing is contingent on the requirements of the student programs. The SIKL Pramuka organizer explains that the Pramuka movement uses public and private finances and self-sustaining resources like profit from a small school stall and personal funds to carry out the program. In order for all school programs to be successful, the stakeholders collaborate with public and private sector organizations as well as certain personal funders to make the most of every opportunity.

### **Solutions for Long Distance between Students' Houses and School**

To cope with this challenge, the school opened an educational facility named the Community Learning Centre (CLC) in the district where many Indonesian residents reside because of the size of Sabah and Sarawak and the widespread presence of Indonesians in the two states. It is impossible to travel the distance between the student residences and the SIKK school. Since the education unit has been established in their districts, supporting the kids' seamless continuation of their formal education is simpler. For this reason, the Community



Learning Centre (CLC) is crucial to the students and the SIKK school. Those who live far from the SIKK school should study at the Community Learning Centre in the vicinity instead of attending the SIKK school.

Historically, the CLC was established in 2014/2015 with 59 education units, following the establishment of the SIKK school in 2008. In the 2020/2021 academic year, the number of Community Learning Centres (CLC) in Sabah and Sarawak grew to 115 units for Primary Schools (SD) and 45 units for Junior High Schools (SMP), which is solely relevant to Primary Schools and Junior High Schools. Prospective Senior High School (SMA) students are still required to attend SIKK school as a prerequisite for formal Indonesian education. However, the Community Learning Centre is excluded from the sample participants because the SIKK school institution officially manages it. All teachers at the CLC are educators from SIKK school who have certain responsibilities assigned to them through a daily timetable (Profile of SIKK, 2021).

### **Solution for Students**

In response to the external obstacles the students pose, the principal promoted impactful programs to address these two types of challenges. According to the SIKL and SIKK principals, the schools support students by implementing counseling guidance (BK) and student-teach-student (STS) programs to help them resolve their issues. The initial program is referred to as Bimbingan Konseling. This program provides counseling and guidance to students facing personal challenges within their households. This guidance aims to stimulate pupils' intellectual and emotional development, recognizing the critical importance of education for young individuals in shaping a more promising future. According to the SIKL principal, one of the school's responsibilities is ensuring pupils do not confront their challenges in isolation. The school institution offers programs addressing personal issues, such as familial troubles, directly affecting students' well-being and mental health. The counseling guidance staff will guide the pupils in identifying the optimal option. The Indonesian Consul of Johor Bahru stated that one of the primary objectives of building the Indonesian school in Malaysia is to facilitate the education of Indonesian children. The government has the responsibility to address all the issues faced by students through Indonesian education institutions to facilitate their problem-solving process.

The second method involves implementing a program called "student teach student." Indonesian schools offer the program to inspire and support pupils, particularly those facing personal challenges within the educational environment. The program is founded on the principles of SIKL and SIKK, which emphasize the coordination of schools to encourage students facing personal issues such as indiscipline, irresponsibility, disrespect, dishonesty, and negligence in their studies. The school teachers handpicked a group of current and former pupils with exemplary academic and personal qualities. An exemplary student, in terms of academic performance and personal qualities, will impart knowledge to others through techniques that involve sharing and encouraging.

According to SIKK's Achievement Division, they selected students with a strong track record in both academic Achievement and character to inspire and support students facing personal challenges. These selected students shared their experiences and knowledge, including strategies for academic success, with their peers. In this approach, the school anticipates favorable outcomes for marginalized children to foster discipline, accountability, respect, integrity, concentration, and dedication toward their academic pursuits. The SIKL and SIKK principals stated that Bimbingan Konseling (BK) and Student Teach Student (STS) programs are extremely beneficial in inspiring and motivating marginalized pupils. The Public Relations Division of SIKK conducted a Focus Group Discussion and found that most



ignored kids could actively engage in classroom instruction and learning. As a result, these students passed the final school evaluation and demonstrated positive attitudes and behaviors.

### **Solution for Parents**

According to the principles of SIKL and SIKK, the parents of the students are considered an integral component of the school community and play a role in the development of their children's education. However, in certain instances, the parents of the children contribute to the school issues by neglecting their child's education. The parents are preoccupied with their everyday obligations, neglecting the child's academic progress, as well as their demeanor and conduct. The SIKK principal disclosed that many parents in Sabah and Sarawak display negligence towards their children's education. This negligence is evident in their tendency to allow their children to engage in unproductive activities at home instead of encouraging them to attend school.

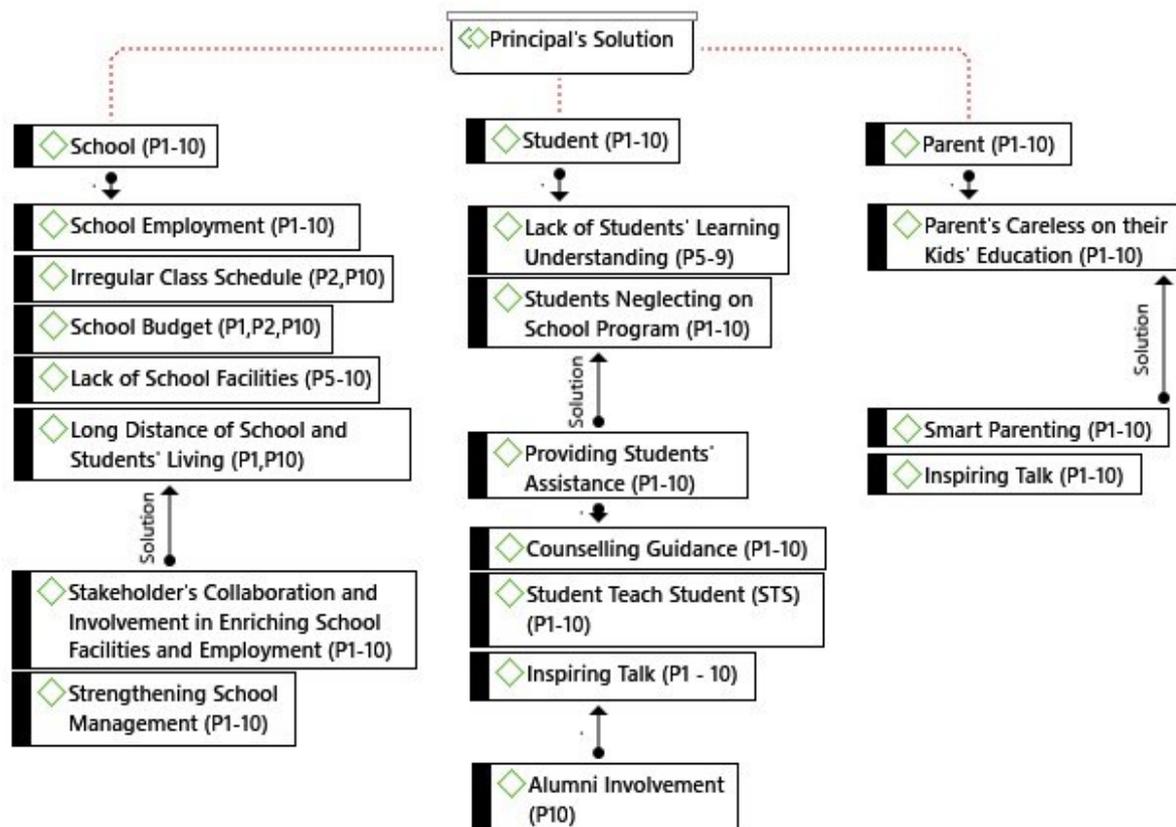
Furthermore, these parents permit their children to work alongside them, compromising their educational opportunities. To address this issue, the Indonesian school system, as stipulated by the 1945 Indonesian constitution, strives to facilitate the education of Indonesian children. The teachers should take a more aggressive approach to disseminating educational information to all Indonesian citizens residing in Malaysia. Therefore, the Indonesian school organizes Smart Parenting and Inspiring Talk programs to inculcate in student parents a strong sense of the importance of their children's education. The goal in organizing a smart parenting program is to enhance the parents' self-awareness regarding the significance of their children's education. This program involves the coordinator using a smartphone to provide a speech emphasizing parental responsibility's importance in their child's education.

It also aims to inspire students' parents by highlighting the critical need for their children to develop skills, knowledge, and character. According to the SIKL and SIKK principals, the program coordinator utilized online meetings to effectively communicate the significance of education, academic progress, and character development among students at the school. It promotes parental involvement, accountability, and interest in their children's skills, knowledge, and character development. In addition, the school principals suggested that an inspiring talk program could serve as an alternate approach to enhance parents' understanding of the significance of their children's education.

Furthermore, the school principal emphasizes the parents' obligation to ensure their children's education. The principal highlights the need for the younger generation to possess aptitude, expertise, and moral integrity to enhance the quality of their life. The SIKL and SIKK principals asserted that the schools organized the Inspiring Talk program to fulfill the obligation of Indonesian schools in implementing diplomacy, as directed by the Indonesian government through the General Directorate of Education and Culture and the Education Attaché of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The principals take aggressive measures to enhance the quality of education for Indonesian children residing in Malaysia.

The Pramuka coordinator of SIKL also mentioned that as part of the school's role to provide a comprehensive understanding to parents, they typically invite them to lecture on topics connected to the program being coordinated. Certain parents need more expertise and are familiarity with the standard school curriculum. Similarly, the schools cater to the formal education of the students' parents, who largely exhibit indifference towards education, and provide them with an understanding about the importance of their children's education.

In a nutshell, the following figure demonstrates the analysis of the challenges and solutions encountered by the principals in escalating students' learning achievement.



**Figure 2. The principal's challenges and solutions in escalating students' learning achievement**

The theoretical implications of the study emphasized that improving students' performance requires character development to stimulate their interest in learning through the creation of instructional leadership. It is crucial to design instructional consequences to assess the degree to which learning objectives are attained. Some specific methods and criteria must be followed to carry out learning activities, which subsequently impact the learning outcomes. Based on the practical implications, the study revealed that the principals suggested the development of the school instructional leadership concept, the formulation of planning, the coordination of the program and its implementation, the organization of supervision and evaluation, the construction of learning implications, and the identification of challenges as advantageous to achieve the exact solution of the encountered issues.

## Conclusion

The results of this study conclude that the principals' responsibilities in developing instructional leadership were categorized into five primary themes: concept, planning, program and execution, supervision, evaluation, and learning implication design. Challenges identified include schools' limited budget and the lack of teachers, students, and parents' problems. Some solutions discovered encompass optimizing the schools' budget, staff, and teachers, stakeholder collaboration and bipartite cooperation, student-teach-student, role modeling, counseling guidance, inspiring talks, and smart parenting. The principals recommended designing the school instructional leadership concept, formulating the planning, coordinating the program and its implementation, organizing the supervision and evaluation, constructing the learning implications, and identifying the challenges to secure solutions.



## Recommendation

For the School Principals

This study recommends that school principals optimize the schools' budget, staff, and teachers, as well as bipartite cooperation and stakeholder collaboration, to enhance the effectiveness of the school programs. Besides, the principals can conduct student teaching student, role modeling, counseling guidance, inspiring talk, and smart parenting programs for the success of students' academic Achievement.

For the Ministry of Education

Applying instructional leadership is an effective way to improve students' academic Achievement, as supported by their excellent character. The Ministry of Education can help every school by providing training, seminars, or research that positively impacts teachers' development and school management, subsequently leading to improved school quality.

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