

Principals' Instructional Leadership Strategies for Building Fostering Meaningful Learning in Primary Schools

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Abstract: This study reveals the strategies employed by a primary school principal in implementing instructional leadership to foster meaningful learning. The research employed a qualitative case study with semi-structured interviews, and the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings highlight three themes that reflect the principal's instructional leadership strategies. These strategies involve supervision and management of learning resources, innovative leadership, and teacher professionalism development. These strategies reflect how principals operationalize instructional leadership to create conditions that support meaningful learning. Through systematic supervision and effective resource management, principals ensure that teaching practices are aligned with curricular goals and student needs. Their innovative leadership fosters a school culture that values creativity, reflection, and learner-centered instruction. Moreover, by facilitating teachers' professional development, principals strengthen teachers' capacity to design learning experiences that connect new knowledge to students' prior understanding, an essential feature of meaningful learning as described by Ausubel's theory.

Keywords: Teachers; Strategi Instructional Leadership; Principal; Meaningful Learning; Primary School.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership is one of the key factors in achieving quality learning in primary schools. Various research findings indicate that the role of the principal as an instructional leader has a direct influence on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and on students' learning (Hallinger et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020; Meng & Chang, 2024). A principal who practices instructional leadership does not merely serve as an administrative manager but also acts as a professional mentor for teachers in planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction (Mora-Ruano et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2024; Plaku & Leka, 2025). Through the formulation of a clear learning vision, the continuous development of teachers' competencies, and the creation of a positive learning

culture, the principal can ensure that the learning process in the school runs effectively and is oriented toward the needs of the students (He et al., 2024).

However, various studies indicate that the practice of instructional leadership in primary schools still faces several (Gümüş et al., 2024; Alsuhaymi et al., 2024; Cansoy et al., 2025). Many principals are still burdened with excessive an administrative task, which makes supervision and guidance of teaching practices less optimal. As a result, some teachers continue to use conventional teaching approaches, such as lecture methods that are teacher-centered and do not sufficiently encourage active student engagement (Zhang et al., 2024; Carter et al., 2024; Xia et al., 2024). This condition affects students' low participation in the learning process and limits their opportunities to develop critical, collaborative, creative, and communicative thinking skills (Brandmiller et al., 2024). As a result, the learning experienced by students has not yet been able to create meaningful understanding within them. In this context, it is necessary to develop various strategies that enable teachers to implement meaningful learning for students, as explained in Ausubel's (Saputra, 2016). Therefore, in this context, the importance of meaningful learning becomes highly relevant.

Meaningful learning does not merely emphasize rote memorization but focuses on students' ability to connect new knowledge with their prior experiences and existing (Agra et al., 2019). This view is in line with constructivist theory, which sees learning as an active process of constructing meaning based on prior knowledge and social (Macías Villegas et al., 2020; Singh & Yaduvanshi, 2015; Widari & Jazadi, 2019). Thus, meaningful learning reflects the constructivist view that knowledge is not transferred but constructed through students' engagement with their environment. This approach enables students to understand concepts deeply, apply them in everyday life, and develop long-term learning (Mystakidis, 2021; Tulak et al., 2024). In addition, meaningful learning is also part of the effort to develop 21st-century skills, which include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and (Supena et al., 2021; Somphol et al., 2022; Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Thus, the successful implementation of meaningful learning greatly depends on the instructional leadership of the principal, who is able to guide teachers in creating contextual and participatory learning experiences.

Several studies have indeed examined instructional leadership in the context of secondary schools; however, research that specifically highlights the role of primary school principals in supporting meaningful learning remains limited (Wibowo et al., 2025; Ralebese et al., 2025a; Liu et al., 2021). Most previous studies have focused more on managerial aspects or student learning outcomes, rather than on the transformation of classroom learning processes as

a result of instructional leadership. In fact, the characteristics of primary school students, who are at the stage of concrete cognitive development, require a different and more meaningful learning approach compared to other educational (Anor Basah & Abdul Razak, 2023). Therefore, further studies are needed to examine in depth how the instructional leadership of primary school principals can support the creation of meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students.

The case of SD Inspiratif Al-Ilham in Kota Banjar serves as an example of the success of instructional leadership in realizing meaningful learning. This success is evidenced by students' achievements in both academic and non-academic fields, accompanied by the development of positive character traits such as discipline, responsibility, and care for others. On the other hand, the principal is central in facilitating strong collaboration with teachers, fostering a culture of innovation in the learning process, and creating a safe, supportive learning climate that encourages active student participation. Through a consistent instructional leadership approach, the school has provided learning focused on cognitive achievement and fosters 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, and students' socio-emotional competencies.

Therefore, it is essential to explore principals' instructional leadership strategies in building meaningful learning relevant to students' needs (He et al., 2024). Research on this matter remains limited in the context of Indonesian primary schools. This study is expected to provide insights into instructional leadership strategies that are theoretically grounded and practically implemented. Based on this, the objective of the study is to reveal the instructional leadership strategies of principals in developing meaningful learning in primary schools, guided by the following research question:

1. How does a principal supervise and manage learning resources to support meaningful learning?
2. In what ways does a principal demonstrate innovative leadership in improving the quality of teaching and learning?
3. How does a principal facilitate teacher professionalism development to enhance meaningful learning practices?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design (Hasanah, 2021; Lim, 2024) selected to explore in depth the practice of instructional leadership in building meaningful learning within the real context

of the school. The research was conducted at SD Inspiratif Al-Ilham in Kota Banjar, which is recognized for its strong instructional leadership practices in supporting meaningful learning. The school's excellence is reflected in students' achievements in both academic and non-academic fields. The Inspiratif Al-Ilham Primary School in Banjar City has successfully optimized instructional leadership to create meaningful learning experiences. Based on initial observations, this success is reflected in the students' academic achievements, such as ranking second in the city-level mathematics and natural sciences (MIPA) competition, winning a gold medal in the International Kangaroo Mathematics Competition, winning a bronze medal in the International Kangaroo Mathematics Competition, and winning a silver medal in the International Kangaroo Mathematics Competition. In addition, students demonstrate improved critical thinking skills in problem-solving. Learning values are also reflected in their daily lives, as students demonstrate discipline, honesty, social responsibility, and care in various school and community activities. This indicates that the learning approach implemented not only enhances academic performance but also holistically fosters students' character development.

Research Instrument

The data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, passive participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a flexible interview guide containing open-ended questions, allowing the researcher to conduct in-depth exploration and provide participants with space to give contextual responses (Naz et al., 2022; Roberts, 2020). The interviews were conducted face-to-face in Indonesian for 30-50 minutes in the principal's office, classrooms, and the computer laboratory. All interviews were recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed. To strengthen data validity, the researcher conducted triangulation through the analysis of lesson plans, curriculum documents, and classroom observations. In addition, direct observations were carried out to closely examine the actual practice of instructional leadership at the research site. Furthermore, document analysis was conducted on curriculum documents and relevant instructional guidelines. These three techniques were used complementarily to obtain rich qualitative data, deepen the understanding of the studied phenomenon, and minimize potential researcher bias (Valencia, 2022; Lim, 2025). The researcher also maintained the confidentiality of participants' identities and acted professionally to avoid any differences in treatment or power imbalances between the researcher, the principal, teachers, and students.

Participant Selections

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, as they were considered to meet the criteria relevant to the research objective—understanding the practice of principals' instructional leadership in realizing meaningful learning. This technique allowed the researcher to select individuals with direct experience, competence, and reflective capacity to provide rich and in-depth data (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). The criteria for participants in this study were carefully determined to ensure diversity of perspectives and depth of data. The criteria included: 1) Principals with a minimum of five years of leadership experience and achievements in school management and teacher development. The selected principal had also received an award as the Second Place Winner of the City-Level Inspirational Principal, demonstrating dedication and innovation in improving learning quality. 2) Class teachers with at least five years of teaching experience and active involvement in professional development activities. Teachers were selected based on variations in roles and experiences, such as exemplary teachers in implementing meaningful learning, teachers active in national training programs, teachers who showed positive changes after the principal's supervision, and teachers certified through the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG). 3) Fifth-grade students with good communication and reflection skills, capable of clearly expressing their learning experiences. Additionally, the selected students were high achievers at both school and regional levels, including three students who received awards in the International Kangaroo Mathematics Competition (IKMC). The number of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, meaning that data collection was discontinued when no new significant information emerged (Guest et al., 2020). The selection of principals, teachers, and students with diverse backgrounds enabled the triangulation of perspectives, thereby producing a more comprehensive understanding of instructional leadership practices in primary schools (Creswell, 2012).

Table 1. Participant Demographics
Data Analysis

No.	Participant	Gender	Position	Achievment
1	Participant 1 (P1)	Female	Principal	Second Winner for Most Inspirational Principal at the City Level
2	Participant 2 (P2)	Male	Grade 3 Teacher	Exemplary Teacher at the School

3	Participant 3 (P3)	Male	Grade 4 Teacher	Teacher who represents the school in various national training programs and activities
4	Participant 4 (P4)	Female	Grade 5 Teacher	Teacher who has undergone a real transformation in teaching practices after receiving direct guidance and supervision from the principal
5	Participant 5 (P5)	Female	Grade 6 Teacher	Certified teacher
6	Participant 6 (P6)	Female	5th Grade Student	Second Winner in the City Level Mathematics and Natural Sciences Olympiad
7	Participant 7 (P7)	Female	5th Grade Student	Award in the International Kangaroo Mathematics Competition (IKMC)
8	Participant 8 (P8)	Female	5th Grade Student	Award in the International Kangaroo Mathematics Competition (IKMC)
9	Participant 9 (P9)	Female	5th Grade Student	Award in the International Kangaroo Mathematics Competition (IKMC)

The study applied the systematic thematic analysis model developed by Naeem et al. (2023), which comprises six structured steps to build a conceptual framework from qualitative data. A total of 13 initial codes were obtained from nine interview transcripts. These codes were then categorized into three themes, which were subsequently consolidated into three main themes. To ensure data credibility, the researcher conducted member checking with participants and peer debriefing with two fellow researchers. The reliability of the analytical process was maintained through the researcher's field notes throughout the research process.

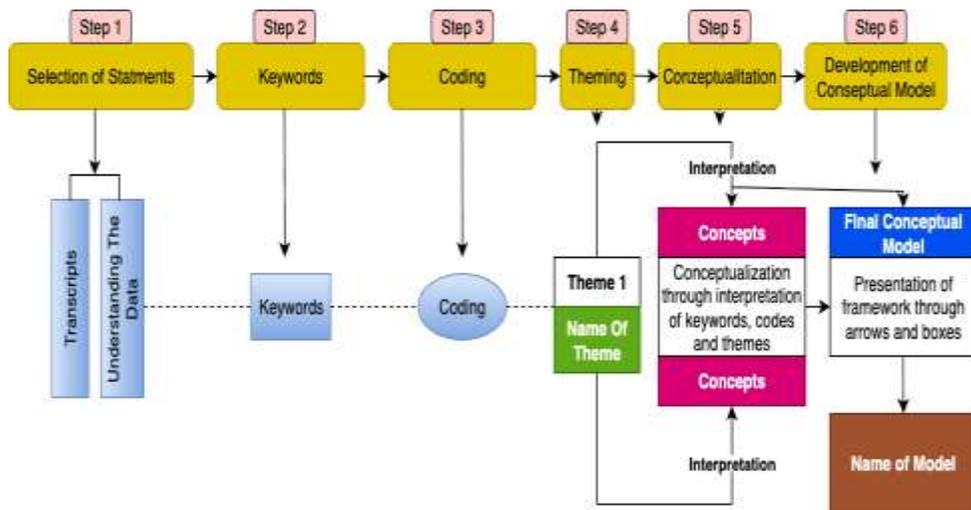


Figure 1. Thematic Analysis Process by Naeem et al. (2023)

1. Data Transcription

All interviews were carefully transcribed. The researcher repeatedly read the transcripts to understand comprehensively and capture significant quotations.

2. Selection of Quotations and Keywords

The researcher selected quotations from the transcripts and frequently recurring or relevant words.

3. Coding

Each data segment was assigned a code reflecting the core meaning or message.

4. Theme Development

Codes with related meanings were grouped into main themes.

5. Conceptualization

The researcher interpreted the themes, identified interconnections, and organized them into broader conceptual categories.

6. Conceptual Model Development

Finally, the themes and concepts were synthesized into a conceptual model representing how instructional leadership fosters meaningful learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study reveals a primary school principal's use of instructional leadership to foster meaningful learning. Three key themes were identified through thematic analysis of participant data that illustrate instructional leadership strategies. These strategies include supervision and management of learning resources, innovative leadership, and teacher professionalism development. These strategies closely align with the study's focus on how principals design and enact instructional leadership to foster meaningful learning in primary schools. The findings are presented as follows:

Theme 1: Supervision and Management of Learning Resources as Key Pillars of Meaningful Learning

The first finding indicates that the effectiveness of meaningful learning in primary schools largely depends on the principal's ability to supervise and strategically manage learning resources. The supervision carried out was not merely administrative, it served as a professional development process that encouraged teachers to reflect on their teaching practices continuously. One teacher emphasized that the principal's involvement in every stage of the learning process was the key to the school's program success:

"For one year, the work meeting is mandatory. We plan everything for a week, starting with the learning process, then the student program, then the major routine programs, and with the principal. Everything is done with the principal, including the evaluation, until we see the results of what we planned earlier. The principal always supervises everything." (P4, page 4, line 27-33)

This excerpt shows that the principal's supervision was carried out through a structured mechanism rather than mere formal monitoring. The principal acted as a facilitator who ensured that every learning activity was collaboratively planned, implemented, and evaluated. This fostered a sense of collective responsibility among teachers and created a reflective culture within the school environment. This is also in line with the view of Hallinger et al. (2020) which emphasizes that the effectiveness of instructional leadership depends on the extent of the principal's involvement in the teaching and learning process.

In addition to supervision, the principal also developed adaptive resource management by implementing the distinctive JSIT (Integrated Islamic School Network) curriculum, which was integrated with the national curriculum. The principal explained that:

"We use not only one curriculum but also a hidden one. We try to integrate this hidden curriculum with Islamic values in our lessons. So, whatever the subject matter, whether it is related to science or sports, we try to internalize Islamic values in every lesson we teach them." (P1, page 1, line 21-27)

The integration of the two curricula reflects a leadership strategy capable of harmonizing national requirements with the school's distinctive values. The principal not only ensured compliance with national education policies but also infused spiritual and contextual meaning into students' learning processes. This is in line with the view of Uljens (2024) which asserts that curriculum leadership does not merely focus on administrative aspects but represents a form of pedagogical work that requires principals to translate national policies into the social, cultural, and value contexts of the school. From this perspective, educational leaders serve as a bridge between broad policy frameworks and everyday classroom practices, ensuring that the learning process not only aligns with national standards but is also spiritually and contextually meaningful for students.

Furthermore, learning evaluation is also an important part of strategic supervision practices. The evaluation is carried out systematically on a weekly, semesterly, and annual basis emphasizing the improvement of program quality and the achievement of the school's vision.

"We have two work meetings every year. These work meetings are a reference for every teacher to plan for the next semester. Then, before moving on to the second semester, we always conduct an evaluation first. In the second semester, we assessed whether what we had planned and implemented in the first semester had been carried out. If there are still unfinished tasks, we try to re-plan them for the second semester." (P1, page 2, line 26-32).

This evaluative approach demonstrates that the principal positions evaluation not merely as a control tool but as a collective learning process involving all members of the school community in continuous improvement. This is in line with the study by Leithwood et al. (2020), which found that reflective and participatory evaluation can strengthen organizational learning and foster a school culture oriented toward continuous quality improvement.

In addition, the principal also established a learning program development team at each grade level to support teacher collaboration. This team serves as a platform for sharing best practices and designing learning activities that meet students' needs.

"We provide teams, so each class has its team, so they can collaborate to complete the program. Perhaps in the teaching team, there is a teaching team"

for grade 1, a teaching team for grade 2, where they usually discuss the programs in each class, and that is related to the teaching and learning process, or related to the habits in the class, or the programs in each class.” (P1, page 4, line 30-34)

This finding indicates that systematic, collaborative, and reflective supervision can create a meaningful learning culture oriented toward improving the quality of instruction (Leithwood et al., 2020; Brown et al., 2024).

Theme 2: Innovative Leadership as a Driver of Meaningful Learning Transformation

The second finding shows that the principal’s innovative leadership plays a crucial role in driving the transformation of learning toward more meaningful practices. This leadership is reflected in the principal’s ability to develop innovations, strengthen managerial capacity, serve as a role model for teachers, and cultivate a fast-learning culture within the school environment. The principal explained the efforts to enhance managerial capacity through various training:

“I participate in principal management improvement programs, usually at JSIT. Principals can also participate in these programs at their departments, although not many do. So, we usually look for these programs at JSIT, which offers many training opportunities.” (P1, page 7, lines 24-26)

This excerpt shows that the principal has a strong orientation toward self-development. Such efforts demonstrate a form of learning leadership, in which the principal continuously updates managerial and instructional competencies to adapt to policy changes and evolving learning needs. According to Fullan (2014), Effective school leaders are those who engage in continuous learning and inspire teachers and students to embrace the same learning spirit as part of the school’s organizational culture.

In addition to personal capacity building, the principal also serves as a role model and a driver of innovation for teachers. One teacher described how the principal exemplified the implementation of learning innovations:

“In terms of learning innovation, we have seen her participation. In Banjar, there is also innovation among school principals, such as a school principal competition, regarding managing education and creating innovations. We have seen her participation in these activities. So, the school principal gives the knowledge to the teachers. Alhamdulillah, the school principal has become a model school principal.” (P3, page 6, line 1-6)

This leadership, which demonstrates both role modeling and innovation, reflects transformational instructional leadership. The principal does not merely give orders but also provides inspiration and a clear direction for change. This is in line with the view of Leithwood & Jantzi (2006), Transformational leadership in the educational context has a significant impact on teachers' motivation, which in turn enhances the effectiveness of learning.

The principal also fostered an adaptive spirit through the “fast learner” principle, which has become part of the school's organizational culture.

“... Al-Ilham teachers must be quick learners, not slow learners. Quick learning means that when there are updates on methods or learning, such as now with the Minister or deep learning, they must be quick to learn and understand them.” (P2, page 6, line 5-10)

This statement illustrates that the principal instills the values of resilient learners in teachers, which is a key characteristic of future-oriented schools. This innovative attitude shows that instructional leadership is not merely about carrying out administrative routines but is oriented toward continuous or lifelong learning that strengthens teachers' competencies and the relevance of learning in the 21st century (Brown et al., 2024; Pashmforoosh et al., 2023).

Theme 3: Strengthening Teachers' Professional Capacity as the Foundation for Meaningful and Sustainable Learning

The third finding emphasizes that strengthening teachers' professional capacity is a key pillar in the principal's instructional leadership strategy to realize meaningful learning. Through efforts in competence development, collaboration, and recognition, the principal fosters a work environment that supports continuous professional growth. This is reflected in the participants' views, which highlight the importance of teacher collaboration, competency training programs, and recognition as a form of work.

“Teachers are indeed encouraged, not just encouraged, but required. They are required to give each other feedback and advise each other as friends.” (P2, page 5, line 36-38)

This excerpt shows that the principal plays an active role in fostering a reflective and collaborative culture among teachers. Such collaboration encourages the exchange of ideas, best practices, and solutions to learning challenges, in line with the view of Brown et al. (2021) which emphasizes that teacher collaboration serves as a primary means to improve teaching practices through reflection and collective learning. Secondly, training programs such as In-House Training and workshops provide opportunities to update teachers' pedagogical competencies.

“Training, or IHT (In-House Training), or workshops, are usually included in the training, so the program itself is not the focus; rather, it is the follow-up plan. What is the plan? The plan is to have a program or workshop to explore this theme in depth.” (P1, page 5, line 14-17)

Furthermore, a reward system is implemented to motivate teachers who demonstrate outstanding performance.

“Some teachers have achieved specific accomplishments, and they receive rewards. For example, the best performance, the most attentive employee, and one more, teachers compete for these rewards three times a year, a form of appreciation for teachers.” (P2, page 4, line 10-13)

This excerpt shows that recognition serves not only as acknowledgment but also as a motivational mechanism to foster a positive work culture. This strategy aligns with the view of Supena et al. (2021) and Janssen et al. (2024) which asserts that professional motivation and recognition enhance teachers' commitment to meaningful teaching.

Overall, the principal's strategies to strengthen teacher professionalism reflect instructional leadership oriented toward continuous learning. Collaboration reinforces teachers' learning networks, training develops pedagogical and professional competencies, and recognition fosters intrinsic motivation to excel. These three elements interact to form a cycle of teaching quality improvement that directly impacts meaningful learning, where teachers are not merely implementers of the curriculum but active learners who continuously transform alongside their students.

Discussion

The findings indicate that, in the context of primary schools, principals are not merely confined to the role of administrators but also act as instructional leaders. The key aspects underpinning the success of instructional leadership in implementing learning at the primary level consist of three main points: supervision of the learning process to ensure quality, the professional development of teachers as direct implementers of education, and innovative leadership. Instructional leadership strategies serve as a crucial factor in fostering meaningful learning for students in primary schools. Such leadership emphasizes the principal's ability to guide, support, and develops teachers' potential while maximizing the utilization of school resources.

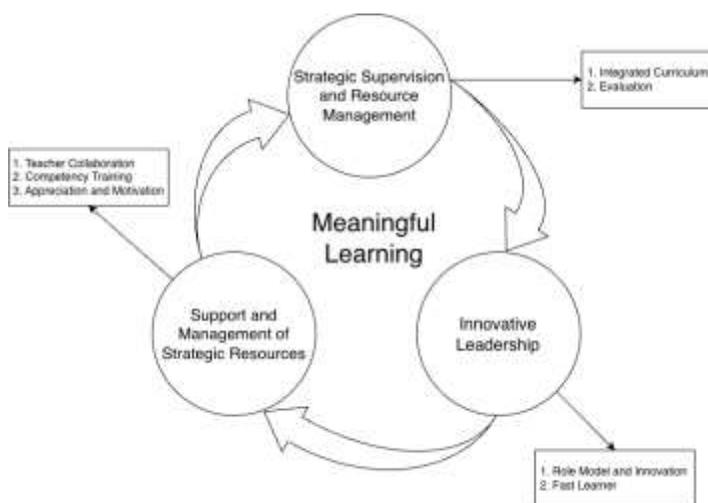


Figure 2. Model Strategy of Instructional Leadership Strategy of School Principals in Fostering Meaningful Learning

Figure 2 illustrates that the three main strategies of instructional leadership: 1) supervision and management of learning resources, 2) innovative leadership, and 3) development of teacher professionalism interact and contribute to the creation of meaningful learning in primary schools. These strategies do not operate in isolation but form complementary relationships. Supervision and management of learning resources ensure that the entire teaching and learning process runs in a directed and efficient manner through the implementation of an integrated curriculum, ongoing monitoring, and systematic evaluation. Innovative leadership promotes creativity and adaptability among all members of the school community, with the principal serving as a role model for innovation, quickly adapting to change, and fostering a spirit of renewal among teachers. Meanwhile, the development of teacher professionalism serves as a foundational element in enhancing teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies through collaboration, training, and recognition for outstanding performance. The interaction of these three strategies creates a continuous cycle: effective supervision supports innovation, innovation drives professional development, and professional teachers strengthen supervision and the quality of learning. The synergy ensures that learning in primary schools is not only oriented toward academic outcomes but also toward character building, values, and the development of students' critical thinking skills, embodying the essence of meaningful learning.

The first dimension highlights that principals play a direct role in determining the quality of learning. It is not sufficient for them to master

administrative and managerial tasks; they must also serve as role models, actively enhancing classroom learning quality. The findings show that principals who focus on quality improvement can foster a dynamic learning culture, motivate teachers to continuously develop, and remain responsive to the evolving demands of education. Thus, innovative principals are able to balance administrative responsibilities with direct involvement in supporting teachers by modeling and introducing pedagogical innovations that lead to meaningful learning for students. Moreover, primary schools require innovation to remain relevant in a rapidly changing era. Innovation-oriented principals foster a culture of research and experimentation, encourage teachers to become fast learners, and help them adapt to educational shifts. These results are consistent with Bao (2024), who demonstrated that instructional leadership significantly influences teachers' innovative behavior by communicating the work's meaning. Witthöft et al. (2024) likewise found that principals with an open innovation mindset cultivate collaborative cultures, promote knowledge sharing, and upgrade teaching practices that enrich and facilitate student learning. Therefore, innovative leadership is not merely rhetorical but represents a practical reality grounded in role modeling, managerial competence, and pedagogical vision.

The second dimension emphasizes that teachers cannot be excluded from efforts to improve educational quality. Regardless of the principal's vision, teachers remain the primary agents of instruction who engage daily with students. Hence, teachers must be consistently supported and their professionalism enhanced. The study's findings reveal that collaboration in competency development programs and the recognition of teachers' roles are critical foundations for strengthening teacher professionalism. Amemasor et al. (2025) demonstrated that sustainable, collaborative, and contextual professional development significantly impacts pedagogical practice, particularly in technology integration. Research on professional learning communities also shows strong links to improved performance, shared efficacy, and job satisfaction (Pan & Cheng, 2023; Li, 2022). He, Guo, & Abazie (2024) found that principals' instructional leadership significantly predicts teacher professional development. It reinforces the perspective that principals function as facilitators of continuous learning for teachers, with collaboration and recognition as key instruments to strengthen meaningful teaching practices.

The third dimension pertains to supervision and the management of learning resources. In this context, principals are administrative supervisors and academic leaders who ensure curriculum integration, practical evaluation, and teacher involvement in program design. Ralebese, Jita, & Badmus (2025) emphasize that instructional leadership is critical in curriculum reform, particularly in defining learning missions, managing instructional programs, and

fostering supportive school climates. Kreijkes & Greateorex (2024) further demonstrate that integrated curricula strengthen meaningful learning by requiring students to construct knowledge, solve problems, and connect concepts within authentic contexts. Meanwhile, Baartman & Gulikers (2025) highlight that data-driven supervision and formative evaluation improves instructional quality while supporting teacher professional growth. Thus, supervision and resource management ensure alignment and continuity across curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

These three dimensions create an instructional leadership ecosystem that delivers meaningful learning when they synergize. Innovative principals foster cultural conditions that support change, teacher professional development ensures implementation capacity, and supervision guarantees alignment and sustainability. Recent studies further reinforce this perspective, showing that integrating innovation, teacher development, and supervision enhances project-based, collaborative, and authentic learning practices that positively affect students' cognitive outcomes, critical thinking skills, creativity, and socio-emotional competencies (Sánchez-García & Reyes-de-Cózar, 2025; Zhang & Ma, 2023).

As stated by Nøkleby et al. (2024), every qualitative study has methodological limitations that should be disclosed to enhance transparency and the quality of interpretation. First, this study was conducted in only one primary school, so the findings cannot yet be generalized to other schools with different characteristics. Future research is recommended to involve multiple schools with diverse social and cultural contexts to obtain broader comparisons.

Second, the number of participants in this study was limited to nine individuals: one principal, four teachers, and four fifth-grade students. Although this number meets the criteria for data saturation in qualitative research, the experiences of other stakeholders, such as parents and school supervisors, were not fully accounted for.

Considering these limitations, future studies are recommended to employ a multi-case study design, involve a larger number of participants, and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to produce stronger and more generalizable findings.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study confirm that instructional leadership in primary schools plays a crucial role in fostering an innovative culture through the principal's role modeling and by providing space for teachers to experiment pedagogically. The facilitation of sustainable professional learning communities,

tangible incentive support, and the implementation of data-driven, development-oriented supervision have strengthened evaluation practices, teaching, and teacher professional development. These measures contribute to creating meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students. Theoretically, these findings expand the understanding of instructional leadership as a dynamic process that is not merely administrative but also reflective and contextual in fostering teacher and student engagement. This study is limited by its context and the small number of participants and has not integrated quantitative data on student learning outcomes. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve more schools with diverse characteristics and employ a mixed-methods approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between instructional leadership and meaningful learning.

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