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The influence of instructional leadership behaviours of principals on teachers' instructional practices in Rwanda: a case study of selected secondary schools in the Nyamagabe district

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ABSTRACT

This study explored instructional leadership of secondary school principals in the Nyamagabe district in Rwanda. Specifically, the main purpose was to identify instructional leadership behaviours enacted by secondary school principals, and investigate the extent to which these behaviours influence instructional practices of teachers in schools.

As the study is largely pragmatic, it used quantitative and qualitative approaches in two sequential phases to gather and analyse data. The quantitative phase was conducted first, followed by the qualitative phase. The main source of data in the quantitative phase consisted of survey questionnaires distributed among 269 teachers from 48 secondary schools in the district. In addition to the quantitative phase, two principals and six teachers selected from two case study schools were involved in semi-structured interviews for the qualitative phase.

The study revealed that some level of instructional leadership exists in secondary schools of the district. Principals were found to enact moderately various instructional leadership behaviours including defining and communicating school goals, promoting teacher professional development, supervising instruction and providing feedback to teachers, allocating resources to instruction and reviewing the curriculum materials. Taken together, all instructional leadership behaviours enacted by school principals displayed a statistical positive and significant correlation with teacher instructional practices. Principals however are still facing some challenges such as the shortage of teaching and learning resources, insufficient training, heavy principal workload, and a highly centralised educational system.

From the study results two models of instructional leadership were developed. One model demonstrates how instructional leadership behaviours of principals are a critical factor to improving the quality teaching of teachers, and the other one shows how instructional leadership of school principals can be developed and maintained to potentially produce a positive effect on teaching and learning. It is hoped that these models will be useful in aiding the performance of school principals, teachers, policy makers and other educational partners who are interested in making instructional leadership more successful in schools.

Keywords

Instructional leadership; School principals; Secondary schools; Teachers; Teachers' instructional practices