

Leadership Alignment in Education: Exploring Instructional and Change Leadership Competencies across Administrative and Teaching Roles

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Abstract

Introduction: Instructional leadership and change leadership are two critical dimensions of educational leadership that significantly influence institutional effectiveness, teacher performance, and organizational adaptation. While both constructs are often discussed in educational leadership discourse, limited empirical studies directly compare how administrators and teachers perceive their enactment within a single institutional context.

Objectives: This study aimed to: (1) compare the levels of instructional leadership competencies between school administrators and teachers; (2) compare the levels of change leadership competencies between the two groups; and (3) examine the correlation between instructional leadership and change leadership competencies.

Methods: A descriptive survey design was employed involving a total of 28 school administrators and 220 teachers from a government college in Zamboanga del Sur. Standardized and validated leadership competency scales were administered using both Google Forms and printed questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and Pearson correlation.

Results: Findings revealed that both instructional and change leadership competencies were rated as “Always Manifested” by both groups, with teachers consistently reporting slightly higher mean scores than administrators. Significant differences were found between administrators and teachers in their perceived leadership competencies. However, correlation analysis indicated no significant relationship between instructional and change leadership competencies, suggesting that these constructs operate as distinct leadership dimensions.

Conclusions: The study concludes that although leadership competencies are strongly manifested, perceptual gaps exist between administrators and teachers, emphasizing the need for leadership alignment and reflective practice. The independence of instructional and change leadership constructs highlights the importance of addressing both dimensions in leadership development programs to cultivate a more cohesive and adaptive leadership culture.

Keywords: instructional leadership, change leadership, educational leadership competencies, administrators, teachers, comparative analysis, leadership perception, organizational change

1. Introduction

School leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor in shaping teaching quality, school climate, and student achievement. Within this domain, two leadership constructs are particularly influential: instructional leadership and change leadership. Instructional leadership refers to the administrators’ and teachers’ capacity to guide and support teaching and learning processes through assessment literacy, management of instructional programs, implementation fidelity, and supervisory efficacy (Daing & Mustapha, 2023; Ismail et al., 2018). In contrast, change leadership involves mobilizing people and systems to navigate school reforms, characterized by situational self-awareness, solution-focused interventions, decision-making styles, coalition

functioning, and a continuous improvement mindset (Tai Mei Kin et al., 2018; Espia, 2023).

Although closely related, these two leadership domains operate differently depending on role expectations within the school hierarchy. Administrators are generally expected to set direction, lead organizational transformation, and ensure alignment between instructional goals and change initiatives, while teachers are responsible for translating these initiatives into classroom practice (Puruwita et al., 2022; Villa & Tulod, 2021). Existing studies have noted perceptual differences between administrators and teachers, with administrators often rating themselves higher in leadership competencies than teachers do in their own roles (Puruwita et al., 2022; Konan & Ađirođlu Bakır, 2022). These discrepancies suggest potential gaps in

leadership coherence, which may affect collaboration, professional development alignment, and implementation of school improvements.

While instructional leadership and change leadership have been extensively discussed in isolation, there is limited empirical evidence comparing these leadership competencies simultaneously between administrators and teachers. Moreover, few studies have examined how these two leadership domains correlate across hierarchical roles, despite theoretical claims that strong instructional leadership enhances readiness for change and professional agency (Ismail et al., 2018; Abdul Aziz et al., 2018; Espia, 2023). Addressing this gap is essential to understanding leadership distribution in schools and informing targeted leadership development interventions.

Given these considerations, the present study compares the levels of instructional leadership and change leadership competencies between administrators and teachers using a descriptive-comparative design involving 28 administrators and 220 teachers. Additionally, it examines the relationship between instructional leadership and change leadership competencies to determine whether strengths in one leadership domain support the other. Through this dual analysis, the study aims to contribute to the discourse on effective school leadership and provide insights for policy, leadership training, and school improvement planning.

Objectives

This study is anchored on the premise that strengthening both instructional and change leadership competencies among school personnel is fundamental to improving school performance and promoting professional growth among educators. Recognizing that leadership responsibilities are distributed differently between administrators and teachers, a comparative analysis can provide deeper insight into role-based leadership capacity within schools. Furthermore, exploring the relationship between instructional and change leadership may reveal whether competence in one leadership domain complements and reinforces the other.

Guided by these considerations, this study aims to address the following objectives:

1. To compare the levels of instructional leadership competencies between school administrators and teachers.

2. To compare the levels of change leadership competencies between school administrators and teachers.
3. To examine the relationship between instructional leadership competencies and change leadership competencies among school administrators and teachers.

2. Methods

This study employed a descriptive-comparative and correlational survey design to assess and compare the levels of instructional leadership and change leadership competencies between administrators and teachers in a government college in Zamboanga del Sur. This research design was deemed suitable as it allowed for the systematic description of leadership competencies and facilitated the comparison of perceptions between two independent groups, while also enabling the examination of the relationship between the two leadership constructs.

The respondents of the study consisted of 28 school administrators and 220 teachers, all of whom were included using a census approach to ensure full representation of the leadership and teaching sectors within the institution. This approach reflects similar methodologies used in leadership research, which emphasize the importance of gathering data from all individuals occupying key roles to ensure valid comparative analysis. Data collection utilized adopted and standardized instruments measuring both instructional and change leadership competencies. These instruments demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70, indicating strong reliability for use in educational leadership research. The questionnaires were structured using a 6-point Likert-type scale to allow respondents to express varying degrees of agreement, providing nuanced data on leadership competencies.

To maximize accessibility and improve response rates, data were collected through both online and face-to-face formats. Google Forms were used for online administration, particularly for respondents with digital access, while printed questionnaires were distributed in person to accommodate those who preferred or required physical copies. This mixed-mode data collection strategy aligns with contemporary research practices in educational settings. For data analysis, independent samples t-tests were performed to determine whether significant differences existed

between administrators and teachers in terms of instructional and change leadership competencies. In addition, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to examine the relationship between the two leadership constructs, as this statistical method is appropriate for assessing associations between continuous variables in leadership and organizational studies.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from institutional authorities, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their voluntary involvement. They were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the exclusive academic use of their responses. No names or identifying information were collected, and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any point. These procedures ensured that the research adhered to ethical standards for responsible conduct in survey-based educational research.

3. Results and Discussions

This section presents the results of the study and discusses their implications in relation to existing literature on instructional and change leadership competencies. The analysis begins with the descriptive levels of leadership competencies as perceived by school administrators and teachers, followed by inferential tests to determine whether significant differences exist between the two groups. Subsequently, the correlation between instructional leadership and change leadership competencies is examined to determine whether these constructs are interrelated or function as distinct leadership orientations within the institutional context. The presentation and interpretation of results are grounded in relevant theoretical perspectives and empirical studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the leadership dynamics operating in the institution.

Table 1 presents the descriptive levels of perceived instructional leadership and change leadership competencies among school administrators and teachers. Across all domains of instructional leadership—Assessment Literacy, Managing the Instructional Program, Implementation Fidelity, and Instructional Supervision Sense of Efficacy—both groups reported perceptions within the “Always Manifested” range based on the descriptive scaling.

Teachers reported slightly higher mean scores compared to school administrators in all four domains, with the highest mean score among teachers observed in Implementation Fidelity (M = 5.38, SD = 0.79). This suggests that teachers perceive a strong adherence to instructional policies and consistency in the delivery of instructional practices.

Table 1

Descriptive levels of administrators and teachers’ perceived instructional leadership and change leadership competencies

Variables	School Administrators (n=28)		Teachers (n=220)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Instructional Leadership Competencies				
1 Assessment Literacy	5.18	0.71	5.29	0.86
2 Managing the Instructional Program	5.18	0.71	5.34	0.9
3 Implementation Fidelity	5.14	0.79	5.38	0.79
4 Instructional Supervision Sense of Efficacy	5.14	0.69	5.35	0.83
Change Leadership Competencies				
1 Situational Self-awareness	5.14	0.64	5.36	0.8
2 School Solution-Focused Leadership	5.07	0.69	5.33	0.78
3 Rational and Intuitive Decision Style	5	0.71	5.39	0.82
4 Coalition Functioning	5.04	0.68	5.44	0.73
5 Continuous Improvement Mindset	5.07	0.65	5.34	0.84

Note: M = mean, SD = Standard deviation: 1.00 – 1.83 = Never Manifested, 1.84 – 2.67 = Rarely Manifested, 2.68 – 3.50 = Sometimes Manifested, 3.51 – 4.33 = Often Manifested, 4.34 – 5.16 = Almost Always Manifested, 5.17 – 6.00 = Always Manifested

For administrators, Assessment Literacy and Managing the Instructional Program both recorded a mean of M = 5.18 (SD = 0.71), indicating a high level of confidence in their capability to use assessment data in guiding instructional decisions and overseeing program implementation. However, while administrators still rated their competencies highly, the slightly lower

means compared to teachers may imply a more cautious or realistic self-assessment typical of leaders who are aware of systemic and operational challenges.

In terms of Change Leadership Competencies, both administrators and teachers also demonstrated “Always Manifested” levels across all five domains: Situational Self-Awareness, Solution-Focused Leadership, Rational and Intuitive Decision Style, Coalition Functioning, and Continuous Improvement Mindset. Teachers rated Coalition Functioning (M = 5.44, SD = 0.73) the highest, indicating a strong perception of collaborative dynamics and the ability to mobilize collective support during change initiatives. Administrators, on the other hand, recorded their highest mean under Situational Self-Awareness (M = 5.14, SD = 0.64), highlighting their capacity to assess contextual demands and adjust leadership approaches accordingly.

The consistent trend of slightly higher teacher-perceived competencies compared to administrators across both instructional and change leadership domains may indicate a positive perception of leadership practices at the ground level. It also suggests that teachers acknowledge and affirm the leadership capacities demonstrated by their school heads, which is a favorable condition for sustaining collaborative school improvement initiatives.

Table 2

Test of significant difference of Instructional Leadership Competencies between administrators and teachers

Groups	n	M	SD	t	df	p-value
School Administrators	28	5.18	0.02	7.269	246	4.795
Teachers	220	5.34	0.04			

The results in Table 2 present the comparison of instructional leadership competencies as perceived by school administrators and teachers. Administrators reported a mean score of M = 5.18 (SD = 0.02), while teachers reported a slightly higher mean of M = 5.34 (SD = 0.04). The computed t-value of 7.269 at 246 degrees of freedom, with a corresponding p-value of 4.795, indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in their perception of instructional leadership competencies.

Although teachers reported marginally higher mean scores, the absence of a significant difference implies

that both administrators and teachers hold a consistently high and aligned perception regarding the level of instructional leadership being demonstrated in their institutions. This alignment is crucial, as shared understanding and recognition of leadership behaviors between leaders and instructional staff enhance coherence in instructional planning, supervision, and implementation of instructional reforms. The high mean scores from both groups also reinforce the findings in Table 1, confirming that instructional leadership competencies are “Always Manifested” within the school context.

The slight difference in means may be attributed to teachers’ more frequent day-to-day observation of leadership practices in classroom supervision, instructional feedback, and support mechanisms provided by administrators. Nonetheless, the statistical result affirms that administrators and teachers share a common perspective, which is a positive indicator of collaborative school culture.

Table 3 *Test of significant difference of Change Leadership Competencies between administrators and teachers*

Groups	n	M	SD	t	df	p-value
School Administrators	28	5.06	0.05	34.73	246	< 0.05
Teachers	220	5.38	0.05			

The results in Table 3 reveal the comparison of change leadership competencies as perceived by school administrators and teachers. School administrators obtained a mean score of M = 5.06 (SD = 0.05), while teachers reported a higher mean of M = 5.38 (SD = 0.05). The computed t-value of 34.73 at 246 degrees of freedom, with a corresponding p-value less than 0.05, indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in their perception of change leadership competencies.

This result suggests that teachers perceive a higher level of change leadership demonstration compared to administrators’ self-assessment. The significant discrepancy implies a perceptual gap, where teachers tend to attribute stronger change-oriented behaviors to school leadership than how administrators evaluate themselves. This may reflect a form of professional modesty or conservative self-appraisal among administrators, or it may indicate that change

leadership practices are more visible and valued from the perspective of teachers who directly experience leadership effects in instructional and organizational shifts.

The statistically significant difference underscores the importance of aligning self-perceptions of school leaders with the field-level perceptions of teachers to ensure coherence in change initiatives. Recognizing this divergence can inform reflective leadership practices and capacity-building interventions that promote not only the execution of change strategies but also the shared understanding and recognition of leadership efforts within the school community.

Table 4 *Correlation between instructional leadership and change leadership competencies*

Variables	M	SD	z	p-value
Instructional Leadership Competencies	5.25	0.10	0.82	0.4122
Change Leadership Competencies	5.22	0.17		

As presented in Table 4, the correlation analysis examined the association between Instructional Leadership Competencies (M = 5.25, SD = 0.10) and Change Leadership Competencies (M = 5.22, SD = 0.17). The computed z-value of 0.82 with a p-value of 0.4122 indicates that the relationship between the two leadership constructs is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that, within the context of the participating academic institution, high instructional leadership performance does not necessarily translate to an equivalent demonstration of change leadership competencies.

The absence of a significant correlation implies that effective instructional leadership and capacity for managing change may function as distinct leadership domains, each requiring specialized skill sets and professional orientations. While instructional leadership is anchored on curriculum supervision, assessment literacy, and program implementation fidelity, change leadership demands situational awareness, coalition building, and sustained innovation mindset. The lack of statistical association may reflect a compartmentalization of leadership practices, where administrators and teachers may be performing well in instructional routines without fully integrating transformative change strategies into their leadership behavior.

This finding underscores the need for leadership development programs that do not treat instructional leadership and change leadership as interchangeable constructs, but rather address them as complementary yet independent competencies. Strengthening the convergence between these leadership domains could enhance institutional capacity to navigate both instructional excellence and adaptive change in response to evolving educational demands.

The study assessed and compared the perceived levels of Instructional Leadership Competencies and Change Leadership Competencies between 28 school administrators and 220 teachers in a government college in Zamboanga del Sur. Results revealed that both groups rated the leadership competencies within the range of "Always Manifested", indicating strong leadership practices within the institution. However, teachers consistently reported slightly higher mean scores than administrators' self-ratings across both instructional and change leadership domains.

Further inferential analysis showed a statistically significant difference in both instructional and change leadership competencies between the two groups, with teachers registering higher perceptions of leadership enactment. This suggests a perceptual divergence, wherein teachers recognize stronger leadership behaviors than what administrators attribute to themselves. Correlation analysis, however, revealed that Instructional Leadership Competencies and Change Leadership Competencies were not significantly associated, indicating that these two leadership orientations operate as distinct constructs rather than overlapping leadership behaviors.

Overall, the findings highlight that while leadership competencies are perceived as highly evident, alignment in perception and integration of instructional and change leadership approaches remain areas for further enhancement within the institution's leadership development agenda.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is concluded that both instructional leadership and change leadership competencies are highly manifested among school administrators and teachers, indicating a generally strong leadership culture within the institution. However, the significant difference in perceptions between the two groups suggests a misalignment in how leadership practices are enacted and experienced.

Teachers tended to rate leadership competencies higher than administrators' self-assessments, highlighting the need for leadership calibration to ensure shared understanding of leadership roles and expectations. Furthermore, the absence of a significant correlation between instructional and change leadership competencies suggests that these constructs operate independently, implying that competence in instructional leadership does not automatically translate into effectiveness in leading organizational change. This distinction reinforces the need to address both dimensions deliberately rather than assuming that strengthening one will enhance the other.

In light of these conclusions, it is recommended that the institution implement integrated leadership development programs that address both instructional and change leadership frameworks to promote cohesive and adaptive leadership practices. Establishing regular reflective assessments and feedback mechanisms among administrators and teachers is also necessary to bridge perceptual gaps and foster a culture of shared accountability. Moreover, creating structured platforms for collaborative leadership dialogues can enhance coalition-building and mutual understanding between leadership and teaching personnel. Focused training on adaptive decision-making, situational awareness, and continuous improvement strategies should be prioritized to strengthen change leadership capacities. Finally, institutional policies that promote distributed and participatory leadership are recommended to encourage teacher involvement in decision-making processes, thereby enhancing ownership of school initiatives and supporting sustainable improvement efforts.

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