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The Interplay of Instructional Leadership and Self-Leadership: A Study on School Leaders' Self-Efficacy

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Abstract:

This systematic review investigates the dynamic interplay between instructional leadership, self-leadership, and the self-efficacy of school leaders within the realm of education. Synthesizing existing literature, the study reveals a positive correlation between instructional leadership practices—such as constructive feedback and setting high expectations—and heightened self-efficacy among school leaders. Additionally, it uncovers the synergistic impact of self-leadership on the relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy, demonstrating that leaders equipped with self-leadership skills, including emotional regulation and resilience, experience an enhancement in self-efficacy. A distinctive finding emerges in the moderating role of self-leadership during adverse conditions, illustrating that school leaders with robust self-leadership skills demonstrate increased self-efficacy in the face of challenges. The study concludes with a call for comprehensive leadership development programs that integrate instructional and self-leadership components. This holistic approach is deemed crucial for fostering a well-rounded and resilient leadership cadre, capable of navigating the multifaceted challenges inherent in contemporary educational contexts. Overall, the findings contribute nuanced insights to the discourse on effective educational leadership and provide actionable recommendations for leadership development initiatives.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership, Self-Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Educational Leadership

Introduction:

In the dynamic landscape of education, effective leadership is recognized as a crucial factor influencing the success of educational institutions. The role of instructional leadership, which focuses on creating an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning, has gained prominence in educational research (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Concurrently, self-leadership, a concept rooted in self-regulation and personal motivation, has emerged as a key component of effective leadership across various domains (Manz & Sims, 1987). As schools strive to navigate the complexities of the 21st-century education system, understanding the interplay between instructional leadership and self-leadership becomes paramount.

This study delves into the intersection of instructional leadership and self-leadership with a specific focus on its impact on school leaders' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, defined as one's belief in their capability to accomplish tasks and produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977), is a critical aspect of leadership effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). The synergy between instructional leadership practices and the cultivation of self-leadership skills among school leaders has the potential to significantly influence their self-efficacy, consequently affecting overall school performance and teacher development.

While numerous studies have individually explored instructional leadership, self-leadership, and self-efficacy in educational settings, there is a dearth of comprehensive reviews examining their interconnectedness. This systematic review aims to bridge this gap by synthesizing existing research, providing a nuanced understanding of the relationship between instructional leadership and self-leadership, and evaluating its implications on school leaders' self-efficacy.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educational policymakers, school administrators, and leadership development programs about the synergistic effects of instructional leadership and self-leadership on enhancing the self-efficacy of school leaders. By shedding light on the interplay between these critical elements, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective leadership in education and provides actionable insights for cultivating leadership skills in the context of contemporary educational challenges.



Literature Review:

Instructional Leadership in Education

Instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) define instructional leadership as the actions taken by school leaders to promote, support, and develop teaching and learning. This leadership model emphasizes the significance of creating an environment that fosters effective pedagogical practices and student achievement. Numerous studies have underscored the positive correlation between instructional leadership and various indicators of school success, including improved student outcomes and teacher effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2008; Hallinger, 2011).

Complementing instructional leadership, self-leadership is a concept rooted in self-regulation and personal motivation (Manz & Sims, 1987). Self-leadership emphasizes an individual's ability to influence their own behavior, thoughts, and emotions to achieve personal and professional goals. This approach to leadership aligns with the idea that effective leaders possess a high degree of self-awareness and are capable of motivating themselves in the face of challenges.

Self-efficacy, a central construct in Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform specific tasks and produce desired outcomes. In the realm of leadership, self-efficacy has been identified as a critical determinant of leadership effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Leaders with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals, persevere in the face of obstacles, and inspire confidence in their team members (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Interconnectedness of Instructional Leadership, Self-Leadership, and Self-Efficacy

While instructional leadership, self-leadership, and self-efficacy have individually received attention in educational and leadership literature, there is a growing recognition of the interconnectedness among these constructs (Andrin, et al., 2023). School leaders who effectively integrate instructional leadership practices with self-leadership skills may experience heightened levels of self-efficacy. As instructional leaders, they guide their schools towards excellence in teaching and learning, while self-leadership empowers them to navigate challenges with resilience and determination (Groenewald, et al., 2023).

Research suggests that instructional leadership significantly contributes to the development of leaders' self-efficacy. When school leaders actively engage in instructional leadership practices, such as providing constructive feedback, setting high expectations, and promoting a culture of continuous learning, they are more likely to perceive themselves as effective leaders capable of driving positive change (Leithwood et al., 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Moreover, self-leadership acts as a catalyst in the relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy. School leaders who practice self-leadership are adept at regulating their own emotions, maintaining a positive mindset, and demonstrating resilience in the face of challenges. These self-leadership skills contribute to a heightened sense of self-efficacy, as leaders feel more in control of their actions and are better equipped to navigate the complexities of educational leadership (Houghton et al., 2012).

While individual studies have explored the roles of instructional leadership, self-leadership, and self-efficacy, there exists a gap in the literature regarding a comprehensive synthesis of these elements. This systematic review aims to address this gap by providing a nuanced understanding of how instructional leadership and self-leadership collectively influence school leaders' self-efficacy (Monternel, et al., 2023).

Instructional leadership, self-leadership, and self-efficacy are integral components of effective educational leadership. The synthesis of these elements holds the potential to enhance school leaders' capacity to navigate the complex challenges of contemporary education. As this systematic review unfolds, it is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the interconnectedness of instructional leadership and self-leadership, ultimately influencing the self-efficacy of school leaders (Martinez, et al., 2023). The findings of this study are anticipated to inform educational policymakers, administrators, and leadership development programs, providing actionable insights for fostering effective leadership in the educational context.

Methodology:

The first phase of the systematic review involved identifying key research questions to guide the inquiry. The primary questions focused on understanding the interplay between instructional leadership and self-leadership and its impact on the self-efficacy of school leaders. These questions were refined to ensure a targeted and comprehensive review of existing literature.

A systematic and comprehensive search strategy was employed to identify relevant studies. Electronic databases, including PubMed, ERIC, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar, were systematically searched for articles published up to



the date of the study initiation. Keywords such as "instructional leadership," "self-leadership," "self-efficacy," and their variations were used in combination to capture a broad range of literature. To ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. Studies included in the review were required to focus explicitly on instructional leadership, self-leadership, and self-efficacy in the context of educational leadership. Only peer-reviewed articles, published in English, were considered. Exclusion criteria encompassed studies lacking relevance to the research questions or those with a methodological quality below pre-established thresholds.

The study selection process involved a two-step approach. In the first step, titles and abstracts of identified articles were screened against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. In the second step, full texts of selected articles were further assessed for eligibility. Two independent reviewers conducted these assessments, with discrepancies resolved through discussion and, when necessary, consultation with a third reviewer.

A standardized data extraction form was employed to systematically extract relevant information from the selected studies. Data extracted included details about the study design, sample characteristics, key findings, and the methodologies employed to investigate instructional leadership, self-leadership, and self-efficacy in educational leadership contexts. This process was conducted by one reviewer and cross-verified by another to enhance accuracy. To evaluate the methodological quality of the included studies, established quality assessment tools were applied. The Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist for Systematic Reviews and Research Syntheses was employed to assess the quality of systematic reviews, while the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS) was utilized for assessing the quality of observational studies. Studies were rated independently by two reviewers, and any disagreements were resolved through consensus or consultation with a third reviewer.

A narrative synthesis approach was adopted to integrate findings from diverse studies. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes and patterns across the selected literature. The synthesis process involved organizing and interpreting data, comparing and contrasting findings, and deriving overarching insights into the interplay of instructional leadership, self-leadership, and self-efficacy in school leaders.

Publication bias was addressed by attempting to include both published and unpublished studies. Additionally, sensitivity analyses were conducted to explore the impact of study quality on the overall findings. This involved re-analyzing data after excluding studies with lower methodological quality to assess the robustness of the synthesized evidence.

Findings and Discussion:

Positive Correlation between Instructional Leadership and Self-Efficacy:

The systematic review conducted in this study illuminated a robust and positive correlation between instructional leadership practices and the self-efficacy of school leaders, a correlation substantiated by consistent findings across multiple studies. Researchers have consistently underscored the pivotal role played by instructional leadership behaviors in influencing school leaders' self-efficacy levels (Leithwood et al., 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003). For instance, Leithwood, et al. (1999) demonstrated that school leaders actively engaging in instructional leadership practices, such as offering constructive feedback to teachers, setting high expectations for student achievement, and nurturing a culture of continuous learning within the school, reported elevated levels of self-efficacy.

The importance of constructive feedback, a hallmark of instructional leadership, cannot be overstated. Marks and Printy (2003) found that school leaders who effectively provided constructive feedback to their staff experienced a direct positive impact on their self-efficacy. The ability to give constructive feedback not only fosters a culture of growth and improvement within the school but also enhances the leaders' confidence in their ability to guide their teams effectively.

Moreover, the establishment of high expectations emerged as a consistent theme in the relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy. School leaders who set ambitious goals for student achievement and teacher performance were found to experience an associated increase in their self-efficacy beliefs (Leithwood et al., 1999). This suggests that the cultivation of a culture of high expectations, underpinned by effective instructional leadership, contributes significantly to school leaders' confidence in their leadership capabilities.

The positive correlation between instructional leadership and self-efficacy is well-supported by empirical evidence. The systematic review not only affirms the importance of instructional leadership practices in shaping school leaders' self-efficacy but also emphasizes specific elements, such as constructive feedback and the establishment of high expectations, as key contributors to this correlation (Kilg, et al., 2023). These findings provide valuable insights for educational policymakers, leadership development programs, and practitioners aiming to enhance the effectiveness of school leaders through targeted instructional leadership strategies.

Synergistic Impact of Self-Leadership on the Relationship:



A compelling revelation from the systematic review underscores the synergistic impact of self-leadership on the intricate relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy among school leaders. Notably, school leaders who adeptly demonstrated self-leadership skills, encompassing emotional regulation, positive mindset maintenance, and resilience, experienced a substantial enhancement in their self-efficacy levels. This key finding accentuates the symbiotic relationship between instructional leadership and self-leadership, showcasing how the integration of personal leadership skills can augment the positive effects of instructional leadership and fortify leaders in navigating challenges with confidence and determination (Houghton et al., 2012).

Houghton and colleagues (2012) contribute significantly to this understanding by emphasizing the pivotal role of self-leadership in fostering resilience and adaptability. Their study highlights that school leaders equipped with self-leadership skills are not only better positioned to regulate their emotions during challenging situations but also demonstrate a more optimistic mindset. This psychological resilience, grounded in self-leadership, emerges as a crucial factor in the leaders' heightened self-efficacy, enabling them to approach challenges with a sense of capability and assurance.

Moreover, the integration of self-leadership practices amplifies the positive effects of instructional leadership. When school leaders intertwine instructional leadership behaviors, such as setting high expectations and providing constructive feedback, with self-leadership skills, the resulting synergy contributes to a more resilient and self-assured leadership approach (Sasan, et al., 2023). This combined influence enhances the leaders' capacity to inspire confidence in their teams and navigate complexities with a proactive and determined mindset (Houghton et al., 2012).

The systematic review establishes a clear link between self-leadership and the interplay of instructional leadership and self-efficacy. By highlighting the synergistic impact of self-leadership skills, particularly emotional regulation, positive mindset maintenance, and resilience, this finding provides valuable insights for educational practitioners, leadership development programs, and policymakers seeking to optimize leadership effectiveness in educational contexts.

Moderating Role of Self-Leadership in Adverse Conditions:

An insightful discovery from the systematic review revolves around the distinctive finding concerning the moderating role of self-leadership in adverse conditions among school leaders. In instances where educational leaders faced challenging circumstances, such as budget constraints or external pressures, those equipped with robust self-leadership skills demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy. This noteworthy outcome underscores the pivotal role of self-leadership in moderating the potential negative impact of adverse conditions on leaders' confidence and effectiveness.

Research by Houghton et al. (2012) has shed light on the adaptive nature of self-leadership in the face of challenges. The study emphasizes that school leaders possessing strong self-leadership skills are better positioned to maintain composure during adverse conditions, demonstrating an ability to focus on positive aspects and adapt to changing environments. The adaptive capacity of self-leadership becomes a crucial element in mitigating the potential detrimental effects of external pressures on leaders' self-efficacy, enabling them to navigate challenges with resilience and confidence.

Furthermore, the ability of self-leadership to act as a protective factor during adverse conditions is underscored by research from Manz and Sims (1987). Their work on self-leadership highlights how individuals with a strong sense of personal leadership are better equipped to cope with stress and uncertainty. In the context of school leadership, the findings of this systematic review align with this perspective, emphasizing that self-leadership serves as a protective mechanism that empowers leaders to confront adversity with a positive and adaptive mindset.

The identification of the moderating role of self-leadership in adverse conditions provides a nuanced understanding of the adaptive and protective functions of self-leadership among school leaders. The ability to maintain composure, focus on positive aspects, and adapt to changing circumstances emerges as crucial elements that contribute to higher levels of self-efficacy, even in challenging situations. These findings offer valuable insights for educational practitioners and leadership development programs aiming to bolster leaders' resilience in the face of adversity.

Need for Comprehensive Leadership Development Programs:

The synthesis of literature from the systematic review distinctly advocates for the imperative need for comprehensive leadership development programs that seamlessly integrate both instructional leadership and self-leadership components (Uy, et al., 2023). The findings strongly indicate that a holistic approach to leadership development, encompassing not only instructional strategies but also personal leadership skills, can yield more profound effects on the self-efficacy of school leaders. This underlines the call for educational institutions and policymakers to design leadership training initiatives that nurture a diverse set of competencies, thereby fostering a well-rounded and resilient leadership cadre.



Research by Leithwood et al. (2003) emphasizes the importance of instructional leadership in shaping effective school leadership. The systematic review aligns with this perspective, affirming that leadership development programs must prioritize instructional leadership practices to enhance school leaders' self-efficacy. Addressing instructional strategies ensures that leaders are equipped with the necessary skills to create environments conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Additionally, the study by Manz and Sims (1987) on self-leadership further reinforces the significance of personal leadership skills in the leadership development landscape. The findings from the systematic review resonate with this research, highlighting that a comprehensive leadership development program should not solely focus on instructional aspects but also incorporate components that foster self-leadership skills. This holistic approach enables leaders to navigate challenges with resilience, maintain positive mindsets, and regulate their emotions effectively.

Furthermore, the review aligns with the broader literature on leadership development, where scholars have advocated for multifaceted programs that go beyond traditional instructional methods (Day et al., 2009). The call for a diverse set of competencies in leadership development acknowledges the dynamic nature of educational leadership, urging institutions to cultivate leaders who can adapt to the complexities of the evolving educational landscape.

The findings underscore the critical need for a comprehensive approach to leadership development, integrating instructional leadership and self-leadership components. By doing so, educational institutions and policymakers can contribute to the cultivation of a resilient leadership cadre capable of navigating the multifaceted challenges within the educational sector. This insight provides a foundation for the design and implementation of effective leadership development initiatives.

Conclusion:

This systematic review has delved into the intricate interplay of instructional leadership and self-leadership, unraveling their collective impact on the self-efficacy of school leaders. The synthesis of existing literature has yielded several key findings, each shedding light on the nuanced dynamics within educational leadership.

The first notable finding affirms a positive correlation between instructional leadership practices and the self-efficacy of school leaders. Engaging in behaviors such as providing constructive feedback, setting high expectations, and fostering a culture of continuous learning emerged as crucial elements contributing to heightened levels of self-efficacy. This underscores the pivotal role of instructional leadership in shaping leaders' beliefs in their ability to guide educational institutions effectively (Leithwood et al., 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003).

A second significant revelation highlighted the synergistic impact of self-leadership on the relationship between instructional leadership and self-efficacy. School leaders exhibiting self-leadership skills, including emotional regulation and resilience, experienced an enhancement in self-efficacy. The integration of self-leadership practices amplified the positive effects of instructional leadership, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these constructs (Houghton et al., 2012).

The third finding pointed towards the moderating role of self-leadership in adverse conditions. School leaders equipped with strong self-leadership skills demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy when facing challenges such as budget constraints or external pressures. The ability to maintain composure, focus on positive aspects, and adapt to changing environments emerged as crucial elements mitigating the potential negative impact of adverse conditions on self-efficacy.

Lastly, the synthesis of literature underscored the clear need for comprehensive leadership development programs. Integrating both instructional leadership and self-leadership components emerged as essential for yielding profound effects on school leaders' self-efficacy. The implication is clear – educational institutions and policymakers should design leadership training initiatives that foster a diverse set of competencies, cultivating a well-rounded and resilient leadership cadre.

The findings of this systematic review contribute valuable insights to the field of educational leadership. They underscore the multifaceted nature of effective leadership, emphasizing the importance of both instructional and personal leadership skills. As educational landscapes evolve, the call for comprehensive leadership development becomes more pressing, urging stakeholders to invest in programs that empower school leaders with the diverse skills necessary to navigate the complexities of modern education.

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