



## THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ENHANCING FACULTY TEACHING PRACTICES: A PATHWAY TO UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE

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### **Abstract**

*This paper has explored how instructional leadership can help improve faculty teaching practices as one avenue to university excellence. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from a stratified random sample of 200 full-time faculty members across departments at selected universities. Instructional leadership behaviors and faculty teaching practices were also measured using a structured questionnaire, along with indicators of university excellence. To analyze the relationships between variables, descriptive statistics, a reliability study, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression and hierarchical regression analyses were performed. The results indicated that teaching practices among faculty and the university's excellence were positively related to instructional leadership. Regression analyses revealed that faculty teaching practices partially mediated the association between instructional leadership and institutional outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of instructional leadership in fostering a conducive teaching environment, facilitating pedagogical change, and enhancing institutional performance. The research highlights the importance of investing in leadership and faculty professional development to achieve sustainable academic excellence by universities.*

**Keywords:** *Instructional leadership, Faculty teaching practices, University excellence, Professional development.*

### **Introduction**

Instructional leadership has emerged as a central construct in contemporary discussions of educational quality, faculty performance, and institutional excellence. Despite its historical relationship with school leadership, the concept has been increasingly used in higher education as universities aim to boost teaching performance, enhance student learning, and support faculty growth in a fast-changing academic context. The performance of the educational leaders can define the concept of instructional leadership in universities- the heads of departments, the deans, and the administrators of the various programs- who mentor, assist and influence the teaching practices to make it a culture of never ending improvement (Hallinger, 2011). With increased pressure on institutions of higher learning to meet globalization demands, expand access, and exercise accountability, instructional leadership has emerged as an essential tool for maintaining high-quality teaching and academic excellence.



Teaching quality has been central to universities' success. Faculty teaching practices are a fundamental factor determining whether students get engaged, learn, and get satisfaction and hence an institution performance (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Nonetheless, the work of the faculty in the universities has become more complicated and digital transformation, diversification of the student body, competitiveness of research studies and increased demands on innovation have influenced the work (Black, 2019). In such circumstances, faculty members need to be supported, guided, and provided with the capacity-building opportunities on a regular basis. Instructional leaders are very important because they offer pedagogical guidance, promote reflective practice, encourage professional growth, and help to correspond teaching activities to institutional objectives (Harris et al., 2019). Besides improving the quality of instructions, such leadership also brings about a teamwork and conducive academic climate in which excellence can thrive.

Instructional leadership in the higher education context differs with the traditional school model. Even though the school principals are usually the main instructional leaders, universities are distributed, whereby leadership is distributed among academic administrators and senior faculty (Jones, 2017). At the intersection of institutional demands and faculty autonomy is, for example, the role of department chairs, who will play an important role in determining the teaching practices. They are expected to mentor faculty, carry out teaching assessments, enhance evidence-based pedagogy, mediate curriculum development, and support resources that aid in enhancing instruction (Floyd, 2016). This distributed model demands that leaders should have good interpersonal abilities, pedagogical skills, and they should be able to create the culture of trust and academic honesty.

An accumulating literature emphasizes the beneficial outcomes of instructional leadership on the quality of instruction and the motivation of the faculty. Leaders who offer constructive feedback, demonstrate effective pedagogical practices, and encourage innovation also create the context in which faculty has a higher chance of engaging in student-centered teaching and reflective practice (Hattie and Zierer, 2018). Additionally, studies have found out that the faculty members positively react to leaders who focus on teamwork, offer them a chance to engage in professional learning communities, and encourage teaching based on evidence (Vescio et al., 2008). Faculty members at a university setting usually prioritize autonomy, making instructional leadership a balance between professional autonomy and institutional integrity to enable faculty to be innovative and still uphold high standards of excellence (Bolden et al., 2012).

Instructional leadership is becoming a significant element that higher education institutions wish to rely on in order to upgrade the academic reputation of the programs provided. The quality of teaching is an important element of global rankings systems, accreditation models and quality assurance standards (Harvey and Williams, 2010). Instructional leadership makes sure that teaching activities are in line with these expectations, which make universities remain competitive and achieve their missions. Pedagogical leaders help faculty to embrace the active learning techniques, use digital applications, and constantly update teaching practices- helping to create higher student achievement and better performance of institutions.

Organizational culture also overlaps the relationship between instructional leadership and university excellence. Institutional effectiveness may be greatly reinforced by a positive academic culture, which is characterized by common norms, values, and expectations concerning the teaching (Tierney, 2008). Instructional leaders are cultural constructors that build norms



concerning collaboration, reflective practice, and student-centered instruction. Faculty members tend to participate in the process of continuous improvement, enroll in professional development, and dedicate themselves to institutional objectives when leaders establish work environments where teaching excellence is valued (Elliott et al., 2016). Culture is therefore an intermediary and a product of instructional leadership that strengthens teaching practice that drives excellence.

Although the role of instructional leadership has gained increased awareness, most universities have been unable to put it into practice. Among them are inadequate training of academic leaders, than administrative workloads, uneven assessment frameworks and resistance to instructional supervision in research-intensive institutions (Jones et al., 2021). Teaching is not valued in certain contexts compared to research and leaders have little power or motivation to facilitate improvement in instruction. These issues can be dealt with by strategic investment in leadership, better institutional expectations, and faculty growth support mechanisms.

With the changing environment of higher education, where the globalization aspect, digitalization, and changing demands of students can be viewed, universities require effective instructional leadership in order to remain excellent. Active leaders who intervene in faculty, foster innovation and create conducive teaching conditions can play a significant role in improving the quality of instruction and institutional performance. The significance of instructional leadership in the development of teaching within the faculty is thus important in the case of universities seeking to enhance academic excellence, student learning and excellence in the long term.

### **Problem Statement**

Nevertheless, the increasing focus on teaching quality in higher education is accompanied with numerous challenges in the process of enhancing teaching by the faculty at most universities related to the lack of instructional support, uneven participation of the leadership and strong professional development frameworks. Lack of effective instructional leadership, which is defined as guidance, monitoring, and pedagogical support, establishes discrepancies between expectations in the institutions and real performance of teaching. Consequently, universities have the problem of academic excellence, student satisfaction, and adherence to global standards of quality. This paper thus evaluates the role of instructional leadership in improving teaching methods among faculty and making universities great.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine the role of instructional leadership in supporting and improving faculty teaching practices in universities.
2. To identify the specific instructional leadership behaviors that influence teaching quality and professional development among faculty.
3. To analyze how enhanced faculty teaching practices contribute to overall university excellence.

### **Research Questions**

- How does instructional leadership influence faculty teaching practices in university settings?
- Which specific instructional leadership behaviors contribute most significantly to improving teaching quality and faculty professional development?
- In what ways do enhanced faculty teaching practices contribute to achieving university excellence?



## Literature Review

### **Instructional Leadership in Higher Education**

Instructional leadership, which was mostly interpreted as a role of school principals, has found its way into the higher education as universities strive to improve the quality of teaching and reinforce institutional performance. According to Hallinger (2011), instructional leadership involves activities, which influence teaching conditions, professional growth, and coordination of academic activities to an institution. Though it was initially developed in the context of K-12, the major principles of its operation, which are determining academic mission, managing instructional programs, and a positive teaching climate, can be used in the university setting (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985). Instructional leadership is often performed by university leaders like department chairs, deans, and program coordinators since they are closest to faculty and get to make pedagogical decisions (Floyd, 2016).

The growing scope of instructional leadership in universities is in tandem with the increased expectations of accountability, quality assurance, and global competitiveness. According to Harvey and Williams (2010), universities all over the world are experiencing mounting pressure over the quality of teaching and the outcomes of learning. Consequently, there has been a change in leadership practices that focus on ensuring that the environment is conducive to teach excellence and research productivity. The literature indicates that instructional leadership leads to a higher quality of teaching through the establishment of a School of collaboration, promotion of evidence-based methods of teaching, and promotion of faculty involvement in professional development (Harris et al., 2019). Pedagogical innovation modeled by leaders who offer mentoring and peer-learning communities enhance the ability of the faculty to adopt effective teaching practices.

Moreover, distributed leadership has become one of the most common patterns in higher education where instructional power is not concentrated on one leader but distributed between administrators and faculty (Bolden et al., 2012). This model allows universities to play up on the variety of expertise and encourages shared accountability in developing the curriculum, enhancing teaching, and learning among students. A study conducted by Jones (2017) highlights the idea that distributed instructional leadership leads to a greater percentage of faculty ownership, more collaboration, and more sustainable ways of continuing to improve instruction. Instructional leadership in institutions of higher learning can therefore be better comprehended as a framework, which is non-hierarchical, but rather as a process that runs across academic departments.

### **Faculty Teaching Practices and Professional Development**

The teaching practices by faculty are at the center of influencing the quality of learning and academic performance of the students. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), purposeful instructional design, active learning strategies, and constant reflection are needed in effective teaching. However, university instruction is becoming more complicated because of different student demographics, electronic revolution, and emerging demands of novelty. Faculty members are likely to juggle between teaching and research, administrative and service obligations and to ensure high-quality instructional practices is a challenge (Black, 2019).

Faculty development is thus needed to facilitate growth of employees in terms of the ability to embrace effective pedagogical practices. Vescio et al. (2008) discovered that professional learning communities can play a big role to enhance instructional practices in a situation where the faculty



collaborate, reflect on instruction and share problem solving. On the same note, Elliott et al. (2016) highlight that faculty members should enjoy organized development programs contributing to the acquisition of pedagogical knowledge, the improvement of their capabilities in designing instruction, and the propagation of new teaching technologies. Nevertheless, the engagement in such programs depends on the support of the leaders; institutional promotion and identification of faculty members are not always relevant in this case to encourage them to take care of pedagogical enhancement.

Instructional leadership has a direct impact on the quality of the faculty teaching practice since it entails the constructive feedback, the modeling of effective teaching strategies, and the facilitation of the access to the opportunities of professional development (Hattie and Zierer, 2018). Those leaders who inform faculty about evidence-based adjustments to their teaching practices, facilitate peer mentoring, and encourage reflective practice enable faculty to change their teaching practices according to their needs and evidence. According to Hallinger (2011), instructional leaders provide circumstances in which professional development becomes an institutional practice and not an optional endeavor.

Furthermore, it has been proposed that quality of teaching by the faculty can be increasing in the presence of supportive teaching climates marked by trust, openness, and academic freedom provided by leaders (Eru & Peng, 2023). A favorable teaching climate promotes exploration of instructional practices, embracing of technology-based learning and devotion to lifelong learning. Conversely, a lack of effective instructional leadership may result in inconsistencies in teaching practices, reduced innovation and lack of faculty commitment to pedagogical growth (Jones et al., 2021). Faculty teaching, therefore, is influenced by efforts of the individual, but also by the frameworks and support networks developed by academic leaders.

### **Instructional Leadership Improvement and University Excellence**

The excellence of a university is multidimensional in the sense that it has teaching quality, student learning outcomes, institutional reputation and overall performance of the university. The teaching excellence has been an influential factor in the success of an institution because it has a direct impact on the student outcomes, satisfaction, and long-term learning (Gibbs, 2012). Instructional leadership helps in the achievement of excellence in universities by making sure that the teaching practice is driven towards the institutional objectives, accreditation requirements, and international standards. By focusing on quality of teaching, leaders will instill a culture of high excellence that will pervade academic programs and improve institutional performance (Harvey and Williams, 2010).

The teaching practices of the faculty are also improved with strong instructional leadership contributing to better student engagement and learning outcomes. According to Hattie (2009), teacher effectiveness has been determined to be one of the most significant drivers in influencing student learning and therefore leadership which enhances teaching is a strong lever in institutional quality. Instructional leadership also facilitates alignment of strategy in curriculum design, assessment practice and institutional missions leading to coherent academic programs that facilitate student success (Leiber, 2023). With increased use of student-centered and evidence-based teaching methods among the faculty, universities are able to enjoy better graduation rates, student satisfaction, and better results conducted by quality assurance assessments.



Professional development facilitated by leadership also leads to institutional excellence as it assists the faculty to adapt to the new trends, i.e., digital learning, competency-based education, and inclusive teaching (Harris et al., 2019). Universities with an investment in professional development create a workforce that is innovative, flexible and highly-educated. According to Elliott et al. (2016), it is impossible to attain teaching excellence without the supportive leadership framework that focuses on pedagogical enhancement and distributes the resources efficiently. Nevertheless, instructional leadership enhances the reputation of an institution because it shows that they are dedicated to teaching excellence. In the world ranking, the teaching quality and student outcomes are becoming the most important factors in the measurement of the university performance (Hazelkorn, 2015). Through effective instructional leadership, the teaching practices of the faculty members are delivered to international standards and this increases the credibility and competitiveness of the university. Therefore, instructional leadership is a tactical bridge between faculty development, instructional improvement, and institutional excellence in the long term.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The paper was based on two theories that guided this study and the way in which instructional leadership influences the teaching behaviors of the faculty and contributes to the excellence of the university. The first one is the Instructional Leadership Model described by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), focusing on the efforts of the leaders in three dimensions: specifying the academic mission, administering the instructional program and establishing a positive teaching climate. These functions within the higher education system can be translated into leading curriculum design, assisting pedagogical enhancement, and promoting conditions that promote effective teaching (Hallinger, 2011). To this is added the Social Learning Theory developed by Bandura (1977), which postulates that people learn through observation, modeling and interaction. When applied to universities, the faculty members improve their practice of teaching when leaders lead by example and model effective instructional practices, to give constructive member feedback, and offer them chances to engage in professional learning. These theories combined explain why instructional leadership leads to the provision of supportive structures and social learning processes help faculty to internalize and use better teaching behavior leading to excellence of an institution.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



### Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the role of instructional leadership in enhancing faculty teaching practices and contributing to university excellence. A cross-sectional survey approach was used to collect data from faculty members working in selected universities, as this design allowed for the measurement of relationships among variables at a single point in time. The target population consisted of full-time faculty, and a stratified random sampling technique was applied to ensure representation across departments and academic ranks. The sample size was 200 faculty members. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire adapted from validated scales measuring instructional leadership behaviors, teaching practices, and indicators of institutional excellence. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale to record respondents' levels of agreement. The instrument's reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha to confirm internal consistency, and content validity was established through expert review. After data collection, responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize participant characteristics and inferential statistics, such as correlation and multiple regression. Ethical protocols were followed, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and allowing voluntary participation.

### Results and Findings

**Table 1**

Demographic profile of respondents

Variable	Category	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Male	118	59.0
	Female	82	41.0
Age group	25–34	76	38.0
	35–44	84	42.0



Variable	Category	<i>f</i>	%
Academic rank	45 and above	40	20.0
	Lecturer	64	32.0
	Assistant Professor	92	46.0
Teaching experience (years)	Associate Professor/Professor	44	22.0
	1–5	72	36.0
	6–10	68	34.0
Department type	11+	60	30.0
	Social/Management Sciences	98	49.0
	Science/Engineering/Health	102	51.0

According to the demographic table, most of the respondents were males (59%), versus females (41%), and the faculty members were within the 35 years to 44 years age bracket (42%), which suggest that the respondents were mid-career academics. The highest proportion was that of the Assistant Professors (46 percent) then Lecturers (32 percent) and senior faculty (22 percent). A majority of the respondents were experienced educators and had 1-10 years of experience in teaching (70%), which implies a combination of early- and mid-career teachers. The representation in the various departments was fairly even and 49 percent of the sample belonged to social/management sciences and the remaining 51 percent belonged to the science, engineering, or health disciplines. This dispersion makes sure that the study records the views of the various faculties and levels of experience.

**Table 2**

Descriptive statistics of key study variables

Construct (subscale)	Items	Mean	SD
Instructional Leadership (overall)	18	3.84	0.61
Defining academic mission	6	3.91	0.63
Managing instructional program	6	3.77	0.66
Promoting instructional climate	6	3.84	0.60
Faculty Teaching Practices (overall)	15	3.76	0.64
Instructional design & planning	5	3.69	0.68



Construct (subscale)	Items	Mean	SD
Active/learner-centered methods	5	3.80	0.61
Assessment & feedback quality	5	3.79	0.63
University Excellence (Total)	12	3.71	0.65
Student learning outcomes	4	3.68	0.68
Teaching quality reputation	4	3.74	0.63
Institutional standards/quality assurance	4	3.71	0.64

The descriptive statistics reveal that the respondents rated the instructional leadership, faculty teaching practices and the university excellence moderately high. The overall mean of instructional leadership was 3.84 meaning that faculty views leadership behaviors in a positive way. Faculty teaching practices had slightly low mean value of 3.76 indicating that there is room to improve the effectiveness of teaching. The average excellence of the university was 3.71, which is moderate institutional outcomes satisfaction. The subscales that scored highest were defining academic mission and active/learner-centered methods, indicating that goal clarity and a teacher-centered teaching approach are perceived as strengths.

**Table 3**

Reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) for study scales

Scale / Subscale	Items (k)	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Instructional Leadership (Total)	18	0.92
Defining mission	6	0.88
Managing instruction	6	0.86
Instructional climate	6	0.89
Faculty Teaching Practices (Total)	15	0.90
University Excellence (Total)	12	0.87

The reliability analysis shows that there was a high internal consistency in all scales and subscales. The Cronbach alpha values were between 0.86 and 0.92 which can be said to be good and excellent. This implies that the questionnaire items were always able to measure the constructs of interest; instructional leadership, faculty teaching practices, and university excellence. The high reliability makes the resultant correlation and regression analyses to have a reliable data.



**Table 4**

Pearson correlations among main variables

Variable	Instructional Leadership	Faculty Teaching Practices	University Excellence
Instructional Leadership	—	0.63**	0.54**
Faculty Teaching Practices		—	0.68**
University Excellence			—

\*\*  $p < .01$

The results of the correlation indicate that there are strong positive relationships between all primary variables. Faculty teaching practices ( $r = 0.63, p < .01$ ) and university excellence ( $r = 0.54, p < .01$ ) were strongly and moderately correlated with instructional leadership, respectively. University excellence was also positively correlated with faculty teaching practices ( $r = 0.68, p < .01$ ). These findings suggest that the greater perceived instructional leadership the better the teaching practices that, in turn, leads to the better performance in the university.

**Table 5**

Multiple regression: Instructional leadership predicting faculty teaching practices

Model	Predictor	B (unstandardized)	$\beta$ (standardized)	t	p
1	(Constant)	1.12	—	5.21	< .001
	Instructional Leadership (overall)	0.41	0.63	10.77	< .001

Model statistics:  $R = .63, R^2 = .40, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .39, F(1,198) = 116.0, p < .001$

The results of the regression analysis reveal that instructional leadership is a significant predictor of the faculty teaching practices ( $\beta = 0.63, p < .001$ ). The model can explain 40 percent of the variance in the teaching practices ( $R^2 = 0.40$ ), which is a significant effect. This implies that universities whose leadership is more instructional in nature based on the levels of mission clarity, instructional support, and positive teaching climate were more likely to have a faculty that exhibited better-quality teaching behaviors. The t-value ( $t = 10.77, p < .001$ ) is significant and it proves that this relationship is statistically strong.

**Table 6**

Hierarchical regression: predicting university excellence (testing the pathway through teaching practices)

Step	Predictors entered	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$ (IL)	$\beta$ (FTP)	$\beta$ (Control: Experience)	F (change)	p
1	Instructional Leadership (IL)	.29	0.54	—	—	$F(1,198) = 80.2$	< .001



Step	Predictors entered	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$ (IL)	$\beta$ (FTP)	$\beta$ (Control: Experience)	F (change)	p
2	+ Faculty Teaching Practices (FTP)	.19	0.22	0.51	—	$\Delta F(1,197) = 56.7$	< .001
3	+ Teaching experience (years)	.02	0.19	0.49	0.14	$\Delta F(1,196) = 5.8$	.017

Model statistics (Step 3):  $R = .68$ ,  $R^2 = .46$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .45$ ,  $F(3,196) = 53.5$ ,  $p < .001$

The hierarchical regression outcomes indicate how the instructional leadership leads to the university excellence through the practices of faculty teaching. In Step 1, instructional leadership was significantly related to the university excellence only (0.54, 0.29,  $p < .001$ ). Step 2 (adding faculty teaching practices) also found that teaching practices (0.51) and leadership (0.22) significantly predicted excellence, indicating that teaching practices partially mediate this correlation. In Step 3, the addition of teaching experience a little boosted the explained variance ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$ ,  $p = .017$ ) indicating that the added effect of experience is minor. The model in general accounts 46 percent of the academic excellence variance in universities giving prominence to faculty teaching quality and leadership in attaining institutional performance.

### Discussion

The results of the research suggest that instructional leadership is important in terms of improving faculty teaching practice, which further leads to the university excellence. The descriptive statistics showed that the respondents had positive perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors with a medium rating of faculty teaching practices and the outcomes of institutions. Such results are consistent with the arguments of Hallinger (2011) according to which instructional leadership includes not only setting the goals of the institution but also administration of instructional programs and fostering the positive climate of teaching, which in turn affects the performance of the faculty. Specifically, the focus on the clarity of the mission and proactive and learner-centered pedagogic activities indicate that the faculty see the purpose of leadership in determining pedagogical priorities and promoting positive learning environments.

The reliability and correlation tests revealed that there are strong relationships between instructional leadership, teaching practices at the university, and excellence. In particular, instructional leadership positively related to the teaching practices of the faculty members and the outcomes of the institution, which underlines the role of leadership behaviors on the quality of teaching. These findings support the argument by Floyd (2016), who highlighted that it is academic leaders, especially department heads and deans, whose influence on faculty instructional behaviors is high due to their role in mentoring, collecting feedback, and assigning resources. Equally, Harris et al. (2019) stated that when leaders are able to model viable pedagogical practices and offer systematic support, they were able to provide an environment that facilitated ongoing professional development and improved teaching performance.

The regression analyses also indicated that instructional leadership is an important predictor of the faculty teaching practice. The multiple regression results indicated that leadership contributed to 40 percent of the variance in the teaching practices, which means that the leadership behaviors are very strong predictors of faculty engagement, the adoption of evidence-based approaches, and general teaching effectiveness. This has been found to be in line with Vescio, Ross and Adams



(2008) who found that professional learning communities and collaborative leadership practices have a significant positive impact on instructional strategy and faculty performance. It also substantiated the model of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) who underline that the ability of leaders to take an active role in managing instructional programs and building positive climates can positively impact teaching outcomes by giving a chance to reflect, be innovative, and take responsibility.

The hierarchical regression analysing the relationship between instructional leadership and university excellence revealed that the faculty teaching practices partially mediated the relationship. Although instructional leadership was a direct predictor of university excellence, incorporating teaching practices further enhanced the model, indicating that the better the teaching behaviors, the more effective the leadership in determining the institution's outcome. This is in line with the outcomes of Gibbs (2012), who highlighted that the quality of teaching is one of the determinants of university performance that shapes student satisfaction, learning outcomes, and reputation of the institution. The partial mediation effect implies that leadership is given but not enough on its own, it should be converted into practical teaching improvements to be able to reach new levels of institutional excellence.

These research findings have severe implications on the instructional leadership role in the higher institutions. First of all, they emphasize the significance of mission clarity, pedagogical direction and fostering a nurturing teaching atmosphere as some of the essential elements of good leadership. Leaders who give clear expectations, positive feedbacks and professional development opportunities positively impact faculty and this is in line with the concept of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Educators can use the practice of observing and modeling successful teaching methods, which will be facilitated by the leadership, to implement new strategies and improve their teaching methods. This forms an excellent culture of continuous improvement that strengthens the performance of individuals and organizations.

Second, the research highlights the applicability of distributed leadership in institutions of higher learning. However, as opposed to the traditional hierarchical models universities tend to have shared leadership roles, with the heads of departments, deans and seniors collaborating to formulate the instructional priorities (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2012). The positive relations between the leadership behavioral patterns and the faculty teaching practices indicate that distributed instructional leadership has the potential to impact faculty engagement and teaching quality. Universities can encourage sustainable change in learning practice and outcomes by practising collective wisdom and encouraging teamwork.

Third, the results highlight strategic significance of the faculty development in attaining the excellence of the universities. Faculty professional development programmes, mentorship, and formal feedback when operating through efficient instructional leadership can help them develop pedagogical skills and embrace student-centered methods (Elliott, Lucas, and Stewart, 2016). This assists the greater organizational objective of university excellence by ensuring that the teaching practices are consistent with the institutional standards, accreditation and global standards (Harvey and Williams, 2010). Besides, the leadership approach that emphasizes both the teaching quality and research productivity can help address the underrating problem of teaching in research-intensive universities and achieve a more balanced academic culture.



The outcomes also indicate that there is a positive but minor impact of teaching experience on the excellence of universities. Although leadership and teaching practices are the main driving force, more experienced, faculty members might apply more sophisticated instructional practices and institutional systems, which are more navigable. This observation is consistent with the results by Black (2019), who observed that experience and professional support would strengthen teaching performance, especially in multicultural and challenging university settings. As a result, the leadership programs must be able to adapt professional development programs and support systems based on level of faculty experience so that maximum benefits are realized.

The study recognizes possible weaknesses even though the results were positive. There is a potential to have a social desirability bias in using self-reported survey data because faculty can overstate leadership effectiveness or their own teaching practices. As well, the cross-sectional nature does not allow making causal inferences, implying that longitudinal research would be better to support the claim of the directional impact of instructional leadership on instructions and university performance. The effect of the differences in disciplines, type of institution, and cultural context in the effectiveness of instructional leadership could also be investigated by future studies because such variables could moderate the relationships.

### **Conclusion**

The paper proves that instructional leadership is an essential facilitator of faculty teaching and university excellence. The leaders enable the faculty to embrace the new and effective teaching methods by setting institutional purposes, controlling the instructional programs and ensuring the teaching climate is positive. In its turn, the relationship between leadership and institutional outcomes is mediated through faculty teaching practices and focuses on the fact that leadership needs to be converted into the concrete gains in pedagogy in order to deliver excellence. These results support the relevance of universities investing in leadership development, faculty mentoring programs, and professional growth programs, which, in turn, provide a long-term culture of teaching excellence and institution performance.

### **Recommendations**

- Universities should prioritize the development of instructional leadership by providing formal training and capacity-building programs for department heads, deans, and academic leaders to enhance their ability to guide teaching practices effectively.
- Faculty professional development initiatives should be expanded to include mentorship, peer observation, and workshops that focus on student-centered and evidence-based teaching strategies. Institutions should foster a culture of collaboration by encouraging professional learning communities where faculty can share best practices, reflect on teaching, and innovate in curriculum design.
- Leadership evaluation systems should incorporate measures of instructional support and teaching quality to ensure that leaders are accountable for promoting faculty development and institutional excellence.
- Universities should integrate instructional leadership practices into strategic planning and quality assurance frameworks to align teaching improvement efforts with broader goals of student learning outcomes and institutional performance.



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