



Nexus Between Principals' Instructional Responsibilities and Secondary School Effectiveness

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Abstract

Success in school is attributed to regular evaluation of teaching and learning, an emphasis on professional growth, and a positive learning environment. This study investigated the correlation between school effectiveness and principals' instructional responsibilities. A correlational design of post-positivism was adopted in this study. All 7059 teachers employed by the 347 public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria, made up the study's population. A systematic sampling technique was used to select 558 participants. Five hundred and fifty-eight participants were chosen using a systematic sampling method. The findings show a significant nexus between principals' instructional responsibilities and the effectiveness of secondary schools. Therefore, it recommends that to enhance school effectiveness. Principals should be provided with induction courses at their appointment as principals to acquaint them with relevant knowledge on the importance of instructional responsibilities.

Keywords *School effectiveness, principals' instructional responsibilities, professional growth, positive learning environment*

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of secondary school programmes depends on the individual principals' capability, knowledge, and skills to discharge specific responsibilities towards achieving the goals. These responsibilities, according to Okolie (2015), include planning, funding and accountability, record keeping, reporting and supervision. However, Okolie's description of principals' responsibilities is geared towards managerial roles rather than the instructional leadership roles expected of principals. On the other hand, principals' responsibilities were conceptualized by Khan et al. (2015) as establishing educational objectives, creating a learning atmosphere, protecting instructional time, supervising and monitoring the progress and promoting professional development. Hence, the present study intends to adapt.

Principals are responsible for personnel management, ensuring that employees are physically present and working to the best of their ability (Meyer et al., 2022; Sit, 2015). Principals should be accountable for the academic achievement of all children, their minimum standards at each grade level, for the gifted, and for those who are neither (Argon, 2015). In the wake of the accountability era, school principals become the unexpected victims or heroes of an accountability system from being publicly identified as leaders in 'poor performing' or 'high performing schools' by the media.

Studies showed that principal leadership responsibility significantly contributed to school effectiveness (Bellibas et al., 2022; Fessehatsion, 2017; Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2020; Johnson, 2021; Mestry, 2013; Shava et al., 2021). In other words, an effective principal leadership



responsibility cannot be divorced from school effectiveness (Herrera, 2010; Parag & Joubert, 2014; Pardosi & Utari, 2021). It explains that school principals are hired and retained based mainly on their capacity to enhance teachers to achieve school success. One of the criteria used to assess a school administration's effectiveness is how well it uses its time (Usman, 2016). Okolie (2015) conceptualized principals' leadership roles as managerial roles, while the present study will use instructional leadership responsibilities. A study showed that positive academic outcomes are related to the principal's time spent on administrative tasks at the school. However, daily education activities performed by principals have little to no correlation with gains in student achievement (Hornig et al., 2010). School effectiveness is not a function of the principals' leadership style but of their awareness of and ability to identify the institution's needs (Day et al., 2016).

Teachers' collective efficacy mediates between the principal's leadership and the degree to which they collaborate and promote effective school (Meyer et al., 2022). According to a study (Gumus & Bellibas, 2016), principals who participate in professional development activities, including networking, mentoring, and research projects, more frequently engage in instructional leadership techniques that improve school success. The effectiveness of secondary schools is significantly influenced by the principal's leadership style (Day et al., 2016; Khaola & Oni, 2020; Oyegoke, 2012; Oyugi & Gogo, 2019; Subandi et al., 2022; Wirawan et al., 2019). However, it has been observed that most of the principals are not well prepared for their present job hence, not executing their tasks and roles as expected, leading to poor student academic performance (Bush et al., 2011; Mestry, 2017; Robinson et al., 2008; Thien et al., 2021). From the preceding, it is conspicuous that school effectiveness is at a lower ebb in Nigeria. This makes it imperative for more studies to be conducted to manage this anomaly. Among many studies needed to gain more understanding of school effectiveness and to extend the frontiers of knowledge of the concept, this represents one of them. This study intends to establish the relationship between principal instructional responsibilities and secondary schools' effectiveness.

Research Objective

This study examined the relationship that exists between principals' instructional responsibilities and secondary schools' effectiveness.

Research Questions

Would principals' instructional responsibilities enhance secondary schools' effectiveness?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Instructional Leadership

Leadership means intentional influence and exercise by an individual or a group over other subordinates or groups to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization (Macambira et al., 2022; Nishii & Leroy, 2022). In addition, leadership is the ability of an individual or group of individuals involved in building visions and setting directions towards the activities of a group of individuals by a leader to achieve a stated goal (Duze, 2012; Awodiji et al., 2019). A responsible instructional leader enhances not only teachers' motivation to work but also the development and productivity of the school (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011; Kuan, 2017). In addition to leading, a school principal is in charge of giving teachers and students the feeling of purpose they need to carry out the institution's educational objectives (Boyce & Bowers, 2018; Hallinger, 2018; Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2020; Thien et al., 2021).

Instructional leadership involves collaborating with and guiding teachers to improve teaching and learning (Evertson, 2020; Maponya, 2020; Ng, 2019; Sibomana, 2020). It is referred to as a school principal's role, who develops positive changes and innovation in educational processes and implementation (Maponya, 2020; Othman & Abd Rahman, 2013; Rasool et al., 2022).

The core responsibility of a school principal is to spell out the school's vision, mission and goals, managing and promoting the instructional programme and climate of the school (Manasseh, 2019). Daily responsibility for the safety and welfare of schoolchildren falls to the principals. The role of the principal as an instructional leader cannot be over-emphasized in the attainment of quality education in the school. Principals must uphold the public's trust by guaranteeing that the student will learn and behave politely and responsibly together with academic performance. (Çokluk & Koçak, 2016; Othman & Abd Rahman, 2013; Thien et al., 2021).

By coordinating values, systems, structure, and strategy, the principal, as a leader in the school, helps teachers reach their full potential (Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2020; Mei Kin et al., 2018). Principals act as leaders who distribute responsibility to teachers, give them the necessary authority to carry out duties and hold them accountable for the outcomes rather than micromanaging (Cook, 2006; Daniëls et al., 2019; Naicker & Mestry, 2011; Shaked, 2018). Thus, the teachers will feel valuable and essential in discharging their instructional responsibility in ways that work optimally for the students. The triumvirate of giving responsibilities, providing authority and holding accountability is vital in developing caring, qualified teachers and validating their enhanced self-worth. The principal as a leader taps into the energies of teachers by connecting through their values, unlocking their human potential and increasing the likelihood of success (Fessehatsion, 2017; Shaked et al., 2020; Thien et al., 2021). Principals' ways to strengthen teachers may include soliciting their advice and acknowledging and supporting their effort in assisting students. Thus, this leadership responsibility might produce great school effectiveness (Duze, 2012).

The principal, who serves as a leader, also fosters teacher relationships based on confidence, piety, trustworthiness, and reverence (Williams, 2009; Lumpkin, 2008; Maponya, 2020). As a principal who works with teachers to set clear goals and establish priorities, he builds consensus around shared goals dedicated to expanding each teacher's abilities (Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2020; Maponya, 2020). Principal fosters teamwork by cooperating with teachers on an equal footing throughout the educational process to achieve the school's educational goals (Awodiji et al., 2019; Awodiji et al., 2022; Boyce & Bowers, 2018). This educational approach includes regular affirmation of each team member's input and future benefits. For instance, principals work tirelessly with teachers to identify learning objectives for students that are both reasonable and attainable and to build a curriculum that will help them meet those objectives. Furthermore, principals offer timely, pertinent, and interactive professional development to support, enhance, and recognize teachers' instructional strategies and talents. In addition, principals and teachers acknowledge shared accountability for the effectiveness of instruction and student learning (Lumpkin, 2008; Manashe, 2016).

Moreover, Jones (2014) opined that a school leader is a combination of skills and actions that encourage broad-based participation, which brings about consensus building, distributes shared responsibility, develops influential leaders, and enables groups to work effectively to achieve common goals. A good leader should have personal characteristics based solely on charisma but also on the ability to motivate and bring the best out of others towards common goods and welfare (Jayaweera et al., 2021; Mango, 2018). An instructional leader must possess organizational skills that recognize the complexity of modern schools and focus on defining and communicating mission and strategy in creating values rather than issuing commands (Kwiotkowska et al., 2022; Mdluli & Makhupe, 2017; Myende et al., 2020).

School Effectiveness

The term "school effectiveness" often refers to meeting the specified criteria and objectives (Bastalić et al., 2019; Chen & Guo, 2020; Horng et al., 2010). Effectiveness is defined as the qualities

and elements that support the school's overall operation and help account for variations in student results across grades, schools, and educational systems (Bower et al., 2018; Day et al., 2016; Ngema & Lekhetho, 2019). However, this definition emphasizes the final objective resulting ineffectiveness of the school but fails to provide a clear-cut definition of school effectiveness (Burušić et al., 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 1991; Arar & Nasra, 2020; Bastalić et al., 2019; Botha, 2010; Herrera, 2010; Mortimore, 1993). Wang et al. (2020) described school effectiveness as a multi-dimensional, multi-level and dynamic concept that relates to the context of education, the mission and the objectives of an institution and the specific standard of an educational system. Scheerens (2004) and Arar and Nasra (2020) explained school effectiveness as a product in which available material and human potential are transformed into educational outcomes, simultaneously considering these processes in specific contextual conditions. UNICEF (2000) has adopted a more comprehensive approach to school effectiveness, emphasizing the complexity of education and the need to adopt a broad and holistic perspective on effectiveness. This includes students, context, processes, environment and outcomes as interrelated dimensions that mutually affect one another. Hence, although the definitions of school effectiveness differ, the present authors agree that it is essential to consider all aspects of education in defining school effectiveness. However, the concept of "school effectiveness" might vary, which has sparked a dispute surrounding the idea on a global scale (Arar & Nasra, 2020; Mortimore, 1993).

Studies of school effectiveness have two distinctive aims: to identify factors that are characteristic of effective schools and to identify differences between education outcomes in these schools. Furthermore, characteristics of effective schools are summarised as "A clear and shared focus; high standard and expectation for all students; effective school leadership; high level of collaboration and communication; curriculum instruction and assessment aligned with the standard; frequent monitoring of learning and teaching; focused professional development; and supportive learning environment" (Arar & Nasra, 2020; Hoy, 1991; Mulyani et al., 2020; Oyegoke, 2012; Puruwita et al., 2022).

School Effectiveness and Principals' Instructional Responsibilities.

Several studies on principals' instructional roles have shown the imperative role in school success. According to Sebastian et al. (2016), good principals concentrate directly on staff development and the school curriculum's consistency while fostering teacher leadership to enhance the learning environment. Thus, principals who play their instructional roles will engage in teachers' professional development, promote teachers' leadership and lead curriculum implementation, which will likely achieve school effectiveness. In another study, successful principals create environments that encourage learning among staff and students and improve student performance regarding value-added indicators of pupil advancement on national test and examination outcomes (Day et al., 2016).

A study carried out by Kraft and Gilmour (2016) submitted that principals were helped by the teacher evaluation system's uniform framework in evaluating and discussing teachers' professional practice. Thus, according to principals, the atmosphere surrounding evaluation experienced to change to place more emphasis on professional development and teachers were more involved in the process. School principals appeared to lead mostly through instructional leadership (Gupta, 2016). Therefore, the research on school effectiveness findings implies the benefits of the principal's leadership behaviours for student achievement (Gupta, 2016). The association between teacher self-efficacy and school instructional leadership was favourable and substantial (Cansoy & Parlar, 2018). This implies that principals with a leadership approach that promotes teachers' self-efficacy will likely attain school effectiveness regarding students' success. Liu and Hallinger (2018) established that principal instructional leadership had a moderately

positive direct and indirect impact on teacher professional development. In addition, principal instructional leadership regarding time management and self-efficacy felt little influence. According to Ma and Marion's (2021) study, defining the school's objective and overseeing the instructional programmes were not significantly related to teachers' effectiveness, but creating a positive and significant school learning climate was. In a separate study, there was a weak association between principals' instructional practices and teachers' effectiveness, with the complete mediation functions of shared practices among teachers and their sense of agency in the effectiveness of learning (Bellibas et al., 2022). The results of the study by (Nurabadi et al., 2021) showed that instructional leadership directly impacts instructors' effectiveness and student accomplishment. Together, leadership and teacher cooperation may contribute to school performance by fostering a sense of collective efficacy among all the teachers in the school. Principals' instructional leadership may promote the extent to which teachers collaborate to improve instruction. Consequently, a considerable direct impact of instructional leadership on teacher cooperation was found (Goddard et al., 2015).

Professional development was found to have a substantial direct and indirect influence on school effectiveness. Meanwhile, creating a learning environment and curriculum development as instructional responsibilities of school principals were found to have an indirect effect on school effectiveness (Mestry, 2013; Sebastian et al., 2016; Setwong & Prasertcharoensuk, 2013). Principals' instructional leadership was positively correlated with teachers' professional development, with teacher trust and collective teacher efficacy acting as mediators (Karacabey et al., 2022). In the same vein, instructional supervision was found to have a high indirect influence on school effectiveness (Mestry, 2013; Sebastian et al., 2016; Setwong & Prasertcharoensuk, 2013).

Research Hypotheses

Based on the previous studies on instructional leadership responsibilities and school effectiveness, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. Principals' instructional leadership responsibilities will not significantly enhance school effectiveness
2. Principals' provision of instructional resources will not significantly correlate with school effectiveness.
3. Principals' monitoring and supervision of instruction will not significantly enhance the level of school effectiveness.
4. Principals' provision of professional development support for their subordinates will not significantly enhances the level of school effectiveness.
5. Principals' maximizing instructional time will not significantly promote school effectiveness.
6. Principals' monitoring of students' academic progress will not significantly relates to school effectiveness.
7. Principals' feedback on teaching and learning will not significantly promotes school effectiveness.
8. Principals' curriculum implementation will not significantly correlates to school effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

Post-positivism has adopted this study with the use of correlational design. This involves the plan,, structure and strategy to be adopted to collect data to determine the relationship between principals' instructional responsibilities and school effectiveness. The population of this study comprised all 347 public senior secondary schools with 7059 teachers in Kwara State (State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, 2020). The state is divided into three

senatorial districts. A systematic sampling approach was adopted to select participants. To have equal representation, a stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select the participants across the three senatorial districts, namely Kwara Central, Kwara North and Kwara South senatorial districts and their local government areas. However, the participants for this study were all the principals and teachers of the sampled secondary school in Kwara State. A stratified sampling technique was used to select 186 schools since a principal heads one school. A simple random sampling technique was used to select two teachers per 186 sampled schools, totalling 372 teachers and 186 principals. For this study, the sampled participants totalled 558.

An adapted questionnaire tagged 'Principals' Leadership Responsibilities Questionnaire' (PLEQ) was used. The instrument was adapted from studies by Khan et al. (2015) and Akram et al. (2017). The items of this questionnaire were modified to suit the current study. The adapted version of the questionnaire contains sections A and B. Section A consists of items on the demographic data of the participants (years of experience, gender, and rank). The PLEQ was measured with constructs such as instructional resource provider, supervising and monitoring, professional development, maximising instructional time, monitoring students' progress, feedback on teaching learning and curriculum implementation with 41 items. The PLRQ was based on the five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from Never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and always (5).

The school's effectiveness was measured by an adapted version of Hoy and Miskel (1991). The index is an 8-item Likert-type scale that provides a collective, subjective judgment of the overall effectiveness of a school along five dimensions: quantity and quality of product, efficiency, adaptability, and flexibility. The index is developed using five Likert scales with response options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The instruments were revalidated because of the adjustment done to the original questionnaires. The adjusted version of the questionnaire was validated by three experts in the Educational Management and Educational Measurement and the Evaluation Department University of Ilorin to ensure the face and content validity of the questionnaire.

A pilot study was carried out to estimate the reliability of the instruments, being an adapted scale. This was administered to 56 principals from schools outside the final participants used. The internal consistency of the scale was determined using the Cronbach alpha method of reliability. The reliability coefficient of 0.89 and 0.76 was estimated, respectively.

Researchers were assisted by three trained research assistants who are undergraduate students of the Al-hikmah University Ilorin. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University ethical committee of Al-hikmah University Ilorin. Data gathered from the respondents on principals' instructional responsibilities, and school effectiveness was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0 via Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic to analyse the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

School Effectiveness and Principals' Leadership Responsibilities

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
School Effectiveness	1	.970**	.790**	.812**	.784**	.818**	.816**	.784**
Provision of Instructional Resources		1	.791**	.850**	.915**	.938**	.931**	.715**
Monitoring & Supervision of Instruction			1	.482**	.827**	.786**	.782*	.887**
Professional Development				1	.810**	.831**	.862*	.724**
Maximising Instructional time					1	.760**	.765*	.915**
Monitoring Students' Progress						1	.330**	.827**

Feedback on teaching and learning	1	.540**
Curriculum Implementation		1

The relationship between principals' instructional responsibilities and perceived school effectiveness was investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. In order to guarantee that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated, preliminary analyses were performed. As shown in Table 1, the findings showed a significant, positive association between the principals' instructional responsibilities and school effectiveness.

Further investigation revealed a high correlation between each of the indicators of principals' instructional responsibilities and the perceived effectiveness of the school by principals and teachers. With $r = 0.970$, $n = 261$, and $p .000$, school principals' provision of instructional resources was significantly positively correlated with school effectiveness. In the same vein, school principals who discharge his/her responsibility for monitoring and supervision of instruction will have a high level of school effectiveness with the $r = 0.791$, $n = 261$, $p < .000$. Furthermore, principals who provide or support the professional development of his subordinates will enhance school effectiveness positively with $r = 0.442$, $n = 261$, $p < .000$. A strong positive relationship was established between maximising instructional time and school effectiveness with $r = 0.810$, $n = 261$, $p < .000$. This shows that school principals that maximise class time will significantly increase school effectiveness. The monitoring of students' academic progress and school effectiveness were also positively correlated, with $r = 0.760$, $n = 261$, $p < .000$. This means that principals who actively track learners' academic progress will increase the efficacy of their schools. Additionally, it was discovered that the availability of feedback on teaching and learning was associated with school performance ($r = 0.330$, $n = 261$, $p < .000$). While, a moderately significant positive association ($r = 0.540$, $n = 261$, $p < .000$) between curriculum implementation and school effectiveness was found, as shown in Table 1.

Point 1

This study examined the correlation between principals' instructional responsibilities and school effectiveness. All the indicators of instructional responsibilities of school principal used indicate a significant relationship with school effectiveness. Thus, it implies that the more the school principals execute their instructional responsibilities, the better the attainment of school effectiveness. One of the critical duties of a school principal is to define the school's vision, mission, and goals and supervise, promote, and cultivate the institution's culture (Manaseh, 2019). Therefore, the execution of these responsibilities will enhance school effectiveness. The finding shows a significant relationship between school effectiveness and instructional resource provision among the principals of secondary schools. This implies that the better the provision of instructional resources, the better the effective school. It is logical to think that when instructional resources are readily available, school effectiveness will be enhanced. This is consonant with the finding of Arar and Nasra (2020) that there is a positive correlation between effective schools and resource availability.

Point 2

Furthermore, this study reveals a positive and significant association between school effectiveness and supervision and monitoring instruction by school principals. It thus indicates that principals' supervision of instruction will significantly promote school effectiveness. The school administrator makes regular classroom visits and is eager to support and practice original thinking. In the same vein, literature established that instructional supervision significantly impacted school performance (Mestry, 2013; Sebastian et al, 2016).

Point 3

The result also shows that principal professional development responsibility is significantly related to school effectiveness. This implies that if school principals provide professional development in pedagogy and other related skills to their teachers, there will be better students' academic achievements and effectiveness. That is, the principal provision of professional support and growth to their teachers will promote school effectiveness. The efficacy of schools was found to be strongly influenced both directly and indirectly by professional development (Mestry, 2013; Sebastian et al., 2016; Setwong & Prasertcharoensuk, 2013; Karacabey et al., 2022). Principal instructional leadership was found by Liu and Hallinger (2018) to have a relatively favourable direct and indirect impact on teacher professional development. Thus, principals with a focus on teachers' capacity building may likely achieve effective school. This implies that principals who support teachers or share pedagogical expertise will promote an effective school.

The study also reveals a strong correlation between principals' efforts to maximise instructional time and schools' overall effectiveness. This indicates that the effective use of instructional time by the principal will enhance the effectiveness of the school. Time management is central to productivity. Therefore, how efficiently a school principal manages his time is one of the factors used to evaluate that leadership's effectiveness (Usman, 2016). According to Horng et al. (2010), the principal's time spent on school-related administrative duties is related to students' academic success. This shows that principals who allocate most of their time to instructional activities will likely achieve school effectiveness.

Furthermore, the results of this study also indicate a strong correlation between school principals' monitoring of students' progress and their schools' effectiveness. Monitoring students' academic progress will serve as feedback that will enhance principals' decision-making and school effectiveness. Liu and Hallinger (2018) found that principals' monitoring of students' development had a relatively positive direct and indirect effect on school effectiveness.

In addition, this study's findings show a significant relationship between school effectiveness and feedback on teaching and learning among secondary school principals. Thus, reports on teaching and learning will significantly promote school effectiveness. This will make both principals and teachers accountable, reflect on the school's strengths and weaknesses, and take decisive action to promote learning effectiveness. The school leader promotes and models communication, is open to criticism and feedback, and actively engages in forging bonds with teachers, pupils, parents, and community leaders. The main focus of all actions and choices is student learning (Cook, 2006; Hou et al., 2019; Sibomana, 2020; Wang et al., 2022).

Finally, the result of the study shows that among secondary school principals, there is a substantial correlation between school effectiveness and curriculum implementation. This suggests that the higher the school principal implement curriculum, the better the school achieves its goals effectively. According to Sebastian et al. (2016), effective principals strongly emphasise staff development and curricular consistency. As a result, principals who fulfil their instructional responsibilities will encourage curriculum implementation and probably improve school performance. On the contract, the effectiveness of the school was not substantially correlated with the principals' oversight of the curriculum activities (Ma & Marion, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study looked into the connection between secondary schools' effectiveness and the teaching responsibilities of their principals. Findings from the testing of hypotheses indicate a

significant relationship exists between components of principals' instructional responsibilities and secondary schools' effectiveness. By implication, it suggests that a school will be more effective if more significant educational resources are provided. It makes sense to assume that school effectiveness will increase when educational resources are easily accessible. Similarly, a regular visit to the classroom by the school principal will promote effective learning. Principals who perform their supervisory role will attain school effectiveness.

Furthermore, schools' effectiveness will be significantly achieved if principals engage in promoting teachers' professional development. Also, a school principal who tracks students' academic progress would receive feedback that will enhance the school's effectiveness. Lastly, a school principal who desires to implement a curriculum will likely achieve a successful school.

LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

The respondent's lack of cooperation in filing and returning the questionnaire limited the study. Another drawback was the difficulty in getting approval from the institution's authorities where the study was done. Based on a quantitative methodology, the study only looked at the nexus between the instructional responsibilities of school principals and the effectiveness of public schools. Along with this quantitative study, a qualitative approach will offer a more in-depth knowledge of how principals' instructional leadership supports school effectiveness. Furthermore, because the study only included public secondary schools, additional research could be done to develop a comprehensive understanding of the variables across school types. Lastly, and most significantly, the study did not investigate if other variables, such as the years of principals' leadership experience, educational level, gender, and professional development, moderate the association between instructional responsibilities and school effectiveness.

It is therefore recommended that school principals regularly monitor teachers' instructional delivery and their compliance with school schedules to enhance teachers' commitment to teaching and promote school effectiveness. Based on the researchers' experience, most school principals have no instructional responsibilities that come with new roles promoted. It is recommended that government and private individuals should organize induction or refresher courses for those promoted to the rank of principals to acquaint them with relevant knowledge in managing instructional responsibilities.

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