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# The instructional leadership behaviour of Papua New Guinea high school principals

## A provincial case study

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233

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**Abstract** *The purpose of the study was to investigate to what extent Papua New Guinea (PNG) high school principals engage in tasks which constitute instructional leadership. The major finding of the study was that the principals did engage in tasks which constitute instructional leadership, but the results indicated that their involvement in performing the five major functions were to a lesser degree than was deemed desirable and expected by the principals and teachers surveyed. This paper calls on the education authorities in PNG to re-examine the selection, promotion, training and staff development opportunities for principals in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of principals in their jobs. With the challenges and demands of the changing educational environment in PNG now, more effective principals equipped with leadership and organizational knowledge and skills are required to lead schools.*

### Introduction

An early school effectiveness study (e.g. Edmonds, 1979) concluded that strong administrative leadership was a characteristic of instructionally-effective schools. Other more recent studies (e.g. Wildy and Dimmock, 1993; Rosenblum *et al.*, 1994; Hallinger and Heck, 1995; Mulford, 1996) have also indicated that principals can, and do, make a difference both to teachers and to students, through their skills as instructional leaders. Such leadership has not been consistently provided in schools (Murphy *et al.*, 1985). This conclusion, according to Hallinger (1992), has given impetus to calls for principals to engage more actively in leading the schools' instructional program and in focusing staff attention on student outcomes.

In recent years, the principalship has been the focus of considerable discussion in the context of initiatives designed to increase school effectiveness. However, descriptions of the role of the educational leader have not necessarily addressed what some would consider the more important issues of what ought to be his or her role. Until recently, the role of the principal was perceived as that of administrator/manager and public relations representative, but the present trend emphasizes the principal's role as an instructional leader (Kimbrough and Burkett, 1990; Hallinger, 1992; Wildy and Dimmock, 1993; Heck, 1993).

However, the question of what the educational leader should be doing in order to make a difference in the quality of schooling needs to be answered. It is clear from the literature on indicators of school effectiveness (e.g. Fullan, 1991;

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Mulford, 1996) that no one factor accounts for effectiveness. There appears to be a critical mass of positive factors which, when put together, would make a difference. These factors include: sense of mission, high expectations, academic focus, feedback on academic performance, positive motivational strategies, conscious attention to a positive, safe, ordered community climate, administrative leadership, teachers taking responsibility, parental involvement and system support (Mulford, 1996).

Another source of information may be drawn from school climate and leadership studies. Studies into these areas (e.g. Mulford, 1987; Fullan, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1991; Starrat, 1993), concentrate on the general quality, ethos, climate, or innovativeness of schools; that is, there is a focus on the leader/teacher relationship. As schools are for teachers as well as for students, it is important that teachers' work environment be a positive one.

School climate and leadership studies (e.g. Leithwood *et al.*, 1994; Rosenblum *et al.*, 1994; Dinham *et al.*, 1995) indicate that principals can make a difference to teachers teaching effectiveness and professional growth and the behaviour of students towards learning in their schools. The difference would appear to be significant and is made all the more important since it can be either positive or negative. Emphasis is on interpersonal skills (for example, the need to be supportive, foster participation, and tolerate uncertainty and freedom) and on strong instructional leadership (for example, the need to be involved, to help develop school goals and a supportive learning climate, and to have high expectations).

Strength in leadership and human relations skills in the principal is essential for the development of educational excellence. There are certain leadership behaviours and specific activities of principals that seem to make a difference. As Rosenblum *et al.* (1994, p. 17) reiterate:

Good leadership is considered to be one that facilitates collaboration, communication, feedback, influence, and professionalism in the following ways:

- i) By providing leadership through establishment of a vision and value system;
- ii) By having consistent policies to delegate and empower others, thus sharing leadership;
- iii) By modelling risk taking;
- iv) By focusing on people, nurturing staff members, and helping them to grow; and
- v) By emphasizing the educational aspects of the school rather than the purely technical aspects of schooling.

It is evident from these studies centred on the role of the principal, school climate and leadership outlined briefly above, that school effectiveness is made up of many factors. This study focuses upon one of the identified factors of school effectiveness – instructional leadership.

Instructional leadership is associated with roles or tasks of the principal which include such things as assuming an important role in framing and communicating school goals, establishing expectations and standards, coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, promoting student opportunities to learn and enhancing professional development for staff. Such leadership can be exercised in different ways and

styles; for example, directly through clinical supervision-type approaches and indirectly through policy formulation and the control of the work structure under which teachers instruct (Murphy *et al.*, 1985).

### The principalship in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea (PNG) high school teachers are promoted to principal positions based on their inspection reports as classroom teachers (Maha, 1992; Quarshie, 1992), rather than their ability to lead. Maha also points out that some principals are promoted to the headship position on the basis of “who they know”. The perception is that secondary school inspectors or the education advisors of the provincial divisions of education in provinces, who are responsible for promotional decisions, have a tendency to promote those teachers who are their friends or “*wantoks*” in spite of the candidates’ lack of relevant qualifications or merit. The concept of bureaucratic “*wantokism*” refers to a person in charge of selection or promotion selecting someone from his or her own area or province in spite of the candidates’ lack of relevant qualifications or merit. It is an expected obligation that when considering applications for a teaching position in a school, that the applicant applying from his or her area is selected or promoted over other more suitable and qualified applicants for the same job. This situation has created a great deal of resentment, and in some cases has affected the working relationships between teachers and principals within schools.

The writer, as a secondary school teacher in the PNG education system, observed that principals tended to spend more time completing administrative tasks rather than instructional leadership tasks. Most principals have engaged in routinized behaviours of administrators such as planning infrastructure developments, organising necessary human, financial, and physical resources, directing and controlling staff performances through evaluation and providing feedback, aimed to achieve desired results within the school rather than using their natural and learned ability, skill, and personal characteristics to conduct interpersonal relations which influence people to take desired actions. Despite their good intentions, little of their workday is actually spent handling matters directly related to teaching and learning. In support, Quarshie (1992) pointed out that principals in PNG saw themselves primarily as administrators of the schools rather than educational leaders.

It may be argued that competence in classroom teaching is an essential attribute of a principal; however, that alone is not enough since there are other equally important skills, abilities and knowledge needed for effective educational leadership. Quarshie (1992) argued that effective educational leaders need vision and leadership knowledge and skills including a knowledge of change and innovation, the ability to initiate, invent and adapt, a sense of direction, as well as the skills to motivate and provide an appropriate leadership style to meet the challenges of the changing society. This emphasis in training in educational administration skills highlights the significance of this study.

The PNG university courses on educational administration did not specifically address these needs until 1995. Sungaila (1990) pointed out that in some countries, dissatisfaction with the educational system has been found to be caused by poor administration of such systems which, in turn, is seen to be the result of quite inappropriate professional development programs for practitioners of educational administration. Quarshie (1992) in supporting the studying of educational administration in PNG, stressed that the current and future school administrators of PNG might face more complex administrative problems than their predecessors met a decade or two ago. He added that if inappropriate professional development programs for educational administrators could be a cause of ineffectiveness of school systems elsewhere, then non-existence of such programs for educational administrators in PNG could be seen as a factor contributing to ineffectiveness of the school system. Formal training in educational administration in PNG is important because of the need for personnel in these positions to acquire basic management knowledge and skills in their work. The introduction of the Bachelor of Education in-service program, majoring in educational administration at The University of Goroka, in 1995, was an attempt to cater for these inadequacies. However, the fruits of these endeavours will not be apparent in the schools for some years because it is still in its infancy stages.

The National Department of Education's (NDOE's) *Handbook for Headmasters in Provincial High Schools* (NDOE, 1990), calls upon principals to attend to a variety of duties. Among the many duties, the principals are directed to provide professional leadership in their schools. Some of the duties outlined under professional leadership are in line with the tasks which Western literature on school effectiveness and instructional leadership have classified as instructional leadership tasks.

Up to date, no research in PNG has shown that principals actually engage in these instructional leadership tasks. The paucity of research in this area means that the contribution of the instructional leadership role of principals to school effectiveness still remains uncertain in PNG schools. This study attempted to redress this area by investigating to what extent PNG high school principals engage in tasks which constitute instructional leadership.

### **The conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework for this study contends that the principals can, and do, make a difference both to students and to teachers, through their skills as instructional leaders. Lipman *et al.* (1985, p. 129), argues that:

... if one had to select the single factor that spells the difference between success or failure of the school, it would be the availability of a principal to lead the staff in planning, implementing, and evaluating improvements in the schools' curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular programs.

However, according to Duke (1987), the typical approach to conceptualizing instructional leadership has been for researchers to review first-generation school effectiveness studies and identify frequently cited characteristics of principals from effective schools. Lists of these are then used to generate items

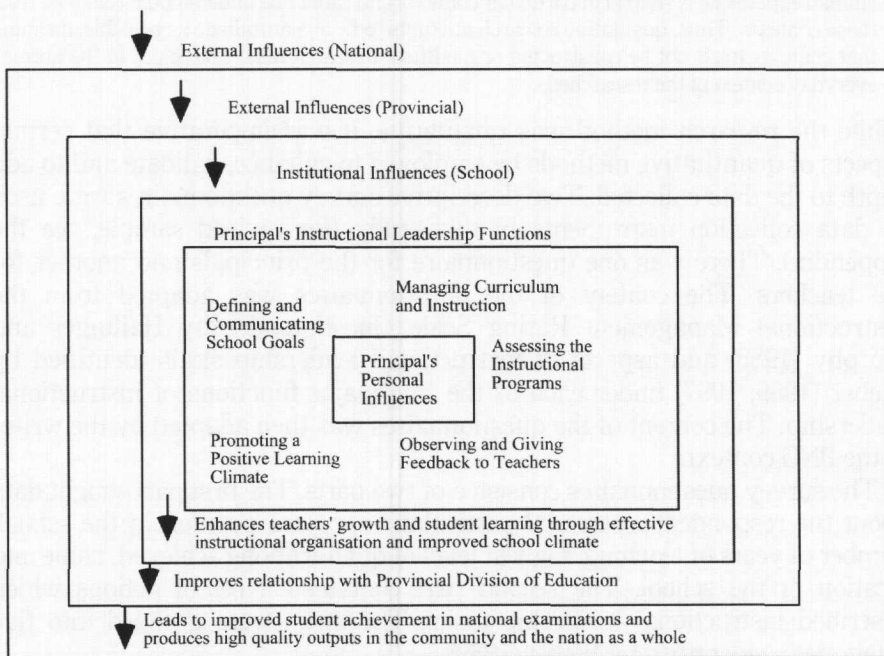
for rating scales or surveys of instructional leadership. These instruments, in turn, are administered to various groups – teachers and school administrators – and further refined. The result is a set of reasonably valid and reliable tools for measuring the extent to which particular school leaders are perceived to manifest characteristics associated with instructional leadership.

The framework presented below (Figure 1) was used as the analytical model in this study to assess the instructional leadership behaviour of the high school principals.

This framework shows that a principal’s instructional leadership behaviour affects two fundamental aspects of the school’s social organization – learning climate and instructional organization. These are the contexts which shape teachers’ behaviour and students’ learning experiences. At the same time, the principal’s own leadership actions are shaped by factors external to the school – personal, national, provincial and community influences. To understand how principals can affect the instructional environment of schools, Weber (1989, pp. 192-3) points out that one must first examine the contexts in which the principal must function:

Principals operate in a multi-level world, working with influences both within and outside of the school – with community members and their interests as well as with teachers, students, and other administrators. Personal characteristics and beliefs also affect principals’ decision-making processes and their styles of instructional leadership.

The conceptual framework places the research questions within five main functions of the instructional leadership role as identified by Hallinger and



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework for the study to assess the instructional leadership behaviour of high and secondary school principals in New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea

Murphy (1985) and Weber (1989). These functions (defining and communicating school goals; managing curriculum and instruction; promoting a positive learning climate; observing and giving feedback to teachers; and assessing the instructional program) were adopted and adapted to the PNG context in this investigation.

### **The research questions**

The research questions posed were:

- Do PNG principals in New Ireland provincial high schools engage in tasks which constitute instructional leadership?
- If tasks which constitute instructional leadership are engaged in, what are they and why are they undertaken?
- If tasks which constitute instructional leadership are not engaged in, why are they not?

### **Methodology**

This study was primarily a qualitative one as it aimed to identify to what extent PNG school principals engaged in tasks which constitute instructional leadership. It was appropriate to use qualitative methods to develop an understanding of these principals as individuals and at the same time observe them in their natural settings in the schools in order to avoid making biased judgements. As Kincheoloe (1991, p. 144) reiterates:

Human experience is shaped in particular contexts and cannot be understood if removed from those contexts. Thus, qualitative research attempts to be as naturalistic as possible, meaning that contexts must not be constructed or modified. Research must take place in the normal, everyday context of the researched.

While the research method was qualitative, it was imperative that certain aspects of quantitative methods be employed to enhance, validate and to add depth to the data collected. Two descriptive survey questionnaires were used as data collection instruments in this study (for revised sample, see the Appendix). There was one questionnaire for the principals and another for the teachers. The content of the questionnaires was adapted from the Instructional Management Rating Scale Questionnaire by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and aspects of instructional leadership skills identified by Weber (1989; 1997) under each of the five major functions of instructional leadership. The content of the questionnaires was then adapted by the writer to the PNG context.

The survey questionnaires consisted of two parts. The first part sought data about the respondent's personal particulars: age, sex, position in the school, number of years of teaching, highest level of qualifications achieved, name and location of the school. The second part contained a set of actions which described instructional leadership tasks. The tasks were grouped into five categories as identified by Weber (1989):

- (1) defining and communicating the school mission;
- (2) managing the curriculum and instruction;
- (3) promoting a positive learning climate;
- (4) observing and providing feedback; and
- (5) assessing the instructional program.

In these questionnaires, respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of one to five the extent to which the principal undertook each of the tasks at the time of responding. The five-point rating scale resembled that used by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). For each behaviour, 5 represented "always"; 4 represented "frequently"; 3 represented "sometimes"; 2 represented "seldom"; and 1 represented "never".

#### *Pilot project to test validity and reliability of instruments used*

A pilot project involving the principal and selected teachers at the Uralla Central School in New South Wales, Australia, was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaires and interview questions used in the methodology. It was the researcher's intention to modify and adapt the questionnaires for both the principal and teachers if the respondents in the project indicated the need for such. During this research stage, the researcher had the opportunity to test several interview techniques. The manner in which the interview with the principal was conducted was reviewed and amendments recommended to improve the presentation. Based on the recommendations suggested by the respondents in the pilot project, the questionnaires and interview questions were modified to reflect the improvements.

#### **Subjects**

Respondents in this study consisted of the principals from the five high schools in the New Ireland Province and 31 teachers who were randomly selected from a cross-section of all levels of the school organization. The total number of respondents was 36. Table I outlines the composition of personnel surveyed from the five high schools.

High school	Principal	Teachers	Total
School A	1	6	7
School B	1	6	7
School C	1	6	7
School D	1	6	7
School E	1	7	8
Total	5	31	36

**Table I.**  
Composition of  
personnel surveyed

### *Setting*

This study was conducted in the five high schools in the New Ireland Province in PNG, namely, Utu High School, Manggai High School, Mongop High School, Madina High School and Namatanai Secondary School. Utu, Madina and Namatanai schools are government owned schools, while Manggai and Mongop are mission owned schools. One is run by the United Church of PNG and the other by the Catholic Church of PNG.

### **Procedures in administering the methodology**

#### *Descriptive survey questionnaires*

First, the descriptive survey questionnaires were administered to the principals and the randomly selected teachers in each school. The researcher allowed each respondent a day to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires were collected the next day and follow-up interview questions for each of the respondents based on their individual responses were then prepared.

#### *Semi-structured interviews*

Second, to cross-check the interim findings from the survey questionnaires, the investigator conducted follow-up interviews with each of the respondents in each school to elicit the reasons why the instructional leadership behaviour of the principal was as identified by the respondent in the questionnaire. This led the researcher to establish how and why instructional leadership tasks were performed by the principal, and identified which of the other staff members shared, or were delegated to perform certain instructional leadership tasks and why they were asked to share, or were so delegated. Permission to participate in the follow-up interviews was sought from each of the respondents before the actual interview took place. They were also briefed that to provide a permanent, accurate and objective record of the interviews, the interviews were to be tape-recorded. This was done to allow the interviewees to respond to questions without any interruptions as well as to allow the researcher to be more flexible during the interviews and adapt the interview to suit the personality and circumstances of the person being interviewed.

#### *Non-participant observation*

The researcher also stayed in each school for an additional day or two days to informally observe the principal at work. This was to re-affirm the validity of the responses received from the survey questionnaires and the follow-up interviews. Summary notes of the daily activities were compiled at the end of each day to maintain records of what had happened during the day or night when the informal observations were conducted. For ethical reasons, permission was sought from the principals to conduct these observations on them.

Being a non-participant observer gave the researcher opportunities to record behaviour as it occurred within the school, pick up "taken-for-granted" features



of situations that were not mentioned in the interviews and questionnaires, and to record the behaviour of principals and teachers who were unable or unwilling to describe it verbally.

### *Analysis of data*

The analysis of data was undertaken bearing in mind the research questions designed for this study. The analysis was completed based on a definition by the researcher of what was considered satisfactory performance or unsatisfactory performance of tasks which constitute instructional leadership. The researcher argues that, if it was to be considered that a satisfactory performance was made, it would be rational that these tasks were carried out "frequently" or "always". It was not sufficient for the tasks to be completed "never", "seldom" or "sometimes" to indicate that the tasks were performed satisfactorily. Therefore, in using the Likert scale, ratings by respondents indicating "never", "seldom" and "sometimes" were considered as unsatisfactory performance, whereas ratings by respondents indicating "frequently" and "always" were considered as satisfactory performance.

The procedures used for analysis was primarily descriptive in nature. For the survey questionnaire, the data obtained from the responses to specific tasks were analysed using the descriptive statistical procedures. For the semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, field notes were analysed using content analysis techniques. The main tasks which constitute instructional leadership on the questionnaires were used as the basis of interviews and observations. After a day's interviews and observations, contact summary sheets were completed to answer questions related to the main tasks in order to develop an overall summary of the main points in the contact. The content of these summary sheets was analysed to create an overall picture of what the principal did in relation to instructional leadership.

The composite analysis and comparison of the data were conducted. The analysis was largely derived from the survey questionnaires, the interviews and the observational notes. These data were analyzed for themes and patterns, which were described and illustrated with examples, graphs and tables, including quotations from the interviews and excerpts from the questionnaires and other documents when possible.

### **Findings from the questionnaires, interviews and non-participant observations**

The overall findings are presented below. Quotations derived from the semi-structured interviews are used to justify the findings.

In *defining and communicating academic goals*, the principals were generally rated as having an unsatisfactory performance. Seven tasks were identified under this function. Table II shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaires. The results of Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 indicate that there was a slight negative difference in ratings. However, there was a marked negative response to Tasks 5 and 7.

Task number	Number of respondents who indicated unsatisfactory performance	Number of respondents who indicated satisfactory performance
1 Develop school academic goals that seek improvement over current levels of academic performance	20	16
2 Develop the school's academic goals in terms of staff responsibilities and meeting with target dates	20	16
3 Use needs assessment to secure staff and community input on school academic goal development	20	16
4 Use data on student academic performance when developing the school's academic goals	20	16
5 Develop academic goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers	23	13
6 Communicate the school's academic goals to teachers, students and parents at school	19	17
7 Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school	27	9

**Table II.**  
Total responses for each task under defining and communicating school goals ( $N = 36$ )

In the development of academic goals for the schools, this study found that 80 percent (four out of five) of the principals developed academic goals in isolation. Academic goals were mainly aimed at improving academic performances of students in Grades 8 and 10 and were not aimed at all grades in the schools. It was evident from data gathered in the interviews that coaching students to pass a national examination was emphasized more than the provision for the entire student body to gain a well-balanced, quality education for the future. The views of two principals highlighted the concentration on Grades 8 and 10.

Our academic goal is to at least score some good marks at the end of the year, and in order to get there, we have been having remedial classes after normal classes for Grades 8 and 10 students, because [students in these] two grades will be sitting for their exams at the end of the year (Principal, School C).

In the past we've been working on a goal that strives for improvement from previous results. Unfortunately, some of our programs haven't met those targets. For this year, we should be looking at improving results from last year in Grade 10 (Principal, School D).

Through interviews it was also discovered that only a few senior teachers were asked their opinions, but most teaching and non-teaching staffs', students' and parents' inputs into what the academic goals of the school should be, were not sought. This is what one of the principals had to say:

The idea of improving our Grade 10 results and to improve the overall tone and discipline in the school was not an idea from my own office, it was the executive that sat and looked at what we can do to improve (Principal, School B).

Most of the teachers interviewed expressed uncertainty in identifying the school's academic goals when asked to do so. This is what some of them had to say:

... I'm not too sure but sometimes from the things he does, it shows that there is academic goals ... somewhere along those lines (Senior Subject Head, School E).

Well, at the moment I have no idea what these academic goals are (Deputy Head, School D).

Well, since the beginning of the year, I think there is no set goals, so we are just working, just for the sake of working, that's all. We don't have a goal to work towards (Subject Head, School C).

These data suggest that a vigorous needs analysis was typically not completed in the development of academic goals.

In the five schools that the researcher visited, there was no evidence of academic goals being visibly displayed in the schools to emphasize their importance. This is what one of the teachers had to say:

Academic goals should be seen on displays on posters or bulletin boards. I have not seen visible displays of academic goals (Base Level Teacher, School A).

In summary, an overall assessment of this function – defining and communicating school academic goals – indicates that although this function was performed by the principals to some extent, it was seen by the majority of respondents to be unsatisfactorily performed.

In managing the curriculum and instruction, the principals were also rated as having an unsatisfactory performance. Six tasks were identified under this function. Table III shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaires.

The results indicate that five out of the six tasks (tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6) were rated as unsatisfactorily performed by the principals. Principals received a satisfactory rating for Task 5 only.

From interviews, the researcher found that this particular task was always delegated to the senior subject heads, the subject departmental heads and the teachers-in-charge of each subject area to perform. The delegation of this task to senior staff members has now become a tradition that has been handed down over the years with the principal mainly acting as an overseer. This is what some principals had to say when asked to explain why this task was delegated to the senior subject heads, the subject department heads and teachers-in-charge of each subject area to perform:

Most curriculum monitoring is conducted by the office of the senior subject head, I only come in when there is need for me and I only will know when I come into that area if reports come in from the senior subject head's office (Principal, School D).

Task number	Number of respondents who indicated unsatisfactory performance	Number of respondents who indicated satisfactory performance
1 Ensure that the classroom objectives of teachers are consistent with the stated goals of the school	22	14
2 Meet with teachers to identify curriculum or learning goals at subject department levels	21	15
3 Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	28	8
4 Evaluate teachers on academic objectives directly related to the approved national curriculum	25	11
5 Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels	11	25
6 Participate actively in the review and/or selection of curriculum materials	24	12

**Table III.**  
Total responses for each task under managing the curriculum and instruction ( $N = 36$ )

Yes, senior subject heads and subject heads of each department. I can only help if they come up with something that needs my attention. For example, like buying of new materials (Principal, School C).

When some of the senior teachers were asked how well they were performing this task, there was evidence of a mixed reaction towards the delegation of this task. This is what some of them said:

At the moment, the principal has delegated this responsibility to me . . . so I'm the one actually formulating the programs, monitoring the assessment and testing, mock exams, remedial classes in consultation with the principal (Deputy Head, School E).

I don't know, maybe he thinks that he has given the responsibility to us [the senior subject heads and the subject heads] and we should go ahead and do what we like (Subject Head, School C).

I see him [the headmaster] as the leader in this area but actually he delegates this tasks to teachers-in-charge of subject areas and they are the ones that make sure that the curriculum is taught (Deputy Head, School C).

In summary, results of the interviews indicated that the principals were in the habit of delegating the responsibility for managing the curriculum and instruction. As a consequence, the rating of the principals in the questionnaire was, as expected, unsatisfactory in the views of a majority of teachers.

In promoting a positive learning climate, the principals were rated as having an unsatisfactory performance. A total of 14 tasks were identified under this function. Table IV shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaires.

The results indicate that in promoting a positive learning climate four out of the 14 tasks (Tasks 4, 8, 10 and 12) were rated as being satisfactorily performed

Task number	Number of respondents who indicated unsatisfactory performance	Number of respondents who indicated satisfactory performance
1 Use term test results to assess progress towards school academic goals	23	13
2 Inform teachers and students of the school's Grade 10 performance results	21	15
3 Encourage the development of appropriate instruction program(s) for students whose test results indicate a need, e.g. remediation or enrichment	18	18
4 Ensure that instructional time is not interrupted	15	21
5 Ensure that students who stay consistently away from school make up lost instructional time	31	5
6 Visit classrooms to see that instructional time is used for learning and practicing new skills and concepts	33	3
7 Reinforce or reward excellent performance by teachers with opportunities for professional development	33	3
8 Support teacher requests for inservice activities which are directly related to the school's academic goals	12	24
9 Actively support the use of skills acquired during inservice training in the classroom	20	16
10 Encourage teachers to share ideas on instruction or information from inservice activities	14	22
11 Set high academic standards for students at all grade levels	18	18
12 support teachers when they enforce academic policies (e.g. on grading, and/or homework)	11	25
13 Recognize students who do superior academic work or exhibit excellent behaviour with formal or informal recognition	22	14
14 Contact parents to communicate improved student performance in school	21	15

**Table IV.**  
Total responses for each task under promoting a positive learning climate ( $N = 36$ )

by principals, whereas eight tasks (Tasks 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13 and 14) were rated as being unsatisfactorily performed. Two tasks (Tasks 3 and 11) had equal ratings of 18.

For the tasks that the principals were rated satisfactorily performing (Tasks 4, 8, 10 and 12), there were mixed reactions expressed during the interviews.

Although the principals were perceived as ensuring that instructional time was not interrupted (Task 4) by 21 out of 36 respondents, one deputy head stated in relation to interruptions of instruction time by the principal:

So many times. One prime example is that we had a cultural day towards the end of term 2 and there was about 2 or 3 weeks [of instructional time] that was interrupted. [During those weeks] we will only find a few students sitting there [in the classroom for lessons], the rest were out preparing for the cultural day (Deputy Head, School D).

In regard to in-service activities in the schools, the principals were seen to be satisfactorily performing these two tasks (Tasks 8 and 10). However, the other task related to in-service activities (Task 9) was rated as unsatisfactorily performed. In relation to the in-service provided in the schools in general, some respondents (especially the principals and the in-service coordinators in each of the schools) stated that appropriate in-service activities which catered for teachers took place. However, a few teacher respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the amount of appropriate in-service activities that have actually occurred in their schools.

This is what some of the respondents had to say:

Teacher in-service – more needs to be done especially when nothing is done in the scheduled in-services in the departments (Base Level Teacher, School E).

In-services for heads of departments could be arranged to share ideas on the administration of subject departments. Teachers need in-services on teaching methods. This is lacking in schools (Subject Head, School B).

For the quality to improve or to reach the expected standards, more in-service activities in academic [subject areas] is needed here [in this school] (Teacher-in-charge, School A).

These calls for more appropriate and relevant in-service activities illustrate that the task of coordinating in-service activities in the school is a very important and sensitive issue. Although, 67 percent of the respondents indicated satisfactory performance, 33 percent of the respondents indicated that there was still room for improvement. A positive learning climate could be created if and when teachers are appropriately prepared to address the challenges in the classroom with creative and innovative teaching approaches and subject content knowledge.

As indicated in Table IV, most tasks were rated unsatisfactorily performed by the principals. One such task was Task 1 – using term test results to assess progress towards school academic goals. Since the task of assessment coordination was delegated to the senior subject head or the deputy head – academic in the five schools, the principals were found to be doing very little in using term test results to assess progress towards school academic goals. This is typical of some of the comments made during the interviews:

No one really cares to use the assessment records as a means of counselling students to improve. Once assessment is over, the marks are neatly filed away never to be touched until the next assessment is added to it (Base Level Teacher, School C).

With regard to Task 2 – informing teachers and students of the previous Grade 10 and Grade 8 examination performances, 58 percent of the respondents (21 out of 36) indicated unsatisfactory performance. When asked during the interviews, 80 percent of the respondents indicated that this was only done once at the beginning of the school year and not repeated or re-emphasized to teachers and students thereafter.

These results indicate that the principals seemed to be isolated from the assessment aspect of the running of the school. This is an important responsibility of principals who need to monitor student performance as a measure of the school achieving its academic goals.

The ratings of the Tasks 5, 6, and 7 showed significant differences as each task was rated by over 30 out of 36 respondents as unsatisfactorily performed.

During the researcher's visits to all the schools and through observations, it was evident that student absenteeism from lessons was a major problem in most of the schools. The problem of absenteeism in PNG schools is very complex. There are numerous reasons why many students attend school irregularly often because of illness, family or work obligations or simply because of the great distance many of them have to walk/travel to get to school as day students. It was observed that some students (especially in School C and School E) made it a habit to stay away from lessons whenever they felt like it. When respondents were asked why students showed a lack of interest towards their school studies, typical replies were:

I am a bit concern . . . with the behaviour of students towards their studies. Right now it is at its minimal, even their academic performance in tests are . . . not encouraging. They do not seem to take their studies seriously. There has been a lot of absenteeism from classes over the past weeks. Students just report sick and do not attend classes (Senior Subject Head, School E).

Since none of the five schools had a fixed policy to ensure that students who consistently stayed away from school made up lost instructional time, it was not a surprise that most respondents rated the principals unsatisfactory as stated by these respondents:

We don't have any program or [have] allocated any time for these cases yet (Principal, School E).

It all depends. At this time we encourage them [the students who miss classes] to come to classes. And whatever they miss out they have to catch up in their own time. The only advice they get is to get the exercise book or whatever notes that their friends have and they try to copy [the notes given in the classes that they missed] (Principal, School C).

When some of the respondents were asked why principals have not ensured that such programs were in place, replies included:

I don't know. These students are just expected to catch up as much as they can by themselves. They probably do it or not. They will have to try their best to catch up (Base Level Teacher, School C).

Not that I know of in this school. I don't think so. It [would be] good that students make up for those times they've actually missed (Base Level Teacher, School B).

Regarding Task 6 – visiting classrooms to see that instructional time is used for learning and practising new skills and concepts, 58 percent of the respondents rated it as unsatisfactory. Most respondents when interviewed, expressed their disappointment in the principals for not performing this important task. There was a call for principals to make frequent classroom visits to check if teachers were doing what they were supposed to do and provide guidance when required. This was typical of some of the remarks:

The positive learning climate could be improved if and when the headmaster visits the teachers more regularly and provides guidance on appropriate teaching methods (Subject Head, School B).

Classroom visits must be done frequently in order to ensure that the correct curriculum is being taught to students. To encourage teachers to better themselves in teaching if they know that the headmaster frequently visits classes. This will also encourage students not to stay away from lessons (Senior Subject Head, School D).

When some of the respondents were asked as to why the principals were not performing this task satisfactorily, the following were typical of the replies:

Probably he thinks that it should be done by his deputy or somebody else. I'm not really sure (Subject Head, School E)

That I do not know but that's probably up to whether he is tied up doing administrative work or not (Deputy Head, School D).

Sometimes the headmaster is not in his office so immediate problems are not attended to by him. Sometimes we do not know where he goes or where he is (Senior Subject Head, School E).

These remarks by some of the respondents reflected the sentiments of most teachers and the frustrations felt by many in relation to the delegation of such an important task by the principal to a senior subject head, subject head, or a teacher-in-charge to perform.

With regard to reinforcing and rewarding excellent performance by teachers with opportunities for professional development (Task 7), the principals were also rated unsatisfactory (33 out of 36 respondents). In this respect it is important to understand the reality of PNG high schools. For one teacher to be recommended for further training and even to be promoted to the next level in the school system depends largely on the recommendation of the secondary school inspector and the principal advisor education in the division of education in each province. Few staff development opportunities are available to teachers in the schools. The typical practice in PNG high schools is described by two of the respondents:

Since I have been here, I had not seen any refresher courses that is organised for the teachers, you know to go out of the classroom and go and refresh themselves. I think this is one of the weak areas in our Division of Education. There are many teachers who have been teaching for so many years, have not been given the opportunity for refresher courses (Principal, School C).



The school has not really sat down to prepare development plans for improving or developing staff because that comes through the Education Division. The Education Department [NDOE] puts out an [education] gazette towards the end of the first term and then teaches [at their own will] apply for courses that are advertised. The application [once completed by the teacher] goes direct to the Advisor Education and he either recommends or not for [the teacher to go] for further training (Deputy Head, School C).

In relation to recognizing students who do superior academic work or who exhibit excellent behaviour (Task 13), the principals were rated unsatisfactory (22 out of 36 respondents). This task, according to interviews, was mainly performed at the end of the school year when students in each grade or class were formally recognized for their academic achievements over the year's work on the schools' prize-giving day. Principals were asked during the interviews to explain why this was done only once a year. One principal said in justification of what he did when he discovered that a particular student's academic results was outstanding:

I do not go to the individual student. I talk to the staff during the staff meeting or call the class as a whole and tell them (Principal, School C).

From the researcher's observations during his visits to the schools, it was evident that little emphasis was placed on recognizing students who did superior academic work or exhibited excellent behaviour either through formal or informal recognition, on a weekly or term basis. Weekly or termly recognition would be one way of motivating students to show more interest and more positive behaviour towards their learning.

The lack of regularity in performing Task 13 may have an effect on the rating of Task 14 – contacting parents to communicate improved student performance in school. The principals were rated unsatisfactory in performing this task (21 out of 36 respondents). Again this was one task that was not performed regularly on a weekly or monthly basis. The researcher was informed that academic student report cards were only sent out to parents at the end of terms 2 and 4 of the school year when the students returned to their homes for vacation. As one respondent indicated:

Report cards are given to students to take home to their parents so that parents also know how their children are doing. If the child is doing badly then the parents should also encourage the child to improve his/her marks in the next assessment (Deputy Head, School B).

However, this seems to be an unsatisfactory way to adequately inform parents. Since these five schools take in both day students and boarders, it would be desirable if the principals ensured that parents were informed of their children's progress more frequently. However, in PNG there are reasons of cost and poor infrastructure (e.g. lack of reliable postal services) which present difficulties for schools in reporting to parents more frequently.

With regard to Task 3 – encouraging the development of appropriate instructional program(s) for students whose test results indicate a need, e.g. remediation or enrichment, and Task 11 – setting high academic standards

for students at all grade levels, an equal number of respondents (18 out of 36 respondents) indicated satisfactory and (18 out of 36 respondents) indicated unsatisfactory performances respectively.

It was evident in all the five schools the researcher visited that remedial classes were developed for students in Grades 8 and 10 classes only and there was a total disregard for remedials for students in Grades 7, 9 and 11 in one school, and Grades 7 and 9 in four schools. When respondents were asked why the schools took that direction, the following was typical of respondents' replies:

Well we are thinking about the Grades 8 and 10 final [national] examinations at the end of the year. That's why only [students in] these two grades have remedials. There is no remedials for Grades 7 and 9 classes (Subject Head, School C).

We have no manpower to spare to start [remedials] for Grades 9 and 11. If we involve these classes in the remedial program, then the work parade system will collapse (Deputy Head, School E).

Based on these observations, it was evident that the teaching was mainly concentrated on students in those grades expected to sit for the national examination. This observation reflected the same emphasis that was placed on the development of academic goals for the schools. Although this may sound unfortunate, the emphasis placed on teaching to pass an examination is the reality that is found in most schools in PNG. The emphasis placed on teachers to teach students to pass an examination overrides the significance of students gaining a well-balanced, good quality education for the future.

With regard to Task 11 – setting high academic standards for students at all grade levels – it was evident that 80 percent of the principals delegated this task to the senior subject head or the deputy head (academic) to perform. Based on the researcher's observations in the schools, 20 percent of these senior teachers took on the challenge and worked towards improving the academic standards in their respective schools. This is what one senior teacher said:

To ensure high academic standards are maintained, we reprimand students who miss lessons or absent themselves during lessons by checking their number of days absent and recommending them to the disciplinary committee. Offenders like those who have exceeded . . . 30 days, then face the Board of Management. The Board then reprimands, gives warning and/or in some cases even terminates students from this school (Deputy Head, School E).

However, 80 percent of the senior teachers have refuted the delegation of this duty:

Academic standards have not been a priority to some headmasters. This is the very reason why standards have been very low in this school and the province as a whole (Senior Subject Head, School B).

In summary, the overall results indicate that the principals engaged in some of the tasks to some extent but the majority of respondents considered the principals to be inadequate in terms of promoting a positive learning climate in

the high schools. In order for the principals to promote a more positive learning climate in their schools and also enhance student learning and professional growth in teachers, the principals need to engage regularly in most of the tasks under this function.

In observing and giving feedback to teachers, the principals were rated as having an unsatisfactory performance. This was attributed to the tradition of delegating tasks and the lack of providing adequate guidance and direction to those delegated this function. Four tasks were identified under this function. Table V shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaires.

This is one of the major functions which needs to be closely addressed by all the principals. The differences in ratings in Table V, indicate that the performance of principals was seen to be unsatisfactory in performing all the tasks by the majority of respondents.

When principals were asked why they performed these tasks so infrequently, most indicated that these tasks were delegated to senior subject heads, subject heads or teachers-in-charge of subject areas to perform, therefore, they left the responsibility of classroom observations to these senior teachers. Others indicated that there was not enough time for the principals to conduct classroom observations as they had other administrative tasks to perform; they only concentrated on conducting classroom observations on those teachers who were on compulsory or promotional inspections by the Secondary School Inspector. Some principals even indicated that their teaching commitments in their specialized teaching subject areas took up most of their time. The following are some of their replies in the interviews:

My timetable and my other commitments do not give me enough time to do things that I think about doing in the school. Lesson observations as I know I've taken on a "sometimes" kind of

Task number	Number of respondents who indicated unsatisfactory performance	Number of respondents who indicated satisfactory performance
1 Conduct formal and/or informal classroom observations on a regular basis	33	3
2 Point out specific strengths and weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post observation conferences	30	6
3 Note student time on-task in feedback to teachers after classroom observations	31	5
4 Provide guidance on appropriate teaching methods for specific subject areas	29	7

**Table V.**  
Total responses for each task under observing and giving feedback to teachers  
(N = 36)

approach. When I feel say within the week I find myself a bit light on other commitments then I do that (Principal, School D).

I put sometimes because it's not been done quite regularly on my part because I have got other things. Maybe I suppose there are things I did prioritized and not this area (Principal, School C).

I have only concentrated on those who are going on compulsory inspection and who are new to the school, especially, people I have not worked with (Principal, School E).

Some of the teachers supported the principals in terms of other priorities, as exemplified below:

He [the principal] doesn't have the time to observe all the teachers. And I see that there are outside factors that influences time for such, for example, discipline. Often he is interviewing students, or he is attending board meetings, or going to the education office to answer appeals by students. So I see that here is too much of outside factors taking up his time (Subject Head, School D).

Nevertheless, some teachers were unsure of the responsibilities of the principals. For example:

Probably he [the principal] has other things to do. I am not sure what he does. Like I said before, sometimes he is not in his office so we do not know where he goes or what he does (Senior Subject Head, School E).

Lesson observation is not done. Most of those inspection reports that they write, most of them are false. They don't get into the classroom to observe the teacher. They just write down what they think. If the headmaster has so many free periods I always question what does he do with those free periods? (Base Level Teacher, School C).

Teachers who received no feedback from principals commented:

No. We never had a post-lesson conference after his observation (Base Level Teacher, School D).

No. He [the principal] just observed me and gave me my copy. No verbal comments followed (Subject Head, School C).

These results indicate that the principals generally did not observe and give feedback to teachers to the satisfaction of the teachers. When principals were asked why, one principal remarked:

It is a general policy in this school that the senior teachers should carry out lesson observation (Principal, School D).

In summary, principals did not actively engage in this function for three main reasons. First, an increase in demand placed by the Secondary School Inspector on their effective completion of administrative routine tasks to meet bureaucratic standards and time-frames. Second, their teaching commitments besides their administrative commitments, left them very limited time for such activities as classroom observations, so that they restricted their observations to teachers who were on compulsory or promotional inspections. Finally, it was not seen as their sole responsibility to observe teachers but was also the responsibility of the senior teachers in each subject area. Therefore, most of this activity was left to the senior teachers to perform in their departments.

Nevertheless, data provided has demonstrated that these explanations were insufficient and inconsistent with the roles principals were expected to perform. From the researcher's observation, it was evident that this was one of the major weaknesses of the principals who participated in this study, since 86 percent of the total respondents reported unsatisfactory performance by the principals.

Finally, in assessing the instructional programs, principals were again rated as unsatisfactory in performing this function. There were two tasks identified under this function. Table VI shows the overall results of the total responses for each task from the questionnaires.

The ratings indicated that the principals have unsatisfactorily performed these tasks. Through interviews, principals highlighted that these tasks were delegated to the senior teachers in charge of subject areas to perform; therefore, they felt that it was not their responsibility to engage in these tasks. This is what one principal had to say to explain his actions (a remark which typifies the remarks expressed by the other principals as well):

I see my job as in two parts, not only am I responsible for the academic excellence, but also responsible for the overall running of the school, maybe running a boarding school. I really have to be fair. It would be good if there were two headmasters or deputies, where one concentrates on academic and the other concentrates on administration.

Evaluation and checking up of the academic programs in the school in line with the breakdown of the responsibility is really a matter of the senior subject heads, subject heads and the teachers-in-charge. They are immediately responsible to that area in their departments. They should be reporting to the senior subject heads, who then feeds me or the deputy about the information.

I do not have the time to be going in each department and sit down and check how they are doing. That is not my duty. It is the duty of the senior subject head. I only do into that area with the request of the senior subject heads' office (Principal, School D).

Despite the remark by the principal above, many teacher respondents expressed the viewpoint that it was the principal's duty to assist or give guidance to other senior teachers in performing these tasks. They considered that the principals should play a major role in performing this function. The following typifies the remarks of most teacher respondents:

I believe that this is an area where it would be nice for the headmaster to come in, actually sit down and review the programs with the teachers. Of course, this is a problem that I have

Task number	Number of respondents who indicated unsatisfactory performance	Number of respondents who indicated satisfactory performance
1 Encourage the use of program evaluation for future curriculum planning	24	12
2 In consultation with teachers assess and revise each grade's instructional program	29	7

**Table VI.**  
Total responses for each task under assessing the instructional program(s) (N=36)

found in this school but the other schools are no exception. Believe me or not but there are many units every year in a particular school that are not taught. For example, I was at [School E] and I covered six units that were not taught in Grade 10. [School A] and [School C] are the same (Base Level Teacher, School C).

In summary, the tradition of principals delegating tasks to senior teachers to perform due to heavy administrative commitments has overridden the necessity to engage in this essential instructional activity. Principals in this study, as the data indicated, have been isolated or have isolated themselves from assessing the instructional programs to evaluate their appropriateness and relevancy to the students.

### **Major findings of the study in relation to research questions**

*Research question 1. Do PNG principals in the New Ireland Provincial High Schools engage in tasks which constitute instructional leadership?*

Yes, the principals in the New Ireland Provincial High Schools in PNG did engage in actions consistent with instructional leadership, but assumed a lesser degree of responsibility than was desirable and expected by themselves and the teachers. This study found that principals in the five schools did not assume instructional leadership responsibilities alone; instructional leadership appeared to be a shared responsibility involving staff at all levels of the school organization. This study supports the notion found in other instructional leadership studies (e.g. Gersten *et al.*, 1982; Wildy and Dimmock, 1993; Weber, 1989; 1997) that not all instructional leadership functions need to be carried out by the principal. The important issue is not who performs instructional leadership tasks but rather that they are performed. It also raises a question of how responsibility is delegated and how it is monitored.

*Research question 2. If tasks which constitute instructional leadership are engaged in, what are they and why are they undertaken?*

Consistent with the response to research question 1, all principals in this study attempted to engage in all the five major functions. However, the results from this study indicate that these functions were performed less satisfactorily than was desirable and expected by the principals and the teachers.

Principals surveyed in this study attempted to engage in all these functions which constitute instructional leadership for a number of reasons. First, they have a commitment to academic excellence as part of their responsibilities as principals in their schools. Principals indicated that their main academic goals for the schools were aimed at academic excellence. However, this study found that academic goals developed by these principals were mainly aimed at improving academic performances of students in Grades 8 and 10 and were not aimed at all students in all grades in the schools. It was found that coaching students to pass a national examination was emphasized more than the significance of the entire student body gaining a well-balanced, good quality education for the future. This study also found that principals lacked the skill in needs analysis when developing academic goals.

Second, performing the functions related to instructional leadership was expected of principals by the NDOE, through the Secondary School Inspector. These responsibilities were laid out in the NDOE's *Handbook for Headmasters in Provincial High Schools*. However, this study found that there were inconsistencies arising from the demands placed on principals by the Secondary School Inspector such that certain administrative procedures tended to override the proper performance of the instructional leadership role. It was also found that two out of the five principals were in their first year of their principal positions with no official training in the tasks they were expected to perform in two big schools, one in an urban school and the other in a rural school.

*Research question 3. If tasks which constitute instructional leadership are not engaged in, why are they not?*

This study found that the principals surveyed performed unsatisfactorily in all functions but in three out of the five major functions (managing the curriculum and instruction; observing and giving feedback to teachers; and assessing the instructional programs) the negative results were statistically significant. In these three functions, principals were perceived to be least involved as these functions, which, according to the principals, were delegated to senior teachers (i.e. deputy heads, senior subject heads, subject heads and teachers-in-charge) of subject areas to perform. This conclusion is not surprising, given the increasingly broad administrative role that principals are expected to play in the schools nowadays. Principals are extremely busy performing many pressing tasks such as meeting with parents, fielding queries or problems from the provincial education office, dealing with students' discipline troubles, coordinating care of the school buildings and grounds, and handling subject department relationships, just to name a few. The principals' involvement in numerous tasks often leave him or her with limited time to attend to matters related to instructional leadership. However, this raises the question of responsibility. In schools it is generally considered that the question of responsibility is always with the principal. If he or she delegates responsibility for something, he or she is still responsible for seeing that it is done properly.

This study also found that the principals themselves placed more emphasis on their administrative tasks as laid out in official NDOE documents on procedures for headmasters at the expense of their instructional leadership role. In addition, the principals' involvement in subject teaching teams and actual classroom teaching, as well as their heavy administrative responsibilities, restricted the time available for them to perform instructional leadership functions.

Furthermore, this study found that the principals were dissatisfied with the lack of training or guidance in the functions related to the instructional leadership provided by the NDOE, the Provincial Education Division and The University of Goroka's Faculty of Education. The lack of appropriate training

for principals to carry out their role as instructional leaders resulted in their lack of commitment to these tasks. Under pressure, principals delegated these tasks to senior teachers, although support was not given nor was there evidence of monitoring this responsibility. In most cases, it was found that senior teachers were left in isolation to handle the functions which were beyond their own professional training, experience and capabilities. In some schools, teachers in their first year of teaching were even acting as teachers-in-charge of core subject areas.

### **Implications for theory**

This study attempted to redress the limitation in relation to research into the instructional leadership behaviour of principals by investigating to what extent high school principals in the New Ireland Province of PNG engaged in tasks which constitute instructional leadership. In this way it is a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the school leadership role of the principal in PNG.

Two main contributions to the knowledge and understanding of the instructional leadership role of principals emerged from this study. These were:

- (1) The changing role of the school principal. It is expanding and becoming more demanding due to the emergence of a new educational environment.
- (2) Instructional leadership is shared by all in a school organization.

These contributions will now be discussed in detail.

### *Role changes of the school principal*

The reformed process in PNG has involved a radical re-structuring of the education system; the re-structuring of the education system forms the basis of the reform agenda. The broad aims of this agenda are to improve access, equity, and the quality of education. A three-year elementary school structure, which includes Grades 1 and 2, where children are taught in local vernaculars in schools that are located within the villages, has been introduced, and Grades 7 and 8 have been moved from provincial high school to a re-organized primary school structure that caters for Grades 3 to 8. Secondary schools have been created and now provide education from Grades 9 to 12; whereas previously, provincial high schools had Grades 7 to 10 and national high schools had Grades 11 and 12. Although all provinces in PNG have now commenced the reform, for the time being, the reforms run parallel with the former system. This means that community schools as well as provincial high schools continue to exist.

The role of the principal as an administrator has changed in PNG in the 1990s and into the new millennium because of the emergence of a new educational environment created by the introduction of the reformed educational system since 1993. The nature of the principals' work has changed considerably to cater for the broad aims of the re-structuring of the education



system in order to improve access, equity and the quality of education. The changes have placed pressure on the principals to accept new responsibilities, especially when considering the emphasis placed on increased community participation in the running of the schools, which has also increased time spent by principals and other school staff on community liaison. Principals are expected to perform a key role as the mediators between the community and the school organization.

Another major change in the implementation of this reforms is the expectation by the NDOE that school principals, both in primary and secondary schools, implement the Grades 7 and 8 and Grades 11 and 12 curriculum in their respective schools. An important point to understand is that these principals were not trained to deal with curriculum issues at these levels as they were Community Teachers' College- or Goroka Teachers' College-trained personnel, who have been appointed over the years to be heads of these schools in the previous education structure. The demands that have now been placed on these principals appears unrealistic to say the least. Some or most of these major changes have occurred and imposed upon schools without appropriate training and preparation of personnel, including the principals, who are expected to implement them.

#### *Shared instructional leadership*

This study found that in the five high schools surveyed, principals did not perceive that they bore sole or major responsibility for instructional leadership tasks, but shared the responsibility with other staff at all levels of the school organization. This finding supported the notion that not all instructional leadership functions need to be carried out by the principal, but rather that they can be shared (Wildy and Dimmock, 1993; Weber, 1989; 1997). However, this study revealed that although there was evidence of shared instructional leadership, the expected leadership follow-up through the provision of technical and personal support, professional direction and the monitoring of the responsibilities delegated, was unsatisfactorily performed by the principals.

While this may be so, Weber (1989, p. 255), warns that:

Shared leadership does not mean an absence of leadership. What research has been showing conclusively, it should be noted, is that where teachers are brought into more leadership roles, only a fully collaborative effort between principal and teachers will produce effective instruction. Where principals give teachers full administrative responsibilities in a school, without the benefit of information, active participation, or cooperation, mistakes will be made and wheels reinvented.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the principal is still the leader of the school and must be held responsible for seeing that support, direction and guidance are given to teachers. Gurr (1996, p. 229) supports Weber's point by reiterating that:

The principal is responsible for the standard of instruction and relies heavily on delegation of tasks and responsibilities to others to supervise the instructional process. Here the principal's

leadership is one of monitoring what is happening and participating in setting directions for the delegated roles.

The warnings of Weber and Gurr seem to point out that it is essential that the principals devote resources to nurture teachers, communicate expectations, give technical and personal support, and supervise, recognize and reward high-quality teaching and leadership performance. In PNG, it appears that teachers are rarely publicly recognized by the principals for their outstanding efforts or performance in teaching and leadership. This attitude has forced most teachers to teach year in year out without performing the real tasks of education.

### **Implications for practice**

With the implementation of the new educational reform in PNG, the nature of school leadership is undergoing significant change. Principals, in particular, need new kinds of knowledge, attitudes and skills to perform their work effectively and efficiently. The change in emphasis through the reforms justifies the need to re-examine the appropriateness, relevancy and applicability of the training and preparation provided for beginning and practising principals. The administrative preparation of school leaders needs to be re-assessed by the different authorities in PNG, including The University of Goroka's Faculty of Education, the NDOE, together with the Divisions of Education in Provinces and the Inspectorial Division. It is essential that beginning as well as practising principals are well-prepared with appropriate and relevant administrative and leadership knowledge, skills and attitudes to face the practical demands and challenges of the role that they perform in the schools.

This means that the selection and promotion procedures for principals in schools need to be re-examined. In this study, two of the principals surveyed were in their first year as principals in two large schools and it was evident that they were not coping with the heavy responsibilities entrusted to them. This calls for more qualified and experienced personnel to be promoted to occupy headship positions when they become vacant. Promotion or selection of principals based on an assessment of classroom competency alone is inadequate. Competencies in leadership and organizational knowledge and skills among other appropriate qualities should also be included in the criteria for selection and promotion in order to ensure that the beginning principals have sound knowledge and skills in educational administration.

The implications of the re-examination of the selection and promotion procedures for principals are that when prospective principals are appointed, the system of mentoring should be mandatory for the purpose of providing a proper induction into the responsibilities that they are expected to perform. The mentor in this case, could be a practising principal, whom the beginning principal will have regular contact with and listen to when they carry out mentoring activities in the schools. Mentoring, as defined by Lashway and Anderson (1997), refers to the pairing of a veteran principal with an intending

principal in a sort of “buddy system”. According to Parks (1991, cited in Lashway and Anderson, 1997, p. 92), the possible roles of mentor is:

Teaching leadership and management skills, nurturing the development of educational values, guiding the acquisition of political savvy, counseling in times of trouble, nourishing creativity, assisting with securing the first job, and advising on career, job, and personal decisions. All this is done in an atmosphere of genuine caring for the learner.

However, Anderson (1991, cited in Lashway and Anderson, 1997, p. 93), cautions that schools have to be very careful in selecting and training of mentor principals. This also calls into question the process/criteria of selection of such important personnel. Mentoring requires a delicate balance between giving advice and encouraging initiative:

Untrained mentors may simply pass on ineffective practices to new principals, perpetuating traditional processes and norms that may need to change. Effective mentors, therefore, must not tell beginning principals what they should do, but instead guide newcomers so that they are able to make their own decisions, based on a thorough understanding of the potential consequences of their choices.

An experienced practising principal with training in educational administration appears to be the best candidate for this role of mentor. But as stated by Anderson, the appointed mentor must not tell the beginning principal what he/she should do, but guide the beginning principal so that he/she is able to make his/her own decisions and learn from his/her own hands-on experience.

### **Recommendations**

A number of problems were identified as central to the successful implementation by principals of the instructional leadership role in PNG schools. The study revealed that the need for training and staff development of principals in educational administration, selection and promotion procedures of principals to be re-examined with the possible introduction of a mentoring system to properly induct beginning principals into their jobs.

The implications for practice are that action needs to be taken in order to attempt to overcome the problems. Table VII summarizes some possible actions and resultant benefits.

### **Suggestions for further research**

In gathering data for this study it became evident that research into the role of the school principal had been largely neglected in PNG. There is a need to conduct further research on this intriguing and important area to improve the understanding and appreciation of the demands and challenges principals nowadays are expected to perform as well as to address and equip the principals for the emerging educational environment.

Since PNG is divided into four main regions – New Guinea Islands, Momase, Highlands, and Southern (Papua), it is advisable that further case studies be conducted in selected provinces in these four regions to find out if similar

Identified problems	Suggested actions	Foreseeable benefits
Inadequate preparation of intending or practising principals and the limited staff development opportunities on site or elsewhere in PNG	<p>Develop skills, attitudes and administrative and leadership knowledge development programs to enhance performance of principals on the job or before taking up headship positions</p> <p>Increase technical and personnel support from NDOE, the Provincial Education Division, the Inspectorial Division and the University of Goroka – Faculty of Education</p> <p>Allow principals in schools to become non-teaching staff members</p> <p>Create an extra teaching position in each school to replace the vacant teaching position left by the principal</p>	<p>Better understanding of the roles that principals are expected to perform</p> <p>Greater readiness to accept educational changes as they come about</p> <p>Increased productivity and effective working attitudes and relationships among teachers</p>
Inconsistencies in selecting and promoting personnel to headship positions	<p>NDOE, Provincial Education Division, the Inspectorial Division and The University of Goroka's Faculty of Education to re-examine the selection and promotion procedures for the appointment of principals in high and secondary schools</p> <p>Intending principals should be promoted based on qualifications, experience and inspection reports with emphasis on an assessment of leadership and organizational competencies</p> <p>Introduction of a mentoring system to help induct beginning principals to the roles expected of them before being promoted to head a school by themselves</p>	<p>Management of schools will improve if the right persons with the right qualities that meet the selection criteria are promoted to headship positions</p> <p>Increased credibility of the personnel taking up the headship position thereby limiting opposition and resistance by teachers</p> <p>Teachers become more responsive and respectful towards the personnel occupying the headship position in the school</p> <p>Reduce isolation of new principals by providing regular contact with experienced peers</p> <p>Principals reflect on their job – what is happening and why</p> <p>Provides systematic orientation of policies and procedures (official and unofficial)</p> <p>Provide regular feedback on the new principal's performance</p>

**Table VII.**  
Identified problems,  
suggested actions and  
foreseeable benefits

results would be replicated. This could then be expanded to a national study to investigate the whole situation in PNG in regard to how the educational reform has affected the role of the principal.

In PNG, the concept of mentoring is new and further research needs to be carried out in order to find out its appropriateness and effectiveness in PNG schools. Issues related to the “buddy” system in the socio-cultural context of PNG also needs to be investigated.

In addition, the role and responsibilities of the Secondary School Inspector needs to be investigated. A change in the role and responsibilities of inspectors in schools from a traditional inspectorial emphasis to a more facilitative and supportive role could also be investigated. Research into the suggested change may provide practical implications for improvement in the performances of principals in the schools.

### Conclusion

The environment in which education is taking place in PNG in the 1990s and into the new millennium, is both qualitatively and quantitatively different from that which existed in previous decades. PNG now needs more effective school principals with a vision and with leadership and organizational knowledge and skills, including a knowledge of change and innovation, the ability to initiate, invent and adapt and a sense of direction, as well as the skills to motivate and provide appropriate leadership styles to meet the challenges and demands of the changing educational environment.

This study into the instructional leadership behaviour of PNG high school principals in the New Ireland Province, found conclusively that the principals' involvement in performing the five major functions of instructional leadership were performed to a lesser degree than was deemed desirable and expected by the principals and the teachers surveyed. There was evidence of shared leadership in all schools; however, the monitoring and the support given in setting directions for the delegated roles were unsatisfactorily performed by the principals to meet the expectations of the teachers who were delegated the responsibilities. It is important that the principals devote resources to nurture teachers, communicate expectations, give technical and personal support, and supervise, recognize and reward high quality teaching and leadership performance.

It may be concluded that in order to understand and appreciate the changing and demanding role of the principal, there needs to be an understanding and knowledge of the changing educational environment. This study calls on the NDOE, Provincial Education Division, the Inspectorial Division and The University of Goroka's Faculty of Education to re-examine the selection, promotion, training and staff development opportunities and investigate the possible introduction of the mentoring system to enhance or improve the efficiency and effectiveness of beginning principals in their struggle to meet the expectations entrusted to them.

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**Appendix. Principal's action and behaviour questionnaire (for principals and teachers)**

**PART 1**

Please provide the following information.

- A. Name of School : \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Location of School : Urban/Semi Urban/Rural (circle one)
- C. Level of School : \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Your position in the School : \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Sex : \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Age : \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Years of experience as a principal or teacher at the end of this school year : \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Years working with the current principal at the end of this school year (for teachers only) : \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Teacher Training : \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of College/University attended : \_\_\_\_\_
- Qualification attained : \_\_\_\_\_
- Years attended : \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2**

Please read each statement carefully and circle the number that best indicates how your principal has demonstrated the specific behaviour.

For each behaviour, 1 represents "never", 2 represents "seldom", 3 represents "sometimes", 4 represents "frequently", and 5 represents "always".

**PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION.**

**I. DEFINING AND COMMUNICATING THE SCHOOL GOALS**

Do you as principal .....?

Does your principal .....?

	Tasks	N	Se	So	Fr	A
1.	Develop school academic goals that seek improvement over current levels of academic performance	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Develop academic goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Communicate the school's academic goals to teachers, students and parents at school	1	2	3	4	5



II. MANAGING THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Do you as principal.....?

Does your principal.....?

	Tasks	N	Se	So	Fr	A
4.	Ensure that the classroom objectives of teachers are consistent with the stated academic goals of the school	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Evaluate teachers on academic objectives directly related to the approved national curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Participate actively in the review and/or selection of curricular materials	1	2	3	4	5

III. PROMOTING A POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATE

Do you as principal.....?

Does your principal.....?

	Tasks	N	Se	So	Fr	A
8.	Encourage the development of appropriate instructional program(s) for students whose test results indicate a need, e.g. remediation or enrichment	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Reinforce or reward excellent performance by teachers with opportunities for professional development	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Support teacher requests for in-service activities which are directly related to the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Set high academic standards for students at all grade levels	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Recognize students who do superior academic work or exhibit excellent behaviour with formal or informal recognition	1	2	3	4	5

IV. OBSERVING AND GIVING FEEDBACK TO TEACHERS

Do you as principal.....?

Does your principal.....?

	Tasks	N	Se	So	Fr	A
13.	Conduct formal and/or informal classroom observations on a regular basis	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Point out specific strengths and weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post observation conferences	1	2	3	4	5

V. ASSESSING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Do you as principal.....?

Does your principal.....?

	Tasks	N	Se	So	Fr	A
15.	Encourage the use of program evaluation for future curriculum planning	1	2	3	4	5
16.	In consultation with teachers assess and revise each grade's instructional program	1	2	3	4	5

Feel free to make comments on the above or any aspect of the school life below.