

# Measuring valuable antecedents of instructional leadership in educational organisations

*by Wildansyah Lubis*



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**Abstract:** On the contrary to business organisation, several researchers argue that instructional leadership is the most appropriate style for educational organisations. This study aims to investigate: (1) the effect of resource capacity, quality management, and communication on trust; and (2) the influence of trust on instructional leadership. This study was conducted using a survey method on high school teachers in North Sumatera, Indonesia. Using a purposive sampling technique, researchers collected 352 responses which were then analysed using SEM-PLS. From three antecedents, communication was found as the most significant antecedent to explain trust between staff. Furthermore, trust has a substantial impact on Instructional Leadership.

**Keywords:** leadership; instructional; effective school; organisational culture.

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## 1 Introduction

The practices of leadership in educational organisations are directed to maximise the function of educational organisations, which in turn will contribute to students' academic achievement (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2016; Li et al., 2016). Therefore, the power of the principal must be able to directly or indirectly control academic services in schools, such as administration, teaching and learning activities, extracurricular activities, to ensure that students experience quality learning (Bush, 2016).

In the previous study (Sagala et al., 2019), researchers have found that instructional leadership is the important factor in the principal leadership set of construct. Interestingly, that finding was in line with several educational leadership studies which argue that the instructional leadership was crucial for school leader to achieve school effectiveness (Hallinger, 2010; Bamberg and Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Dwyer, 1986; Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982). Indeed, several

studies argue that principals who practiced instructional leadership have a better positive impact on student achievement than principals who practiced other styles of leadership (Hallinger, 2010; Heck and Hallinger, 2009; Louis et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2008).

In the instructional leadership role, a principal tends to be highly directive in their leadership styles and using leadership as a driver to move the school through a productive activity (Hallinger, 2010). On one hand, direction sounds as binding the creativity of a teacher because it give the principal a strong and dominant role to determine school goal and drive the school's strategy (see Hallinger, 2010; Horng and Loeb, 2010; Robinson et al., 2008). On the other hand, however, school leaders have goal orientation, so they modelled their high expectations and are unwilling to compromise their high standards (Hallinger, 2010). Those conditions were appropriate with the core function of leadership practices in order to maximise the function of the organisation (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Harris, 2004; Leithwood, 2016; Li et al., 2016). Horng and Loeb (2010) argued that the principal's instructions were not aimed to increase student's achievement, but strengthen the functions of school organisations. The functions of school organisations can be in the form of developing human resource capacity, developing regulations, revitalising research, involving teachers in the community of practice, and developing collaboration (Horng and Loeb, 2010; Horng et al., 2010; Blase and Blase, 1999; Murphy et al., 1982). However, there are only a small number of studies which explicitly examined the antecedents, which can maximise the effectiveness of instructional leadership. Therefore, this study aims to investigate alternative antecedents that can maximise the implementation of a principal's instructional leadership. The alternative antecedents were adapted from principal leadership and school capacity construct (Li et al., 2016) which have a similarity of context with the successful indicators of instructional leadership proposed by previous studies (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Robinson et al., 2008; Robinson, 2010).

Hallinger and Murphy (1985), in Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), proposed that instructional leadership should concern on at least the following three-dimensions: 1) defining the school mission, which comprised two functions: framing the school's goals and communicating the school's goals; 2) managing the instructional program; 3) developing positive school learning climate. Furthermore, Robinson et al. (2008) proposed the following five dimensions of successful leadership: 1) Establishing goals and expectations; 2) Resourcing strategically; 3) Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; 4) Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; 5) Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. In his further research, Robinson (2010) suggested three interdependence capabilities that instructional leaders must have, namely: (a) possessing in-depth leadership knowledge (b) able to solve complex school-based problems (c) able to build trust with staff, parents, and students. The dependence between the three capabilities should be able to establish leadership framework, standards, and curriculum that result in the integration of expertise for the effectiveness of instructional leadership (Robinson, 2010). Those three capabilities are in line with several contents of the principal's leadership and school capacity offered by Li et al. (2016), i.e. quality management, resource capacity, communication, and trust. Various interactions of knowledge and problem-solving skills will be proxied in quality management, resource capacity, and communication as standardised systems. The dynamics of the three variables are expected to produce trust between teacher and staff which in turn will affect the

implementation of the principal's instructional leadership. In the effort to explore the new insight regarding the practices of instructional leadership, this study will answer two following research questions:

*RQ 1:* Whether quality management, resource capacity, and communication have a positive and significant impact on trust; and

*RQ 2:* Whether trust has a positive and significant impact on instructional leadership.

## 2 Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Instructional leadership

In the 1980 s, instructional leadership was widely practiced due to the limited education literature, so the source of teacher information was centred on the principal (Bossert et al., 1982; Murphy et al., 1982). In the 1990 s, the practice of instructional leadership was avoided because of the emergence of alternative leadership styles named is transformational leadership which is seen better to improve the organisational functions (Hallinger, 2010). At that time research and publication in the field of education and learning began to develop (Hallinger, 2010; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood, 2016). However, instructional leadership is reborn with a new concept as leadership in learning (Hallinger, 2010). This is interesting because in educational organisations, which organise learning, organisational culture naturally shapes the characteristics of organisational members who need discussion, advice, and direction in solving instructional problems because learning in the classroom is very dynamic and complex.

Hornig and Loeb (2010), Hallinger and Murphy (2013) and Hallinger (2018) argued that strong instructional leadership is indeed crucial for schools to be successful. However, Hallinger and McCary (1990) stated that instructional leadership is a complex role that depends on personal, contextual, and organisational factors. Brandon et al. (2018) revealed that it takes time to adjust the budget, match students and parents' concerns with school goals, prepare reports, develop bureaucratic requirements, and prioritise organisational tasks that are deemed urgent from other jobs to support instructions. With such complexity, the principal must have a strategic thinking, so the instructions given are indeed valuable to the organisation. In this case, strategic thinking refers to the principal's overall awareness of the interrelation between needs, school capacity, its environment, and its actions as a leader (Hallinger and McCary, 1990).

Hornig and Loeb (2010) stated that instructional leadership is not intended to improve student learning directly, but rather to maximise organisational management, so it can foster organisational value to achieve the expected school outcomes. Therefore, the principal must be able to think strategically and operationalise the strategic mind in their leadership approach, so the implementation of instructional leadership can provide change to students (Hallinger and McCary, 1990). The results of these strategic thoughts will be used to compile staff in schools with quality teachers and provide them with adequate support and resources to perform their work in class (Hornig and Loeb, 2010; Hornig et al., 2010). Furthermore, the concept of instructional leadership must be systematically operationalised into rigorous planning, management, and quality control



which has implications for the interdependence of action on the school's social system by maximising the function of various Purposeful coordination of resources (Hallinger and McCary, 1990).

Hallinger (2018) proposed three task functions in managing the core technical schools to produce high-quality learning, i.e. the development of quality teaching and learning qualities, monitoring student development, and making adjustments to increase success continually. The technical core in question is curriculum, instructional design, assessment, and evaluation which will directly produce direction and influence on the daily activities of teachers and students in schools (Marks and Printy, 2003; Sagala et al., 2019). This management style distinguishes instructional leadership from transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2003; 2018). Transformational leadership seeks to develop the organisation's long-term vision and goals which can have implications for developing organisational capacity while shared instructional leadership seeks to build individual and collective competencies with collaborative distribution of tasks to achieve organisational goals (Firestone and Martinez, 2007; Printy et al., 2010; Sagala et al., 2019). Interestingly, previous studies indicate that instructional leadership is more suitable for educational organisations because educational organisations require explicit focus on the direction of technical core development by building teacher competencies individually and collectively (Sagala et al., 2019; Firestone and Martinez, 2007; Marks and Printy, 2003; Leithwood and Reihl, 2003; Horng and Loeb, 2010; Horng et al., 2010; Hallinger and Murphy, 2012 and Hallinger, 2018).

In the implementation of instructional leadership, Murphy et al. (1982) conceptualise two paths – direct and indirect. Indirect implementation can be done by building policy or regulation that can monitor and control the application of work of all school staff (Murphy et al., 1982). The principal transfers their authority to regulation, so the regulation's quality controls staff's work. Rules are designed to accommodate the expectations of the principal's strategic thinking, the professional needs of all school staff, and the expectations of students and their parents. Next, the principal's job is to ensure that all staff works by following the designed regulations. Then, direct implementation is done by managerial actions aimed directly at individuals – both teachers and students (Murphy et al., 1982). A typical example of a direct activity is the practice of clinical supervision. In clinical supervision, the principal can interact with the teacher to discuss learning problems systematically to find out the solution.

On the other hand, Blase and Blase (1998) showed that there are three interrelated aspects to produce effective instructional leadership: 1) talking to teachers, 2) promoting teacher professional growth, and 3) fostering teacher reflection. In another study, Blase and Blase (2000, 1999) purified these three aspects into two critical elements – talking to the teacher to promote reflection and promoting professional growth. Communication to the teacher to encourage reflection seems to be in line with the direct activities proposed by Murphy et al. (1982). Blase and Blase (2000, 1999) describe it as the communication between principals and teachers conducted directly to solve various learning problems in the classroom. The principal can share various knowledge, experiences, alternative solutions, and the development of instructional practices to directly recommend teacher problem-solving. Principals can inspire, motivate, and stimulate teachers to develop various ideas for innovation in learning. Thus, the principal's instructions run smoothly without putting pressure or stressors on the teacher. Blase and Blase (2000) recommend that effective instructional leadership must avoid approaches that limit and intimidate teachers, but must give way to the promotion of collegiality among educators.

Henceforth, Blase and Blase (2000, 1999) argue that promoting professional growth is the second important aspect of the effective instructional leadership. The results of the Blase and Blase's study (2000, 1999) reveal that facilitating the professional development of teachers will not only enable teachers to develop their quality of learning continuously, but also enable teachers to collaborate in developing strategies, media, materials, and evaluation instruments. Therefore, it will not only help schools achieve their goals but also provide value in managerial practices and learning in schools.

Hallinger (2018) indicates that principals that are successful in instructional leadership implementation have the following characteristics:

- They develop their special skills in learning and teaching.
- They apply instructional leadership as a team responsibility, with an explicit delegation and clear assignment of responsibilities according to the competencies of team members.
- They work systematically with how they work, the work time they use, and manage their activities according to the priority of their work (see Hallinger, 2018; Hallinger and Murphy, 2013).

In simple terms, the critical aspects of the formation of effective instructional leadership converge on human resource capacity. Meanwhile, the human resources capacity can be controlled by the interaction or instruction of the principal to staff through communication through direct communication, and policy-making to indirectly control human resource capacity. Quality communication between leaders and staff not only can produce a sense of belonging for staff, but also can directly deliver solutions to the problems at hand. Furthermore, the policies stipulated to control quality, generally referred to as quality management, will undoubtedly help leaders to manage the quality of work of academic and administrative staff. Existing regulations make teachers have performance standards that must be achieved and automatically require teachers to work according to these standards. However, various antecedents do not directly impact instructional leadership. These antecedents must produce the value which will ultimately result in instructional leadership effectiveness. The leader cannot achieve the effectiveness of an administration by their own effort. However, a leader should be able to transfer their value to staff, so the value will be transformed into a new value that teachers can trust as the basis for working with confidence and maximum effort. Various educational organisation studies believe that value is trust (see Serva et al., 2005; Chugtai and Buckley, 2009; Forsyth and Adams, 2014; Handford and Leithwood, 2013; Notman and Henry, 2011; Salfi, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2003, 2009; Zeinabadi, 2014; Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2017), therefore the following hypothesis were formulated:

*H1: Human Resource Capacity has a positive impact on trust*

*H2: Quality Management has a positive impact on trust*

*H3: Communication has a positive effect on trust*

## 2.2 Trust

Trust has been studied in organisational research over the past four decades. Leadership studies indicate that employee's trust in leaders or organisations can increase their self-confidence in their work (Serva et al., 2005). In educational organisations, school leaders who create trust for teachers can ultimately create an atmosphere that inspires teachers to improve their achievements and performance (Chugtai and Buckley, 2009; Forsyth and Adams, 2014; Handford and Leithwood, 2013; Notman and Henry, 2011; Salfi, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2003, 2009; Zeinabadi, 2014; Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2017). On the contrary, if the teacher does not have the trust in the leader, the teacher will be resistant to various tasks and self-development that increase vulnerability and risk of not achieving learning goals (Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2017). Long time before, Driscoll (1978) did reveal that trust in the decision making of organisational leaders determines job satisfaction more than employee's involvement in decision making.

Furthermore, the studies of Louis (2007), Tschannen-Moran (2004) and Bryk and Schneider (2002) indicate that leadership behaviour determines teacher's trust and trust itself, in turn, influences the leadership quality of the principal. Teacher's trust in the principals' leadership is built slowly based on principal supportive behaviour (principal supportive behaviour) (Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008). Principal behaviours can be direct or indirect actions. Principal behaviour was crucial related to how instructional leadership is designed to produce effective instructional leadership as discussed earlier and, of course, it does not seem to escape the trust inherent in the staff's brain or teacher's. Principal behaviour not only should produce effective instructional leadership but also trusted instructional leadership. The teacher can accept the principal's instructional attitudes because of the teacher's belief that the direction given by the principal is the right direction. Meanwhile, the trust will not be built without a variety of valuable experiences that teachers get while working. Thus, a hypothesis is formulated:

*H4: Trust has a positive effect on instructional leadership*

## 3 Research method

The study sample was a secondary school teacher in North Sumatra Province, Indonesia. This study uses a survey method with questionnaires distributed using purposive sampling. The questionnaire was designed with a 5-Likert Scale. The use of the Likert scale aims to identify agreeable and disagreeable behavioural responses (see Cooper and Schindler, 2011). From 500 questionnaires distributed, 352 responses were returned. The data were then tabulated and analysed using variance-based Structural Equational Modelling (SEM). The data analysis was executed by SmartPLS 3.0. Behavioural researchers commonly use SEM-PLS because it is seen as more convenient and powerful for testing complex models even with small sample sizes compared to covariance based-SEM techniques (Thatcher and Perrew, 2002; Bollen, 1989; Goodhue et al., 2006). The demographic sample is tabulated in Table 1 below. More than 50% of the sample are teachers who have a range of ages from 31 to 40. This indicates that the experienced teachers are the dominant respondents on the collected data. Furthermore, males and females are equally distributed in the gender category, and almost all samples have a bachelor's degree in their educational background.



**Table 1** Demographic sample

Descriptions	Amount	Percentage	
Age	1. 21 – 30 years	32	9.09%
	2. 31 – 40 years	205	58.24%
	3. 41 – 50 years	115	32.67%
Gender	1. Male	44	12.39%
	2. Female	308	87.61%
Education	1. Bachelor	215	61.08%
	2. Master	137	38.92%

### 3.1 Variable and research instrument

The five variables measured in this study are Human resource capacity, Quality Management, Communication, Trust, and Instructional Leadership. To prevent errors during observation and data analysis, these five variables will identify the variations of the phenomenon using the instruments which were adapted from a previous study (see Li et al., 2016). We assume that this previous study has been developed, used, and validated before, so it will give an excellent confidential level for researchers. Nevertheless, we still assess the validity of instruments using validity constructs which include convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability to confirm the validity and reliability of our population.

### 3.2 Descriptive statistics

Based on the descriptive statistics presented in Table 2, it is known that the average of each variable is >4. This number indicates that respondents have a reasonably high perception score on each variable. Then, the figure is strengthened by the relatively small standard deviation (<0.5). This figure shows that the response gap of each sample can be avoided with a relatively modest level of data variation. This situation supports the data of this study to obtain a proper review validation. The results of discriminant validity and reliability testing can be reviewed in the same table, while the results of convergent validation can be observed in Table 3. Discussion related to construct validity is presented in the following section.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistic, reliability and discriminant validity

Latent Var.	Mean	St. Dev	AVE	Reliability		Discriminant validity				
				Composite reliability	Cronbach Alpha	HRC	IL	Tr	Comm	QM
HRC	4.168	0.453	0.631	0.837	0.707	0.794				
IL	4.204	0.477	0.623	0.868	0.795	0.527	0.789			
Tr	4.295	0.467	0.572	0.842	0.749	0.546	0.640	0.757		
Comm	4.257	0.496	0.703	0.904	0.859	0.545	0.629	0.728	0.839	
QM	4.291	0.438	0.559	0.883	0.841	0.405	0.644	0.589	0.618	0.747

Source: smartPLS 2 M Output

**Table 3** Cross loading table

	<i>HRC</i>	<i>IL</i>	<i>Tr</i>	<i>Comm</i>	<i>QM</i>
IL1	0.456	<b>0.699</b>	0.517	0.584	0.573
IL2	0.382	<b>0.805</b>	0.462	0.417	0.436
IL3	0.437	<b>0.866</b>	0.538	0.527	0.495
IL4	0.380	<b>0.778</b>	0.493	0.442	0.519
Comm1	0.408	0.531	0.649	<b>0.861</b>	0.524
Comm2	0.535	0.544	0.633	<b>0.871</b>	0.493
Comm3	0.421	0.605	0.586	<b>0.844</b>	0.511
Comm4	0.464	0.428	0.571	<b>0.775</b>	0.548
HRC1	<b>0.833</b>	0.447	0.475	0.425	0.318
HRC2	<b>0.800</b>	0.408	0.404	0.367	0.267
HRC3	<b>0.748</b>	0.399	0.418	0.507	0.379
QM1	0.366	0.490	0.466	0.478	<b>0.684</b>
QM2	0.284	0.435	0.392	0.423	<b>0.715</b>
QM3	0.243	0.449	0.393	0.457	<b>0.722</b>
QM4	0.262	0.501	0.446	0.469	<b>0.818</b>
QM5	0.273	0.478	0.510	0.469	<b>0.794</b>
QM6	0.387	0.532	0.410	0.471	<b>0.742</b>
Tr1	0.524	0.593	<b>0.767</b>	0.554	0.481
Tr2	0.485	0.434	<b>0.788</b>	0.568	0.426
Tr3	0.308	0.431	<b>0.803</b>	0.522	0.415
Tr4	0.303	0.453	<b>0.661</b>	0.552	0.448

Source: smart-PLS 2 M Output

### 3.3 Construct validity

Convergent validity was assessed by observing the loading factor ( $>0.6$ ) of measurement model, while the discriminant validity was conducted by observing the root of AVE value that in <sup>28</sup> diagonally in the correlation matrix between variables ( $AVE > r_{xy}$ ), and reliability test was conducted using Cronbach Alpha ( $>0.8$ ) (Hair et al., 2011; Gudono, 2011; Hartono, 2012). The figure of the loading factor is observable in table 3 below. HRC4 was eliminated from the measurement model because its loading factor was below  $<0.6$ , while another loading is included on the measurement model. Furthermore, the results of discriminant validity presented in Table 2 show that the root of AVE value, which was induced diagonally on the correlation matrix, has a higher value than correlation value between a variable presented below the diagonal row of the root of AVE. In addition, the reliability test for both Composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha show a great value ( $>0.7$ ) for each variable. These results indicate that each construct has proven the convergent and discriminant validities.

#### 4 Result

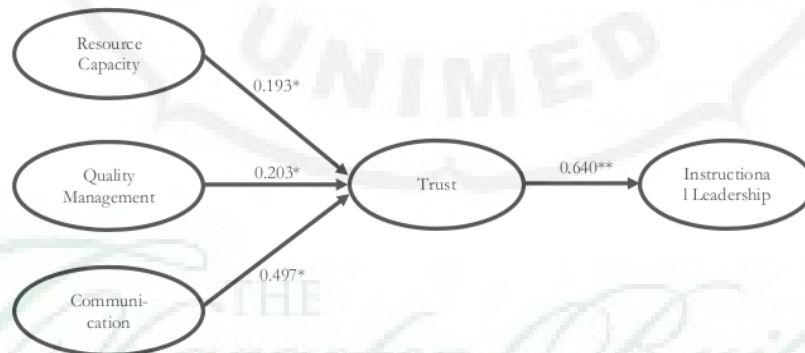
Bootstrapping with 352 samples was used to calculate that  $t$ -values of path coefficients. As can be observed in Table 4, the five hypothesised links of the research model were significant at  $t > 1.96$ . Statistically, the result shows the relationship between Human resource capacity and Trust has a path coefficient of 0.193 and  $t$ -value of 2.682. The value indicates that Human resource capacity has a significant and positive impact on Trust, so H1 was supported. The path between Quality Management and Trust indicate a substantial relationship with the path coefficient equal to 0.203 and  $t$ -value equal to 2.886, so H2 was supported. Furthermore, the relationship between Communication and Trust has a path coefficient of 0.497 as and  $t$ -value of 6.486. The value indicates a significant impact of Communication on Trust. Therefore, this finding supported H3. Finally, the relationship between Trust and Instructional Leadership also shows a significant association with a path coefficient is equal to 0.640 and  $t$ -value is equal to 10.057, so H4 was supported. The result summary of SEM-PLS can be observed in Table 4 below.

**Table 4** The results of data analysis

	Hypo-theses	Path coefficient	Standard error	$t$ -value	Conclusion
Human resource capacity → Trust	H1	0.193	0.072	2.682	Supported
Quality management → Trust	H2	0.203	0.064	2.886	Supported
Communication → Trust	H3	0.497	0.077	6.486	Supported
Trust → Instructional leadership	H4	0.640	0.070	10.057	Supported

Source: smart-PLS 2 M5 Output

**Figure 1** Research model



## 5 Discussion

Human resource capacity, quality management, and communication were found to have a significant influence on trust. Human resources are the necessary capital to achieve organisational effectiveness. The implementation of the best leadership style will not be able to produce organisational effectiveness if the organisational staff consists of incompetent resources. Furthermore, previous studies have revealed that a principals' leadership does not directly affect student achievement, but rather affects organisational functions which in turn affect student performance (Fielden, 2008; Li et al., 2016; Harris, 2004). Human resources of a school must have sufficient capacity to be able to understand and implement the development instructions given by the principal. Marks and Printy (2003) and Bush (2016) argued that principals have the power to control the teachers' quality of teaching to ensure the delivery of learning material following the academic goals of the school. In order to translate the instruction of the principal into operational action inside the classroom, a teacher needs enough capacity, including pedagogic, professional, and personal skills. This study reinforces the recommendations of Blase and Blase (1998) regarding the development of human resources to produce effective leadership. It also in line with the study of Horng and Loeb (2010), which also argues that organisational management for instructional improvement will be effective if staffing in schools consists of qualified and adequate teacher resources in performing their work in the classroom. The capacity possessed by the teachers will then make them understand the vision of the principal and confidently have their trust to understand further that the instructions are given to achieve the school's strategic goals. After the teachers have their trust on the principal, they will always carry out the principal's instructions under the qualifications they have and meet the school's goal.

Furthermore, to control the standard of teacher performance regarding the instructional processes, principals need quality management. Human resources quality must be controlled by specific regulations to support the achievement of organisational goals. In educational organisations, teachers should manage their performance following particular rules. Therefore, the teachers need to have a performance standard maintained and even have an achievement scheme that must be achieved with certain compensation. This regulation can indirectly but continuously control teacher performance. This idea is in line with the indirect implementation in the instructional leadership practice proposed by Murphy et al. (1982). The idea of indirect application of instructional leadership proposed by Murphy et al. (1982) offers policies or regulations that make it possible to monitor and control the work of all school staff. In the business sector, those frameworks have developed and are commonly referred to as a quality control managed in quality management. This term of quality management is used in this study, so it can enrich the concepts of governance of educational organisations that are currently developing.

The quality of interactions between principals and staff is also an essential instrument in generating organisational effectiveness. This study found that communication is a variable that has the most significant path coefficient that was influencing trust. The communication of the principal and teacher can produce direct instruction from the principal in solving classroom learning problems as the concept proposed by Murphy et al. (1982). Thus, the principal can discuss many things with the teacher and recommend various solutions or even together with the teacher to produce innovation in learning. Direct interactions between principals and teachers have been reviewed in

previous studies (Murphy et al., 1982; Blase and Blase, 2000, 1999) and are known to be useful to inspire teachers to solve classroom learning problems and even produce innovations in their learning strategies.

The dynamics that occur between antecedents have constructed trust in the teacher. Furthermore, these trusts become a value that ultimately results in effective instructional leadership. Staff trust in principals' leadership has been widely tested by previous studies as a critical factor in increasing teacher achievement and performance (Chugtai and Buckley, 2009; Forsyth and Adams, 2014; Handford and Leithwood, 2013; Notman and Henry, 2019; Salfi, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2003, 2009; Zeinabadi, 2014; Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2017). This study reconstructs the trust variable in a useful instructional leadership model. This study enriches previous research findings, so it can reproduce the antecedent of instructional leadership into a parsimony model, but it is still comprehensive. The implementation of instructional leadership cannot be separated from the direction given by the leader. The leader will transfer their vision to subordinates, either in a softly or hard manner, so the command can be in the form of regulations, suggestions, recommendations, direction, or orders. Trust is the key to how subordinates can work totally under an authority. A subordinate must have trust in the leadership that the decisions taken by the leader will bring welfare to the institution, which will undoubtedly have implications for the well-being of the teacher. With confidence in the performance of the principal, the teacher will automatically issue their best performance to achieve these welfare goals. Therefore, the critical issue of this research finding is how a principal can build trust between teachers and administrative staff. This study offers three key antecedents that have been empirically tested: Human Resource Capacity, Quality Management, and Communication.

## 6 Conclusions and limitation

This study proposes Human Resource Capacity, Quality Management, and Communication as the antecedents of trust among teachers, which in turn will affect instructional leadership in the school management. More specifically, from three antecedents, communication was found as the most significant antecedent to explain trust between staff and trust itself has a substantial impact on Instructional Leadership. These findings will give an insight into the practice of school leadership practice in Indonesia, specifically North Sumatera. In the previous study (Sagala et al., 2019), the researchers have found that North Sumatra naturally practiced instructional leadership, but unfortunately, it became stagnant in the practice of school management. The practice of leadership have not stimulated the school to shift into a productive and effective organisation. The findings of this study offer an alternative strategy for preparing effective instructional leadership. Based on this study, a principal, policymaker, or other stakeholders may evaluate the practice of instructional leadership practiced in their school and improve the organisational strategy adapted from the findings of this study. In many conditions, this study needs more exploration and adaptation according to the contingency principle, so further research is needed.

This study produced practical recommendations for principals in designing leadership styles that they would use to manage effective schools. This study recommends the principal to design the strategy for teacher capacity development, strengthen quality



management, and improve the quality of communication to the teachers. Furthermore, the principal should be directing those strategies to build trust among staff. Finally, the principal can smoothly distribute a leadership strategy to encourage teacher's instructional performance.

Also, this study can be a reference for the government or private school foundation to determine the indicators when selecting the principal candidates. The indicators will be possibly adapted from the strategic construct, which was measured in a recent study. Meanwhile, for regulators, this study can be the basis to evaluate the design of leadership competency standards that school principal's must-have. Therefore, the principal should be following the standard basis in order to achieve the predicate of a standardised leader in educational organisations.

Theoretically, this study complements previous studies related to confirmation of the antecedents expected to improve the effectiveness of instructional leadership. This study describes how these antecedents can form instructional leadership by offering back a fundamental value – Trust. This study has limitations in internal validity due to the limitations of the survey research method. In future studies, a researcher can use the experimental approach to strengthen the internal validity of the research results. In addition, to achieve a good internal validity, experimental studies can produce appropriate methods in achieving organisational design to also support effective instructional leadership.

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**Appendix: Items of observable variable****26** *Resource capacity*

- 1 Teams in different subject compete for each other to get resources.
- 2 Teams in different subject compete for each other in performance.
- 3 The structure of our school is more complicated than other schools.
- 4 The structure of our school is inhibiting the implementation of useful innovations

*Quality management*

- 1 Building a structured quality assurance mechanism in schools.
- 2 Creating a culture of accountability among teachers.
- 3 After observing class activities, principals often giving a discussion and giving teachers an alternative solution to improve their teaching.
- 4 Using student assessment data to inform the school's strategic planning.
- 5 Regularly observe class activities.
- 6 Regularly observe student homework.

*Communication*

- 1 Meetings at our school are effective and efficient.
- 2 There are a number of meetings at our school.
- 3 We have information on time to complete our work.
- 4 Our leader always informs us about the latest issues regarding school development.

*Trust*

- 10 1 We do our task with competence and confidence.
- 2 We complete our task professionally
- 3 We have never tried to get profit by deceiving others.
- 4 We can honestly discuss the feelings, concerns, and pressures we have.

*Instructional leadership*

- 1 Conducting school-based instructional projects.
- 4 2 Encourage staff to consider new ideas for their teaching.
- 3 Design steps to improve student learning.
- 4 Articulating high expectations regarding student academic achievement.



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