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Investigating the Relationships between Effective Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness As Perceived By Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The international literature is replete with a discourse on the link between principal leadership and school effectiveness. However, in the Caribbean where there is limited school effectiveness research, perceptions of key school factors can drive critical decision making or education policy regarding the influence of principals to improve schools. Interestingly, although the literature is sated with features of high performing schools, it is debatable as to the leadership practices that must be emphasized for principals to lead their schools to effectiveness. This research examined the relationship between effective principal leadership practices and school effectiveness as ascertained by teachers in primary and secondary public schools in Grenada. A quantitative correlation research design was used to survey the ratings of teachers on effective principal leadership practices and school effectiveness. The results confirmed the relationship between Effective Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness. The results also indicated that at the primary school level, principal leadership practices with a focus on instruction best envisages school effectiveness whereas at the secondary level, the evidence suggests that the better practices relate to instructional focus and accountability focus.

Keywords: Principal leadership practices; school effectiveness; teachers' ratings; instructional leadership; Grenada.

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1. Introduction

Organizations, specifically schools, have to contend with the issue of failing to achieve their desired outcomes. This problem can be exacerbated in low performing schools by challenges associated with leadership issues such as leadership instability, unavailability, and ill-preparedness. Furthermore, the demand for higher students' performance at high stakes testing in the Caribbean region has imposed on principals the need for accountability in their schools. Many educational researchers asserted that principal leadership should be grounded in transformational and instructional

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leadership practices rather than on management practices, although school accountability rests heavily on the principal's management of the school.

Over the last two decades, educational research has solidified the assertion that principal leadership is the catalyst for school effectiveness (Hallinger 2018; Day, Sammons, Leithwood, Hopkins, Qu, Brown & Ahtaridou 2009; Kouzes & Posner 2013). Heck and Hallinger (2014) claimed that principal leadership has an indirect but positive effect on student outcomes thus influencing the effectiveness of the school. Furthermore, Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins (2019) indicated that principal leadership practices impact classroom instruction through its indirect influence on classroom and school settings.

According to the literature there is a link between high performing schools and principal leadership. Hallinger (2018) concluded that based on empirical data, it is quite evident that school leadership is needed for the successful execution of programmes and policies directed at ensuring that schools achieve their desired results. Many leadership styles were debated to be most appropriate for the development of schools and many advocates have produced empirical evidence to support the best practices of the instructional, transformational, participative and distributed leadership styles as crucial to leading schools to effectiveness (Bush, 2018; Gumus, Bellibas, Esen & Gumus, 2018). However, Bush (2018) asserted that specific principal leadership practices were more desirous to elicit effectiveness in schools. The study was approached from the perspective that the principal's effective leadership practices can determine the level of desired outcomes of schooling, which can be measured by the indicators of high performing schools.

Despite the vast knowledge that exist regarding principal leadership and school effectiveness, educational research does not drive critical decision making or education policy in the small developing states of the Caribbean, leaving many schools to operate by chance. As a consequence, many schools fail to achieve their anticipated outcomes. This study sought to examine teachers' perceptions of effective principal leadership practices and school effectiveness within a selected population of Grenadian public primary and secondary schools. The examination was guided by the research questions: 1a) What is the level of effective principal leadership practices in primary and secondary schools as perceived by teachers? b) What is the level of school effectiveness in primary and secondary schools as perceived by teachers? 2. Are there statistically significant relationships between perceptions of effective principal leadership practices and school effectiveness? 3. Which of the selected effective principal leadership practices components best predict school effectiveness?

This research was undertaken on the basis that there was evidence of declining school performance in Grenada and supporting theoretical confirmation from the international literature points to principal leadership and school effectiveness as two main variables related to the performance of the school. Furthermore, key constituents of the school who are always ever present, can be good judges of these two concepts, and their views can help guide future leadership actions that could lead schools to success.

To achieve this end, the study adopted a quantitative correlational design to survey a targeted population of 901 teachers from public primary and secondary schools. For the purposes of this research, Effective Principal Leadership Practices refer to the particular activities that the principal endorses or personally facilitates in his/her school (May and Supovitz, 2011) for the achievement of the desired outcomes of the school. This was measured by the leadership framework outlined in Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003). School Effectiveness was defined as the extent to which the school has the characteristics of high performing schools as identified by Shannon and Bylsma (2006). Descriptive statistics, the Pearson Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis were used to analyze the data in the study. The findings revealed that teachers were moderately positive in their assessments of Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness. A moderate direct relationship was conformed between Effective Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness. Multiple Regression Analysis revealed that at the primary school level, principal leadership practices with a focus on instruction best predicts school effectiveness whereas at the secondary level, the evidence suggests that the better practices relate to instructional focus and accountability focus.

This study builds on the limited foundation of school effectiveness research in the Caribbean. The investigation of the practices of the principals and school effectiveness informs the policy direction for school system on areas that can improve school quality especially in underperforming schools. There are additional policy implications for constructing school development plans and for the

advancement of effective school leadership practices as in preparatory programmes, training, or professional development for principals, vice principals and aspiring school leaders.

The first section of the paper presents the introduction to the study which includes the background to the problem, educational context, and purpose of the study. This section is followed by five major sections. The theoretical framework presents the use of symbolic interactionism as the guiding academic underpinnings for the study. The review of relevant literature highlights the findings of related studies on principal leadership and school effectiveness. The methodology section explains the research methods employed in the study while the results and discussion section present the findings and discussion of the findings of the study. The paper concluded with the policy implications based on the analysis of the study's findings.

2. Theoretical underpinnings

2.1 Symbolic interactionism

The central issue in this paper was explored using the theory of symbolic interactionism, which according to Blumer (1969), Mead (1934) is entrenched in the following notions: (1) human beings develop their actions toward things according to the meanings that the things offer to them; (2) the meaning of such things are inferred from, the social interaction that one has with each other; (3) these meanings are modified through interpretations. Additionally, the theory further promotes individuals as rational beings who systematically regulate their actions in response to that of others (Blummer, 1969; Mead, 1934). The theory is applicable in this paper as it relies vastly on meanings that people form through interactions with others.

Within the school environment Symbolic Interaction can be applied as the process whereby the constituents of the school interpret each other's actions and reactions, forming meaning of these actions, which will be formed differently by individuals. For instance, teachers will see the principal walking about the school compound and think that the principal wants to be aware of what is happening in their classrooms and so they resort to particular actions in the classroom when the principal is visible. As long as the principal practices leadership by wandering, the teachers will continue in their roles as required by a visible principal. It is therefore critical for the principal to understand that his/her action will elicit certain behaviors from the teachers based on their interpretation of the principal's actions.

The use of this theoretical framework will enable one to analyze how the practices of the principals is perceived based on his/her interactions with the teachers to influence the effectiveness of the school. Since teachers are ever so present in the school with the principal then their perceptions of the principal practices and the school social environment, according to Symbolic Interactionism, can be considered accurate.

3. Literature review

There is a general consensus among stakeholders in education that a strong positive educational leadership is a determining factor of school effectiveness. Hallinger (2018) summarized those recent studies on educational leadership and management have progressively produced empirical evidence indicating that school leadership have a substantial influence on school effectiveness. Moreover, Leithwood et al. (2019) indicated that principal leadership has an undisputed effect on the characteristics of the school which ultimately positively impact the quality of school effectiveness.

Gumus et al. (2018) contended that distinctions in leaderships constructs were presented as critical elements to lead schools to effectiveness. The styles of leadership exhibited by principals can determine their leadership practices. A principal may not only exhibit a particular style of leadership but may exhibit various styles, thus influencing his/her various leadership practices. The most popular styles were those of the widely proposed models of Instructional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, and Distributed Leadership (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014).

Gurley, May, O'Neal and Dozier (2016) advocate that the school leader performs a significant function by practicing instructional leadership in building and preserving an emphasis on learning within

the school community. Özdemir, Şahin, and Öztürk (2020) stated that the principal must then perform their duties to provide leadership, instructional guidance, supervision, and provide a conducive work environment. These are necessary components for the organization growth and development (Özdemir et al., 2020). However, Neumerski et al. (2018) believe several reasons may have been attributed to the issues surrounding principals' execution of instructional leadership. They concluded that:

- (1) Principals rarely have enough time in their day to spend on teaching and learning.
- (2) Few have been adequately trained to assess teaching and to coach teachers around instructional improvement,
- (3) Principals have little 'appetite' for focusing their work on teaching and learning,
- (4) principals intentionally avoid 'interfering' in classrooms (Neumerski et al., 2018, p. 270).

To overcome these challenges, Distributed Leadership Theory advocates for the principals as instructional leaders to distribute leadership throughout the college by empowering staff, creating teams to spread tasks and accountability (Shava & Tlou, 2018). However, Bush (2018) concluded that the Transformational Leadership has been favored over the last two decades as there has been empirical evidence that it leads schools to better performance.

While initially, these leadership models were proposed independently, recent research has concluded that there is a need for the integration of these models in the practices of principals (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016; Kwan, 2020; Printy, Marks, & Bowers, 2010; Sebastian, Huang, & Allensworth, 2017). Urick and Bowers (2014) argued that a conceptual comparison of the three major leadership styles namely transformational, instructional, and distributive/shared leadership illustrates a substantial amount of integration of the various practices rather than a marked separation in each category. Moreover, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) contended that these models have very little practical use to principals, and other researchers such as Hitt & Tucker (2016) and Shen and Joseph (2020) endorsed the provision of evidence to support the practices of principals that can affect school effectiveness. In essence, there is a measure of doubt regarding the applicability of principal leadership to school effectiveness. According to Gurr (2015) there is no prescriptive leadership prototype that determines success in the organization, although the most researched prototypes of principal leadership illustrated that there is no particular principal leadership style that was clearly transformational or instructional but rather an integration of both especially in challenging contexts.

Researchers have further documented that a relationship exists between principal leadership practices and school effectiveness. The nature of the relationship is unclear. Some writers focus on transformational leadership and/or instructional practices as the key to drive school effectiveness whereas others focus on cultural or contextual factors as the influential factor to drive effective principal leadership practices.

The study by Nartgün, Limon, and Dilekçi, (2020) on principal sustainable leadership and school effectiveness indicated that primary and secondary school teachers expressed ratings of leadership above moderate level and perceived their schools to be effective. They also found significant positive high and moderate level correlations among these two variables and that sustainable leadership predicted perceived school effectiveness.

Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji (2012) identified a positive correlation between the principal's leadership style and his/her effectiveness, but found no correlation with school performance. Lee, Walker and Ling Chui (2012) found marked differences between instructional management and direct supervision of instruction in impacting school effectiveness. Lee et al. (2012) concluded that principals should focus less on accountability and more on instruction management. Principal instructional leadership practices will yield more success if it aligned with a clearly articulated and shared vision and with knowledge of collaborative and individual efforts, rather than being a reflex action to policies and processes from the head office of district. Nir and Hameiri (2014) produced evidence that suggests principal leadership is linked to school effectiveness through:

- i) The deployment of knowledge and skills, individualize gratification and the leader's influence over the follower, somewhat facilitates the relationship between transformational leadership practices and school effectiveness.
- ii) Principal leadership practices, the use of the sources of influence mainly add to school effectiveness.

Nir and Hameiri (2014) subsequently suggest that the transformational leadership practices were favorably correlated to the employment of lax power bases and unfavorably correlated to the employment of tough power bases. It was evident, according to Nir and Hameiri (2014) that self-powerbases such as expertise, personal reward and referent powerbase partially mediate the relation between transformational leadership style and school effectiveness. These findings point to a critical element that serve as a framework for principals to utilize in order to drive their schools to effectiveness.

The international literature points to key leadership components such as instructional and transformational leadership constructs to support effective schools. The regional scarcely addresses the views of the teachers, at different school levels, as to what they perceive are the best effective practices for principals to engage to achieve school success. There is also a dearth of research on principal leadership and school effectiveness in the regional literature. Consequently, the exploration of principal leadership practices and their resulting influence on school effectiveness are of critical importance particularly in the context of small developing states.

4. Methodology

4.1 Study design and instrumentation

Using a quantitative correlation approach, the study adopted a survey research design to investigate the relationship between Effective Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness. This paper reports on the examination of the perceptions of principals and teachers of public primary and secondary schools in Grenada on the above-mentioned variables. These perceptions were gathered using a questionnaire comprising of two scales. The Effective Principal Leadership Practices Scale (EPLPS) was developed from a synthesis of the literature by Waters et. al, (2003) whereas the School Effectiveness Scale (SES) was developed by Shannon and Blyma (2006) based on characteristics of high performing schools in the USA.

The EPLPS used four subscales derived from a principal component analysis of the instrument to measure, on a Likert type scale, the leadership practices of the principals. These subscales were named Instructional Focus (27 items), Accountability Focus (13 items), Change Focus (15 items), and Sense of Community Focus (11 items). The SES used a Likert-type scale procedure and was made up of 9 subscales: A Clear and Shared Focus (5 items), High Standards and Expectations (5 items), Effective Leadership (6 items), High Levels of Collaboration and Communication (7 items), Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards (8 items), Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching (7 items), Focused Professional (6 items), Supportive Learning Environment (8 items), and High Levels of Family and Community Involvement (6 items).

The instrument was highly reliable with Cronbach Alpha of .984 for the PLPS and .958 for the SEC as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1.

The reliability statistics for the effective principal leadership practices scale.

Name of Scale	No. of Cases (Participants) Used	No. of Items Used	Items # on questionnaire	Cronbach Alpha
Principal Leadership Practices	444	66	1 – 66	.984
Instructional Focus	556	27	4 – 24, 48 – 52, 55	.973
Accountability Focus	652	13	25, 26, 29, 32 – 35, 37 – 41, 53	.929
Change Focus	589	15	27, 28, 46, 47, 56–59, 60 – 66	.92
Sense of Community Focus	638	11	1 – 3, 30, 31, 36, 42 – 45, 54	.931

Table 2.

The reliability statistics for the school effectiveness scale used in the questionnaire.

Name of Scale	No. of Cases (Participants) Used	No. of Items Used	Items # on questionnaire	Cronbach Alpha
School Effectiveness	547	58	67 – 124	0.958
Clear and shared focus	713	5	67 -71	0.792
Standards/Expectations	692	5	72 – 76	0.754
Leadership	675	6	77 – 82	0.815
Collaboration/Communication	672	7	83 – 89	0.845
Alignment	674	8	90 – 97	0.703
Monitoring	675	7	98 – 104	0.864
Professional Development	669	6	105 -110	0.764
Learning Environment	693	8	111 – 118	0.814
Family/Community Involvement	702	6	119 -124	0.828

By means of the Statistical Package for Social Science (version 19), the Pearson R Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis were used to analyzed the data collected.

4.2 Sampling

A criterion was set delimit the targeted population for the study which refer to only the principals and teachers who were in their position for a period exceeding two years. This was done so as to adequately capture a clear picture of leadership practices and the effectiveness of the school. From a population of 901 teachers who met the criterion to participate in the study, 729 educators volunteered. Of these participants 478 belong to the primary schools and 251 belonged to the secondary schools.

5. Results and discussion

5.1 The level of effective principal leadership practices and school effectiveness in public primary and secondary schools

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviation of teachers' perceptions of Principal Leadership Practices. Primary school teachers reflected a mean of 199.28 (SD = 58.74) and secondary school teachers reflected a mean of 199.06 (SD = 60.90). This suggests that the teachers were moderately positive in their assessments of Principal Leadership Practices.

Table 3.

Mean scores and standard deviations of teachers' perceptions of principal leadership practices.

Variables (Range)	Primary School Teachers N = 426		Secondary School Teachers N = 236	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Principal Leadership Practices (0 -330)	199.28	58.74	199.06	60.90
Instructional Focus (0-135)	83.97	25.12	83.22	26.86
Accountability Focus (0-65)	44.45	12.60	44.32	12.51
Change Focus (0-75)	38.48	14.41	38.26	14.83

Sense of Community Focus (0-55)	32.38	11.36	33.24	11.54
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The primary school teachers reported mean scores that represented 60.4%, 62.2%, 68.4%, 51.3% and 58.9% of the sum scores for Effective Principal Leadership Practices, Instructional Focus, Accountability Focus, Change Focus and Sense of Community Focus respectively. The secondary school teachers reported mean scores that represented 60.3%, 61.6%, 68.2%, 51% and 60.4% of the sum scores for Effective Principal Leadership Practices, Instructional Focus, Accountability Focus, Change Focus and Sense of Community Focus respectively. The teachers assessed their principals to be more effective in their practices regarding Accountability Focus and Instructional Focus and less effective on Sense of Community Focus and on Change Focus.

Table 4 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of teachers' perceptions of School Effectiveness. The primary school teachers reflected a mean of 202.06 (SD = 38.39) and the secondary school teachers reflected a mean of 186.99 (SD = 43.39). Table 4 indicates that the teachers rated their schools moderately positively.

Table 4.

Mean scores and standard deviations of teachers' perceptions of school effectiveness.

Variables (Range)	Primary School Teachers N = 426		Secondary School Teachers N = 236	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
School Effectiveness (0 - 290)	202.06	38.39	186.99	43.39
Shared Focus (0 - 25)	18.28	5.13	15.78	5.41
Standards (0 - 25)	17.88	4.12	16.28	4.49
Leadership (0 - 30)	19.87	5.33	18.60	5.50
Collaboration (0 - 35)	21.27	6.20	20.46	6.14
Alignment (0 - 40)	30.09	5.91	27.55	7.53
Monitoring (0 - 35)	24.86	5.54	24.16	6.14
Professional Development (0 - 30)	19.99	5.35	18.58	6.50
Learning Environment (0 - 40)	29.38	6.10	26.79	7.00
Family Involvement (0 - 30)	20.31	5.11	18.78	5.36

The primary school teachers mean scores represented these percentage values of the sum score for the sub-variables of School Effectiveness: Shared Focus (73.1%), Standards (71.5%), Leadership (66.2%), Collaboration (60.8%), Alignment (75.2%), Monitoring (71%), Professional Development (66.6%), Learning Environment (73.5%) and Family Involvement (67.7%). Similarly, for the secondary school teachers, the mean scores represented these percentages values of the sum score for the sub-variables of School Effectiveness: Shared Focus (63.1%), Standards (65.1%), Leadership (62%), Collaboration (58.5%), Alignment (68.9%), Monitoring (69%), Professional Development (61.9%), Learning Environment (67%) and Family Involvement (62.6%). This suggests that the primary school teachers graded their schools to be more effective in to Alignment and Learning Environment where the secondary school teachers more effective areas were Alignment and Monitoring. The less effective areas for both primary and secondary school teachers were to Leadership and Collaboration.

Most studies indicated that the teachers perceived their principal leadership practices positively and their school to have elements of school effectiveness. Deligiannidou, Athanailidis, Laios and Stafyla (2020) found teachers in Greece to be satisfied with their principals’ leadership practices. Arivayagan, Akmaliah, and Pihie (2017) findings indicated that teachers perceived the level of school effectiveness in secondary schools to be at an overall high level whereas the level of effective principal leadership practices was at a moderate level.

5.2 The relationship between effective principal leadership practices and school effectiveness

The study examined the impact that school level may have on the relationship between Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness by exploring the correlations based on this demographic. In the primary schools’ sample, Table 5 depicts the correlation matrix for primary schools, reported a moderate direct relationship between Effective Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness which was significant at the 0.01 level, $r = 0.686$, $p < 0.0005$, $n = 452$.

It was further detected that Effective Principal Leadership Practices shared a moderate direct relationship with the following sub variables of School Effectiveness: Shared Focus ($r = 0.578$, $p < 0.0005$), Leadership ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.0005$), Collaboration ($r = 0.621$, $p < 0.0005$), Monitoring ($r = 0.522$, $p < 0.0005$), Professional Development ($r = 0.605$, $p < 0.0005$), Learning Environment ($r = 0.567$, $p < 0.0005$), and Family Involvement ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.0005$) and a low direct relationship was shared with Standards ($r = 0.339$, $p < 0.0005$) and Alignment ($r = 0.329$, $p < 0.0005$).

When the components associated with Effective Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness and its sub variables were correlated, all reached statistical significance at the 0.01 level with a two, tailed distribution as summarized in Table 5 and were found to mostly share a moderate direct relationship with the sub variables of School Effectiveness.

In the secondary schools’ sample, the correlation matrix which is displayed in Table 5 reported a high direct relationship between Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness ($r = 0.801$, $p < 0.0005$, $n = 245$) and Shared Focus ($r = 0.735$, $p < 0.0005$). Additionally, Principal Leadership Practices shared a moderate direct relationship with the other sub-variables of School Effectiveness as shown in Table 5. Likewise, the components of Effective Principal Leadership Practices shared a moderate direct relationship with School Effectiveness and its sub-variables as shown in Table 5.

Table 5.

Correlation matrix for interrelationship between principal leadership practices and school effectiveness according to school level.

Primary School Participants N = 452					Secondary School Participants N = 245				
Princip al Leader ship Practic es	Instructi onal Focus	Accounta bility Focus	Chan ge Focu s	Sense of Commu nity Focus	Princip al Leader ship Practic es	Instructi onal Focus	Accounta bility Focus	Chan ge Focu s	Sense of Commu nity Focus

School Effective	.668**	.66**	.653**	.608**	.599**	.801**	.775**	.758**	.713*	.692**
Shared Focus	.578**	.583**	.542**	.461*	.520**	.735**	.730**	.702**	.592**	.669**
Standards	.339**	.347**	.305**	.316*	.252**	.561**	.555**	.509**	.527*	.446**
Leadership	.654**	.612**	.604**	.601**	.604**	.688**	.631**	.654**	.657**	.614**
Collaboration	.621**	.593**	.568**	.570**	.549**	.665**	.632**	.627**	.595**	.601**
Alignment	.329**	.313**	.335**	.283**	.281**	.558**	.566**	.538**	.473**	.444**
Monitoring	.522**	.508**	.499**	.477**	.424**	.613**	.599**	.598**	.543**	.499**
Professional	.605**	.569**	.567**	.566**	.530**	.692**	.658**	.632**	.644**	.615**
Learning Environment	.567**	.562**	.554**	.440**	.524**	.693**	.675**	.658**	.593**	.620**
Family Involvement	.560**	.522**	.565**	.513*	.467**	.606**	.577**	.579**	.560**	.513**

**Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

This study confirms that Grenadian schools' teachers perceived that there is a direct relationship between principal leadership and school effectiveness and since the principals are perceived to be performing core leadership practices and their schools were perceived to have elements of school effectiveness, then there is the likelihood that the principals' leadership practices are effective enough to lead their schools to effectiveness. The teachers perceived the practices of the principals to have a greater impact at the secondary school level as a stronger relationship exists between the two variables.

These findings are in concert with studies on school effectiveness and principal leadership. Cerit and Yildirim, (2017) found that there was a significant positively correlation between effective principal leadership and perceived school effectiveness. Arivayagan et al. (2017) found a moderate correlation between school principals' creative leadership practice and school effectiveness.

Nir and Hameiri (2014) produced evidence that suggest principal leadership is linked to school effectiveness with the use of power basis and transformational leadership. Muijs (2011) concluded there is empirical data to support the claim that leadership have an impact school effectiveness. Muijs (2011) then argued that the leader does not simply mold the organizational culture and climate to increase school outcomes, but it is the contextual nature of the organization that impact and build the leader. Additionally, Nadeem and Mudasar (2012) further concluded that the effectiveness of schooling depends largely on the effectiveness of the practices of the leader which must be focused on the achievement of excellence.

It can be noted that all of the areas assessed for school effectiveness, rely on the driving force of the principal to create, sustain and modify his/ her situational reality, so that the school can achieve its goals. For example, the principal has to be the person to shape the vision for the school, and get constituents to share that vision, so that there can be a concerted effort to work towards the mission and goals of the school. The principal plays an influential role in galvanizing the constituents to be actively involved in the criteria used to judge effectiveness such as participating in professional development, enhancing the learning environment, leading, communicating and collaborating. The actions and interactions of the principal enable teachers enable to form meaning and interpret the intentions of the principal in determining the effectiveness of the school.

5.3 Predicting school effectiveness

Multiple Regression analysis was conducted to explore predictability of the four components of Effective Principal Leadership Practices on School Effectiveness using sample sets based on school level

and all teachers. Three sets of two predictor variables were used to avoid issues associated with violations of the assumptions of multicollinearity. Those sets comprised of Model 1 – Instructional Focus and Change Focus; Model 2 – Accountability Focus and Change Focus; and Model 3 – Change Focus and Sense of Community Focus.

5.3.1 Primary schools' sample

Model 1, which explained 40.2% of the variance in School Effectiveness, was found to be statistically significant [$F(2,408) = 137.01$; $p < .0005$; $N = 411$]. Model 2 explained 39.5% of the variance in School Effectiveness and was also found to be statistically significant: $F(2,408) = 133.08$; $p < .0005$. Model 3 explained 39.1% of the variance in School Effectiveness and was also found to be statistically significant: $F(2,408) = 131.22$; $p < .0005$. This suggests that the Models were able to distinguish among the components of Principal Leadership Practices.

The results of the multiple regression analysis for the primary schools' sample are displayed in Table 6. Instructional Focus was determined to be the best predictor ($\beta = .336$, $p < .0005$) as in Model 1 since Change Focus was the better predictor ($\beta = .374$, $p < .0005$) in Model 2 and in Model 3 ($\beta = .383$, $p < .0005$). These findings suggest that the primary school teachers point to the principal's Instructional Focus practices as the best predictor of School Effectiveness in primary schools. The primary schools' teachers believed that the principals need to direct more attention to managing the instructional programme.

Table 6.

Multiple regression models for predictors of school effectiveness at the primary school level: n = 411.

	Predictors	B	T	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1	Instructional Focus	.336**	5.327	.368	2.178
	Change Focus	.333**	5.272	.368	2.178
Model 2	Accountability Focus	.293**	4.83	.4	2.48
	Change Focus	.374**	6.17	.4	2.48
Model 3	Change Focus	.383**	6.26	.398	2.51
	Sense of Community Focus	.28**	4.58	.398	2.51

** Significant at the .01 level. Better predictor highlighted in bold β score

5.3.2 Secondary schools' sample

Model 1 explained 60.6% of the variance in School Effectiveness and it was found to be statistically significant: $F(2,225) = 172.96$; $p < .0005$. Model 2 explained 58.3% of the variance in School Effectiveness and it was also found to be statistically significant: $F(2,225) = 157.08$; $p < .0005$. 53.8% of the variance in School Effectiveness was explained by Model 3 which was also found to be statistically significant: $F(2,225) = 130.96$; $p < .0005$.

The results of the multiple regression analysis for the secondary schools' sample are displayed in Table 7. From Model 1, Instructional Focus was the better predictor ($\beta = .546$, $p < .0005$) whereas in Model 2 Accountability Focus was found to be the better predictor ($\beta = .447$, $p < .0005$). From Model 3, it was determined that Change Focus was the better predictor ($\beta = .428$, $p < .0005$). These findings did not confirm a conclusion as to the best predictor of School Effectiveness at the secondary school level. However, it emphasizes Instructional Focus as a more significant predictor than Accountability Focus since this model explained a greater percentage of the variance in School Effectiveness.

Table 7.

Multiple regression models for predictors of school effectiveness at the secondary school level: n = 231

	Predictors	B	T	Tolerance	VIF
Model 1	Instructional Focus	.546**	8.444	.419	2.388
	Change Focus	.277**	4.287	.419	2.388
Model 2	Accountability Focus	.447**	7.4	.45	2.24
	Change Focus	.339**	5.27	.45	2.24

Model 3	Change Focus	.428**	6.32	.447	2.24
	Sense of Community Focus	.357**	5.26	.447	2.24

** Significant at the .01 level. Better predictor highlighted in bold β scores

Due to issues related to the violations of assumptions associated with multiple regressions analysis, three models comprising of two predictors were used with three samples. It was determined that at the primary level and at both levels Instructional Focus was the best predictor of School Effectiveness. This suggests that the teachers in the sample are suggesting that principals need to focus on managing the teaching and learning programmes in the school and providing instructional leadership. However, at the secondary school level in another model, Instructional Focus and Accountability Focus emerged as better predictors than Change Focus. Hence, the conclusion was drawn that the secondary school teachers are suggesting that secondary school principals need to focus more on managing the teaching and learning programmes and on accountability within the organization. In comparison to this study, Cerit and Yildirim, (2017) found that effective leadership qualities were good predictor of perceived school effectiveness.

It is interesting to note that Change Focus was a significant predictor for all three multiple regression models used. The management of change has been a challenge for many principals. However, shifts in thinking that allow for new strategies and ideas to actively engage students must occur, in order to make learning more meaningful for students and to ultimately increase student achievement (Reagle, 2006).

The study also seems to suggest that principals need to focus on instructional leadership in schools, but the literature suggests a blend of instructional leadership and transformational leadership practices. Kwan (2020) and Gurr (2015) asserted that in order for principals to sustain their success they ought to blend transformational and instructional leadership practices. Earlier, Louis et al. (2010) theorized that it is not reasonable to assume that secondary schools' principals are not in a good position to provide instructional leadership as they have to deal with much more managerial and bureaucratic issues, a complex set of relationships and a multiplicity of content areas to master. Thus, the focus could be on emphasis for supportive practices to instructional leadership.

New evidence suggested that leadership should not be rested in that hands of the principal for directing the instructional programme within schools, but rather, he/she provides vision and a culture that builds and support teacher's leadership in order to ensure that this role is fulfilled (Urick & Bowers, 2014). Although the findings of the study indicated that the teachers perceived that a focus on instructional leadership is best for school effectiveness, Özdemir et al. (2020) highlighted how instructional leadership effectiveness, depends on successful orchestration of programmes, people and resources. This suggests instructional leadership practices are dependent on transformational leadership practices.

It is arguable that the teachers believe themselves to be the experts in their subject matter in secondary schools, and so they do not believe that the principal should lead the methodological aspect of the curriculum and provide assistance to teaching and learning programmes at their school. The secondary school principal most likely, may be bombarded with more organizational and bureaucratic issues, mainly because the secondary schools are much larger than the primary schools. Additionally, the social interactions among principal and teachers can develop relationships that results in both parties avoiding each other on instructional issues unless it is absolutely necessary. In the larger schools, social interactions can be more sporadic which can hinder the development of relationships between teachers and principals. Another important factor is the level of qualification. The lesser qualified teachers are more likely to request support for pedagogy than the more qualified teachers. Grenadian primary schools are smaller than the secondary schools and are also staffed with lesser qualified teachers.

Schools, are often required to implement new programmes and policies from an external or internal perspective. The management of the change can lead to the adoption or non-adoption of these new initiatives or innovations. Principals are the main catalyst for change, which explains the reasoning by teachers for selecting Change Focus practices as key for principals at all school levels.

Primary school principals have to share, guide or actively participate in all curriculum matters at the school whereas the secondary school principals are not seen as an expert in all areas. Secondary school teachers may tend to consider themselves the expert in their subject field, and unlike the primary schools there is greater specialization in the subject areas at the secondary level. It is apparent that at the secondary schools, the heads of the department perform the role of instructional leader.

6. Conclusion and policy implications

In conclusion, this study indicated that principals were engaged in effective leadership practices at a satisfactory level and teachers perceived their schools to be moderately effective. There were direct moderate relationships amongst the principal leadership practices components and the variables of school effectiveness. Principal leadership practices significantly predicted school effectiveness at both primary and secondary school level. Principal leadership practices focused on instruction can be considered the best predictor of school effectiveness at the primary school level, while at the secondary level, teachers considered accountability and instructional practices to be the key focus for school effectiveness. Kwan (2020) concluded that despite sporadic assertions for the blended approach of transformational leadership and instructional leadership in schools, the literature is contested mainly by major proponents of using one or the other approach. This research affirms that school principals should consider using a blended approach of instructional and transformational leadership practices to lead their schools to effectiveness particularly at the secondary school level.

The study was in concert with many aspects of the literature and highlighted that there is a relationship between Principal Leadership Practices and School Effectiveness. The study brought to the fore that Grenadian school leadership ought to be developed with a focus on managing change and the instructional programme so as to lead these institutions to effectiveness. The Ministry of Education and institutions offering programmes to develop school leaders should consider tailoring programmes or professional development sessions that incorporate the use of change management and instructional leadership.

The study challenged the assertions of Neumerski et al. (2018) that principal instructional leadership practices can be difficult to execute by emphasizing the need for a principal to be an instructional leader, manage change effectively, and be accountable in the position held. To achieve these ends the leader must share leadership so as to have the necessary time and expertise to deal with these domains. Shared leadership allows for teachers to be given opportunities to utilize their talents and at the same time developing a culture of team work through collaboration. Teachers should not operate independently in their classrooms but together with all stakeholders in the school community i.e., school leaders should allow for the distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities within the classroom for students' learning. It is important to have an environment that encourages high performance. The Ministry of Education may consider employing vice principals and heads of department on a term basis so that there can be a rotational policy of sharing leadership within schools. Additionally, policies should be developed to have a support system of school managers in public schools. School managers can assist principal with management issues so that more time is afforded to instructional and transformational leadership practices.

Hallinger (2018) supported the idea of distributive leadership influencing student outcomes, as teachers become a more integral part, by taking ownership and becoming problem solvers, as part of a cohesive team. Leadership therefore, must rest in the hands of many and not a single person. It will prevent future problems involved in leadership stability and leadership continuity. This further suggest that the Ministry of Education can develop a cadre of school leaders by building a community of learners of school leaders and providing opportunities for aspiring school leaders to harness their leadership abilities. A programme of mentorship for school leaders can be instituted through the Secondary Schools Principal Association whereby other practices such as cheerleading and coaching can be incorporated. This can further lead to the introduction of a principal association for primary schools.

In conclusion, the study has implication for general policy development to emphasize the role of principal as the drivers of educational reform or change within the system such as implementing new curriculum innovation or new education policy. Policy options should focus on the development of principals through training programmes or professional development initiatives to cultivate a leader

who is capable of managing the instructional programme and inspire vision and strategy in followers to achieve the desired results of the organization whilst implementing a change program.

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