

## Model of Virtual Instructional Leadership by Mobile-Mediating Technology

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**Abstract:** In Malaysia, one of the government's aspirations is to place high-performance leaders in schools. This aspiration is clearly emphasised in Chapter 5 of the Malaysia Educational Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025. One of the important elements that need to be emphasised in order to realise the aspiration is the instructional leadership function. However, now a days school leaders found busy with administrative task and always being outsidess school and rarely to meet teachers to concern about teaching and learning matters. Based on this situation, this study propose the concept of instructional leadership to overcome those problem. By manipulating mobile-mediated technology, this study propose conceptual model of virtual instructional leadership containing three dimensions namely defining school mission, managing program instruction and promoting school climate. This three dimension are measured by eight constructs namely framing school goals, communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, integrating mobile technology, monitoring student's progress, providing incentives for students, providing incentives for teachers and involving in community support. Hopefully, the school leaders could using this proposed model to maximize their instructional leadership performance, although, being far and dynamic places from their staff.

**Key words:** Instructional leadership, virtual leadership, mobile technology, aspiration, hopefully, providing incentives for students

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### INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education has described clearly the aspiration to produce knowledgeable young people who can think critically and creatively with strong leadership skills and can communicate globally (MEM., 2013) Leadership is often an important topic in the organisation (Hallinger, 2011a, b; Yusof and Ibrahim, 2015; Ibrahim, 2012). The past studies of effective school formulated that an effective school leader is the major factor in the success of school (Hornig and Loeb, 2010; Hoy and Miskel, 2013; Akmaliah and Soaib, 2011). In school, one of the important elements that need to be emphasised is an instructional leadership among school leaders.

School leaders are advised to apply strategic approaches and plan some strategies in line with the school vision and mission as well as the government aspirations in Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025. That means, principals do not only practise an instructional leadership but they need to apply strategic leadership in schools. Besides, communication is an important factor to connect all units in school. Recently,

new technologies have led to changes in the way people communicate. The new mediums of communication such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram and Facebook are very popular among users. The popularity knows no boundaries and this includes teachers as they even form active cyber community.

Now a days with the rapid changes in virtual communication, the best strategy is that principals can be changed from traditional instructional leadership concept to virtual instructional leadership. Virtual instructional leadership was defined as the principal's behaviour that integrates mobile technology such as Smartphone, iPad and Tablet using social media applications (web applications and communication applications) such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, Facebook and Google Plus in performing instructional leadership functions (Rahimi, 2017).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Instructional leadership:** In Malaysia, instructional leadership has begun to attract attention after a research

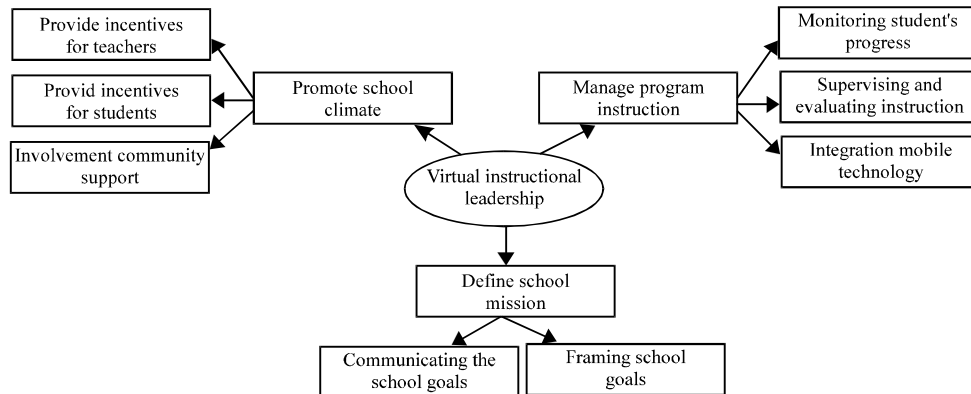


Fig. 1: Instructional leadership’s model

found that it has a significant relationship with effective schools (Ibrahim 2012; Sazali *et al.*, 2007). However, since, 1970’s until now, researchers are still debating about the definition of instructional leadership (Glasman, 1986; Hallinger, 2011a, b; Hallinger and Murphy, 1985).

Based on literature, instructional leadership can be defined as principal’s behaviour to improve teaching and learning, teacher teaching competencies and student’s academic achievement (Glasman, 1984, 1986; Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; James and Balasandran, 2013). However, the rapid advancement of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) also influence a leadership definition. Most academicians define leadership as principal’s behaviour that integrates ICT and mobile technology in leadership style and practices (Hornig and Loeb, 2010; Lashway, 2002; Mohd Yusri and Aziz, 2013).

The disagreement in defining instructional leadership has caused different models to be developed such as Hallinger and Murphy (1985)’s Model, Murphy’s Model and Weber’s Model. Hallinger and Murphy’s Model has been widely accepted among researchers (Hallinger, 2011a, b). Since, 1980’s till 2010, 130 studies have been using the Hallinger and Murphy models (Hallinger, 2011a, b) and more than 200 researchers from 26 countries used Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) as a research instrument (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Hallinger and Bryant, 2013).

A study conducted in Malaysia found that most principals are practising all the instructional leadership functions as found in the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) Model. However, the findings show that there are differences in the aspects of instructional leadership practice for each element (Audryanah, 2017; Davarajoo, 2012; Abdullah and Kassim, 2012).

Principals are urged to generalise instructional leadership in general to improve school effectiveness and academic achievement (Hallinger, 2011a, b; Ibrahim, 2015). In fact, the principals face some constraints in practising all the functions of instructional leadership (MEM., 2013) due to the fact that they are busy with administrative tasks such as attending meetings, workshops and conferences (Alias *et al.*, 2010; Abdullah and Kassim, 2012; Taat and Minhat, 2013).

The concept of instructional leadership is a variable that contains three dimensions (define school mission, manage instructional programs and promote school climate) and eight constructs (framing school goals, communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring student’s progress, providing incentives for students, providing incentives for teachers, integration mobile technology and involvement in community support). The conceptual of instructional leadership was shown in Fig. 1.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Mobile-mediated instructional leadership:** Principals do not have enough time to focus on the curriculum and teaching (Abdullah and Kassim, 2012; Ahmad and Boon, 2011; Rahimi, 2017). As a result, principals lack the time to communicate, especially with teachers. At the same time, group communication become less effective (Velloo and Komuji, 2013). To address this problem, most researchers suggest that principals should integrate mobile technology into instructional leadership or known as virtual instructional leadership.

In the context of virtual leadership, it is moving along with the rapid development of information technology and communications and mobile technology (Avolio *et al.*,

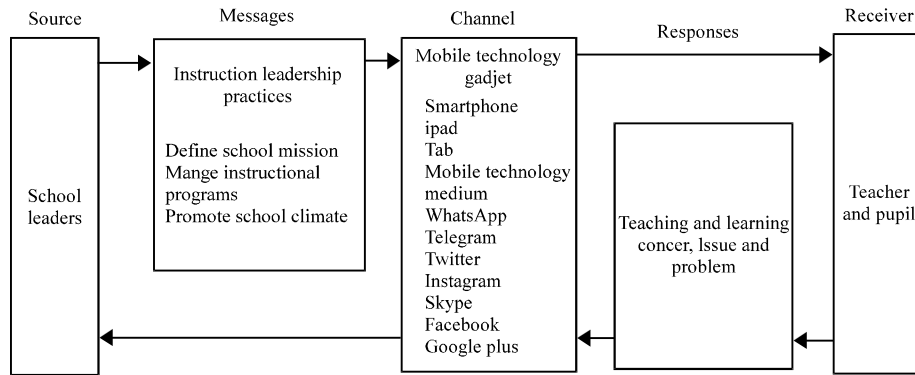


Fig. 2: Model of virtual instructional leadership

2014). The impact of the 21st century has been causing a shift in research in leadership including instructional leadership. Virtual leadership is a new paradigm that provides opportunities for communicating ability, enhancing organisational performance by creating multi-functional teams, enhancing customer satisfaction and reducing costs as well as providing room for improved management knowledge (DasGupta, 2011).

Virtual leadership should be practicing among leaders including instructional leadership. Nearly a decade ago, researchers had suggested to school leaders to integrate mobile technology in their instructional leadership practices (Ibrahim, 2012; Rahimi, 2017). Referring to the issues in the previous studies and related models, the conceptual model of virtual instructional leadership was proposed as shown in Fig. 2.

This proposed model was suggested by combination the classical model of communication and conventional model of instructional leadership. The classical model of communication containing 5 main elements namely source, message, channel, receiver and response from receiver to the source. In this leader-follower relating, school leaders are source who sending messages about teaching and learning matter to teacher or pupils as receiver. Teachers and pupils also sending responses about any issues of teaching and learning back to the school leaders. In traditional model, interaction between school leaders and teachers or pupils experiencing in face to face mode while in this model the interaction will perform using mobile-mediating mode. For more clear, virtual instructional leadership is a concept that school leaders are practices their dimensions of instructional leadership by manipulating mobile technology hardware and software as communication channel. The mobile technology gadget can be using such as smartphone, iPad or any type of tab while communication apps such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Twitter and Web Apps such Facebook and any type of Web 2.0.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, this study has successfully developed a proposed conceptual model of virtual instructional leadership which is modified from the Hallinger and Murphy Model. However, unlike the Hallinger and Murphy Model, this conceptual framework is developed on the basis of Malaysian educational system and practices. To realise the government inspiration in MEB 2013-2025, this study is proposing the new function in virtual instructional leadership namely integrating mobile technology and involvement in community support. At same time, this model proposed mobile-mediated technology as interaction channel between school leaders and classroom teachers. It is hoped that this paper can be a guide to school leaders to practise the virtual instructional leadership especially when they are not in school. This is because instructional leadership is an important element to improve school effectiveness and academic achievement. Finally, the success of developing this conceptual framework is expected to contribute and guide the researchers to do their future research.

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