

The Relationship Of Instructional Leadership Towards Teachers' Development Through Instructional Coaching Among Malaysian School Leaders

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Abstract

Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013 - 2025) has outlined 11 shifts that focus on the development of the Malaysian education system. The 5th shift highlights the role of principals as instructional leaders who are responsible for bringing excellence to the organization through improving teachers' knowledge and skills within teaching and learning. Accordingly, this study aimed to identify the relationship of instructional leadership (IL) towards teacher development (TD) through instructional coaching (IC) among Malaysian school leaders. The study design is a survey method with a quantitative approach using questionnaire. Total of sample involved in this study are 1265 respondents consisting of principals and head teachers, Senior Curriculum Assistant, Head of Subject Field, Head of Subject Committee, and teachers. Samples were selected based on multi-stage cluster sampling method. Data were analysed using inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and multiple regressions). Pearson correlation test shows that the relationship between instructional leadership and instructional coaching towards teacher development is significant. Whereas multiple regression analysis shows that instructional leadership and instructional coaching were correlated and contributed significantly to teacher development.

Keywords: instructional leadership, instructional coaching, teacher development

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

The 21st century is an era of globalization which demands that we compete with developed nations in our quest for progress. The issue of education that has taken place since independence until now has also brought about a stream of educational change in the management of educational organizations. According to Hatch (2009), change is natural and uncontrollable and changes occur when economic, climate and technological developments occur. In this regard, the enacted Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013-2025) outlined 11 shifts to ensure school excellence continues to be emphasized.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) is responsible for reviewing the role of school leaders and teachers who are the front line in the national education system, focusing on improving quality and support for teachers and school leaders. Student achievement is the focus of the MOE based on teacher quality in teaching, learning and facilitating. The emphasis of the 21st century learning environment by the MOE is to ensure that all schools in Malaysia are in line with globalization and are able to compete internationally. As such, school leaders possess as

agents of change to ensure that the policies of the MOE are formulated in a successful manner in the school. This is to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the education transformation systems is understood by everyone involved in school community. This is about the important role they play and the benefits they will gain. Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008), found that instructional leadership has a significant impact on student academic achievement. This finding is in line with Hallinger and Heck's (2003) opinion that principals need the commitment and cooperation of teachers to ensure improvement in student achievement. According to Reed (2015), in addition to teacher collaboration and commitment, the quality of teacher teaching also influences student achievement.

1.2 Explore Importance of the Problem

MOE (2010) emphasizes the role and responsibilities of principals in planning, coordinating and evaluating instructional and learning activities in order to enhance the performance of principals and the quality of student achievement. The findings of the Malaysian Inspectoral Department (Jemaah Nazir dan Jaminan Kualiti, 2014) in 2011, 2012 and 2013 showed that the quality of teaching, learning and facilitating among Malaysian school teachers was less than impressive, with only 3.22 per cent achieving excellent and 14.20 per cent achieving good level (Jemaah Nazir dan Jaminan Kualiti, 2014). This showed, indirectly affects student outcome as we know schools are the most important agents in building future generations (Rahimah, 2005). As a school leader, principals are responsible for ensuring that their school is on the right track to ensure the success of their students.

According to Bean and Dagen (2012) to help teachers make direct and effective improvements in teachers' pedagogy it is best through instructional coaching. Findings from The University of Kansas Centre for Research and Learning report that traditional professional development models contribute only 10% of teaching and learning implementation in the classroom compared to the instructional coaching effectiveness contributed 85% – 90% of teaching and learning implementation in the classroom (Devino & Fitzsimons, 2008).

In the implementation of instructional coaching, there are several aspects that need to be taken into consideration, such as ensuring teacher is in direct contact for a sufficient period of time. This is evidenced by the findings of L'Allier et al., (2010), that instructional coaching performed in a timely manner can impact student achievement. Effective instructional coaching can influence teacher quality in teaching and learning, so instructional leaders hold the responsibility of teacher development effectively. The 2013-2025 Education Development Plan report (page 28) shows that teachers are only able to deliver 50% of their teaching effectively. Most of the teachers delivering their teaching passively. This situation shows that professional development gained by teachers in Malaysia has little to do with improving teachers' capacity in their work especially teaching. Some measures need to be taken immediately as more than 60% of today's teachers will be teaching for the next 20 years (Malaysian Education Development Plan, 2013-2025).

According to Taufani et al. (2020) findings, in Malaysia the influence by teacher learning on teacher professional development was only 1.4%. Do principals as instructional leaders play their role? There is a gap in literature on school leaders' role directly on teacher development in teaching and learning through instructional coaching. For that purpose, one study needs to be conducted. Thus, the study looked at the relationship of instructional leadership practices to teacher development through instructional coaching among school leaders in Malaysia.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to identify the instructional leadership relationship to teacher development through instructional coaching among school leaders in Malaysia

1.4 Research Objective

1. To Identify the relationship between instructional leadership towards teacher development through instructional coaching among school leaders in Malaysia based on school leaders' perceptions.
2. To Identify the relationship between instructional leadership towards teacher development through instructional coaching among school leaders in Malaysia based on school teachers' perceptions.
3. The contribution of instructional leadership and instructional coaching towards teacher development.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

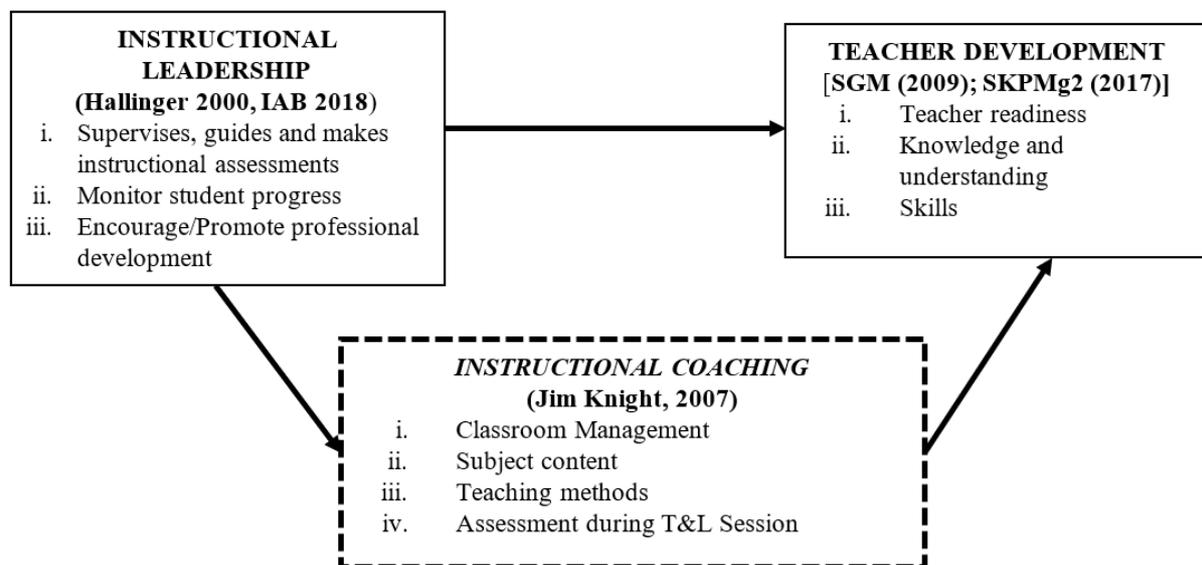


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

1.6 Study Limitations

- The study sample consisted of school leaders (Principal / Headmaster, Senior Curriculum Assistant, Head of Subject Field, Head of Subject Committee) and teachers.
- Instructional leadership only look at elements related to supervising and managing instructional programs and professional development of teachers in the models of Hallinger and Murphy, (2000) and IAB (2018), Teacher development based on a combination of SGM (2009) and SKPM g2 (2017), while Instructional coaching in turn, see four elements by Jim Knight (2007).
- Quantitative and virtual studies are conducted due to financial constraints.

1.7 Literature Reviews

1.7.1 Instructional Leadership

Hallinger (2000) has defined instructional leadership as a leader that prioritizes goal setting, managing instructional programs and school climate approaches. Based on these three (3) dimensions, only ten elements are defined: Formulating school goals, defining school goals, supervise and evaluating teaching, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student development, maintaining teaching time, promoting professional development, maintaining learning support, providing incentives for teachers and provide incentives for students.

Hallinger (2000) and Murphy (1990) have also defined, supervised and made instructional assessments to ensure that teachers' classroom teaching and learning plans are aligned with school goals, taking into account student work performance when assessing teacher teaching, conducting informal observations in the classroom on a regular basis (informal means unstructured supervision takes approximately 5 minutes), state the strength of the teacher in teaching on the absorption form and the weakness of the teacher in the teaching on the absorption form. According to Weber (1989), in the principal's instructional leadership practice there are some critical elements that cannot be implemented by principals in their administration that require principals to share with their staff in improving or maintaining high standards and expectations in student work and curriculum supervision. According to Nurahimah and Rafisah (2010), effective supervision is a participatory supervision that emphasizes knowledge, skills and interpersonal skills.

Therefore, the Principal needs followers such as teachers, students, students and parents to carry out the leadership process and as a leader, he or she can achieve the school's dreams / vision and goals. The literature review conducted indicates that an effective leader can influence his subordinates to achieve the goals and mission of the organization. McGuire (2008), Marks and Printy (2003) and Lambert (2002) agree that leaders should share power and influence with teachers, staff, parents and students because through this partnership each individual in the school can take responsibility and commit to achieving the school's goals. The literature review also found that

leaders influence an organization through shared goals. Hallinger and Heck (2010) explain that to influence the student academic achievement, sharing of the vision and mission of the school must be done with the community. James and Balasandran (2009) also emphasized the importance of principals sharing their vision and mission for holistic implementation. Mc Ewan (2002) in the instructional leadership model also emphasized the need to prioritize clear academic goals that would not have been possible without cooperation in achieving them.

1.7.2 Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is one way to train teachers to become more proficient (Jones.G, 2018). This can be done with a mentoring session between a school leader and a teacher or a teacher's friend. The purpose of instructional coaching is to help teachers learn and adapt the latest teaching practices. In addition it is also a space to help teachers provide feedback on teaching, learning and facilitating performance. According to Knight (2007), instructional coaching provides a unique and supportive way for each teacher to enable them to practice best and succeed in the classroom. Jacobs, J., Boardman, A., Potvin, A. and Wang, C. (2018), explores instructional coaching practices and sees close links with teacher professional development in schools that directly reinforce teacher teaching to be more effective. Instructional coaching is also a method that ensures all teachers are directly involved in improving their teaching and learning skills or in other words no teacher will be excluded from professional development. Therefore, whenever an instructional guidance session is completed then an evaluation should be conducted to see the effectiveness of the guidance and whether there is improvement in the teacher's teaching, learning and facilitating (Jacobs.J et al., 2018).

Knight (2007), also highlighted instructional coaching practices using the Big Four (4) frameworks: i) classroom management, ii) course content, iii) teaching and iv) assessment for learning. Instructional coaching in classroom management involves the collaboration of teachers who address a variety of issues related to student learning. However, if the problem of student behavior is out of control through instructional coaching, teachers collaborate and will work hard to ensure classroom management is outstanding. Instructional coaching for the content of the subject matter is also important for a teacher because if a teacher is able to manage the classroom well, but if his knowledge of the content of the teaching and learning subject is weak, it will impede the teacher's teaching and learning session.

Jacobs.J et al. (2018) clarify that instructional coaching practices are not uniformly applied to all teachers but who needs guidance based on the teacher's needs. As a whole, all teachers have the opportunity to ensure that their knowledge is enhanced in the subject. Teachers are able to reinforce knowledge in the subject matter more importantly and know how to present the content clearly and effectively (Knight, 2007).

Once teachers are able to master the classroom effectively and understand the content in depth, can the teacher convey the teaching effectively and effectively? Good and effective teaching requires a variety of interesting teaching and learning methods. Student learning assessment is also one of the Big Four (4) so that classroom management, content and teaching content can be carried out effectively and efficiently. Instructional coaching is therefore seen as a catalyst for teachers to continually improve in teaching and learning.

1.7.3 Teacher Development

In the Master Teacher Development Professional Development Plan (PIPPK), KPM (2016) stated that there are three career paths for teachers, namely the teaching, learning and facilitating, Leadership and Educational Expertise path. School performance is measured by student achievement. To improve student performance, instructional sessions in the classroom need to be effective. Therefore, the delivery of teachers should enhance student learning. There have been numerous studies that have shown that only teacher development programs can improve student academic performance (Vannemann, Hamilton, Anderson & Rahman, 2009; Georgia Department of Education, 2010). According to Wood (2013), the training and continuous learning of quality teachers is very important in providing high quality education to produce student success.

Education in Malaysia has changed from time to time and every change presents a variety of challenges to schools. At the same time, 21st century education demands that every teacher competent a broad range of knowledge in order to compete with the challenges of globalization. Although the process of teaching and learning is a master's task, the challenges of the 21st century cannot be overlooked. According to Abu and Ismail (2010), teacher readiness can be seen in three main aspects: cognitive readiness (literacy), psychomotor readiness (skills) and affective readiness (attitude). He also stated that in order to operate the teaching, learning and facilitating process effectively, teachers must have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Teachers must plan lessons before starting teaching, learning and facilitating regardless of their experienced teacher, excellent teacher or specialist teacher. Teacher preparation will involve different times depending on the

student's achievement, class, materials, and individual skills. The results of the study by Mohd Yusof & Mohd Fahmi (2016) found that every teacher regardless of subject matter has knowledge in teaching preparation. According to Yeo and Abdul Halim (2010), knowledge and skills are related to one another, especially in relation to pedagogy method. Learning will be smooth, engaging and effective if teachers use a variety of methods that are relevant to the content and skills that students will achieve. Further, when teachers are smart in using their style of speech and voice intonation, storytelling, facial expressions and humor, they will continue to be interested in learning and the learners can be taught effectively (Ikhsan & Daniel, 2012). Teaching and learning will be most effective if assessments are made to evaluate the actual effectiveness of student learning. According to Mohamad Said and Alias (2013), teachers need to know how to achieve individual and group objectives, especially in the classroom.

2. Method

The study design utilized the survey method by collecting data directly from the subject studied and could generalize the population (Creswell 2008). Sample selection is based on multistage cluster sampling. According to Babbie (2001) this sampling is suitable for obtaining samples from large and big populations (Maimunah 2005; Jafri 2010; Jamelaa 2013). Principal sample selection was based on the number of principals and head teachers based on state. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) quoted from Chua (2006), the main basis of the selection of samples in this study must be based on the study population. This is because according to Jafri (2010) the selected sample should be generalizable and represent the population. Sekaran (2003) found that the sample size exceeds 30 and less than 500 is in line with the research needs.

Of the 30342 populations and sample selection according to Krejcie and Morgan in Chua (2006), only 1795 school samples were selected. The total number of respondents from the actual study was 1265 (70.47%) respondents consisting of Principal, Headmaster (PGB), Senior Assistant Teacher, Head of Field, Head of Committee and teacher in 16 states throughout Malaysia.

2.1 Instrument

This study used questionnaires as a main tool for quantitative research to gather information on instructional leadership practices on teacher development in teaching, learning and facilitating through instructional coaching practices among school leaders in Malaysia. The basis for the selection of research constructs is based on instructional leadership models (Hallinger, 2000) and High Performance Leadership Standards (IAB, 2018), for teacher development using the Malaysian Teacher Standards (2009) and SKPMg2 (2017), while for Instructional coaching it is based on the model instructional guidance (Jim Knight, 2007).

2.2 Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

Procedures for data collection and analysis are the most important stages for ensuring the success and failure of a study (Jainabee 2005). The data collection procedure involves the procedure of distributing and collecting the questionnaire twice, the first for pilot studies conducted from 2 to 15 February 2019 and the actual study from 1 to 20 April to early. The pilot data collection process was conducted in February 2019 and the actual study was in April via virtual (google form, url shared via WhatsApp or telegram application). The first step is to obtain the approval of the Education Policy Planning and Research Division (BPPDP) and the State Education Department. Once permission is obtained the questionnaire url is extended via virtual to the selected schools. The questionnaire consisted of two sets - set A for school leaders and set B for teachers. For the teacher questionnaire, the cover letter is included listing the teacher criteria that the principal should choose in order to answer the questionnaire that i) the teacher must serve under the supervised principal for at least one year, ii) the teacher must have been confirmed in the post and a permanent teacher.

Schools are given two to three weeks to respond to the questionnaire. According to Maimunah (2005) and Oppenheim (2005), the average time to answer a questionnaire is between 2 and 3 weeks because if the longer answer period is given then the url is lost or destroyed. Oppenheim (2005) also suggested that notification should be given to respondents in the event that the questionnaire url was not obtained. Therefore, researchers have sent out the reminder emails to schools that failed to respond to the questionnaire after the deadline. A pilot study of 500 respondents provided feedback on urls shared via WhatsApp and telegram.

For the actual study, the number of respondents who responded to the url shared via WhatsApp and telegram was 1265 people out of 1795 suggested sample. The response rate was 70.47 percent. The survey response rate is in line with Chua's (2006) recommendation that the return rate above 60 percent is sufficient to analyze. Cohen and Manion in Jamil (2002) suggest that response rates between 70 and 80 percent are better. This indicates that the

response rate of the survey for this study was adequate and high and outperformed the recommendations of Chua (2006) and Cohen and Manion in Jamil (2002).

3. Results

i. To Identify the relationship between instructional leadership towards teacher development through instructional coaching among school leaders in Malaysia based on school leaders' perceptions

The parametric test that is the Pearson correlation test is used and the results are as in Table 1 below. There are three interpretations that can be made instead of correlation analysis, i.e. 1) can see the strength of the relationship between three variables, 2) can see the significance of the relationship between the three variables, and 3) can see the direction of the relationship.

Table 1. Correlation Between Teacher Development, Instructional Coaching, and Instructional Leadership Based on School Leaders' Perceptions

	TD	IC	IL
Teacher Development (TD)	-	0.56	0.57
Instructional Coaching (IC)	0.56	-	0.66
Instructional Leadership (IL)	0.57	0.66	-

Table 1 shows that's the Pearson correlation results between three relationships, namely the relationship between TD and IC are significant ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$), as well as the relationship between TD and IL ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$) while the relationship between IC and IL ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$) are significant. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between TD, IC and IL. These findings also show the strong correlation between TD, IC and IL (as shows in Table 2). In addition, the correlation coefficient (r) is positive which means that the relationship between dependent variables and independent variables is one-way. Thus, such relationships conclude that with increasing TD, also will increase IC and IL. Relatively, the respondents surveyed had a relationship between TD, IC and IL.

Table 2. Interpretation of Correlation Coefficients

Correlation Coefficients	Size Correlation
0.10 hingga 0.29	Low
0.30 hingga 0.49	Medium
0.50 hingga 1.0	Strong

Source: Cohen (1988)

ii. To identify the relationship between instructional leadership towards teacher development through instructional coaching among school leaders in Malaysia based on school teachers' perceptions.

Table 3. Correlation Between Teacher Development, Instructional Coaching, and Instructional Leadership Based on School Teachers' Perceptions

	TD	IC	IL
Teacher Development (TD)	-	0.55	0.60
Instructional Coaching (IC)	0.55	-	0.66
Instructional Leadership (IL)	0.60	0.66	-

Table 3 above shows that's the Pearson correlation results between three relationships, namely the relationship between TD and IC are significant ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$), as well as the relationship between TD and IL ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$) while the relationship between IC and IL ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$) are significant. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between TD, IC and IL. This finding also shows the strong correlation between TD, IC and IL (as shows in Table 2). In addition, the correlation coefficient (r) is positive which means that the relationship between dependent variables and independent variables is one-way. Thus, such relationships conclude that with increasing TD, also will increase IC and IL. Relatively, the respondents surveyed had a relationship between TD, IC and IL.

iii. Contribution of Instructional Leadership And Instructional Coaching Towards Teacher Development

This section examines the contribution of independent variables that comprise the domain of instructional leadership and instructional coaching. The dependent variable for this study was teacher development.

The multiple linear regression model can be described as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + r$$

Whereby;

\hat{Y} = criterion variable (dependent)

$X_1 \dots X_2$ = predictor variable (independent)

$b_1 \dots b_2$ = regression coefficients for each predictor variable

a = regression constant

r = error

Multiple regression analysis was used to answer the research question.

Table 4a. Multiple regression (stepwise) (Contributor to Teacher Development)

Independent Variable	B	Beta β	t	Sig. t	R ²	Contribution
Instructional Leadership	0.285	0.353	11.152	0.000	0.323	32.3
Instructional Coaching	0.243	0.326	10.278	0.000	0.383	6.0
Constant	1.972		25.453	0.000		
R	0.619					
R Square	0.383					
Adjusted R Square	0.382					
Standard Error	0.335					

Table 4b. Variance Analysis

Model	Sum Squared	df	Mean Square	F	Significant level
Regression	75.728	2	37.864	337.012	0.000**
Residual	122.127	1087	0.112		
Total	197.855	1089			

Table 4a and 4b showed a multiple linear regression was calculating to predict (Teacher Development-DV) based on (Instructional Leadership-IV1) and (Instructional Coaching-IV2). Findings indicate that Instructional Leadership and Instructional Coaching were significantly contributing (38.3%) to teacher development.

The highest predictor variable that contributed 32.3 percent to teacher development was the domain of instructional leadership (β 0.353, t 11.152 and p 0.000). This indicates that when the instructional leadership score increases by one unit, the teacher development score increases by 0.353 units. This finding explains that instructional leadership practices are a major factor contributing 32.3 per cent to teacher development.

The second most important predictor variable that contributed 6 percent to teacher development was the domain of instructional coaching (β 0.326, t 10.278 and p 0.000). This indicates that when the instructional coaching score increases by one unit, the teacher development score increases by 0.326 units. This finding explains that instructional coaching contributed 6 percent to teacher development.

The variance analysis in Table 4b shows the F value of 337.012 (DK2, 1087) and a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The R Square ($R^2 = 0.383$) represents the overall contribution of two independent variables to teacher development by 38.3 percent, namely the instructional leadership domain (32.3%) and the instructional coaching domain (6%). In conclusion, the overall contribution of two independent variables that are significant to teacher development can be explained by the following regression equations;

$$\hat{Y} = 1.972 + 0.285 X_1 + 0.243 X_2 + 0.335$$

Whereby;

\hat{Y} = Teacher Development

X1 = Instructional Leadership

X2 = Instructional Coaching

a (Constant) = 1.972

r (Error) = 0.335

Figure 2 shows the correlation between the three relationships, the correlation relationship based on the perceptions of leaders and teachers concluded that as the practice of instructional leadership and instructional coaching increased, teacher development will increase too. In conclusion, the overall contribution of the instructional leadership relationship to teacher development through instructional coaching is higher by 6%, than the direct relationship of instructional leadership to teacher development.

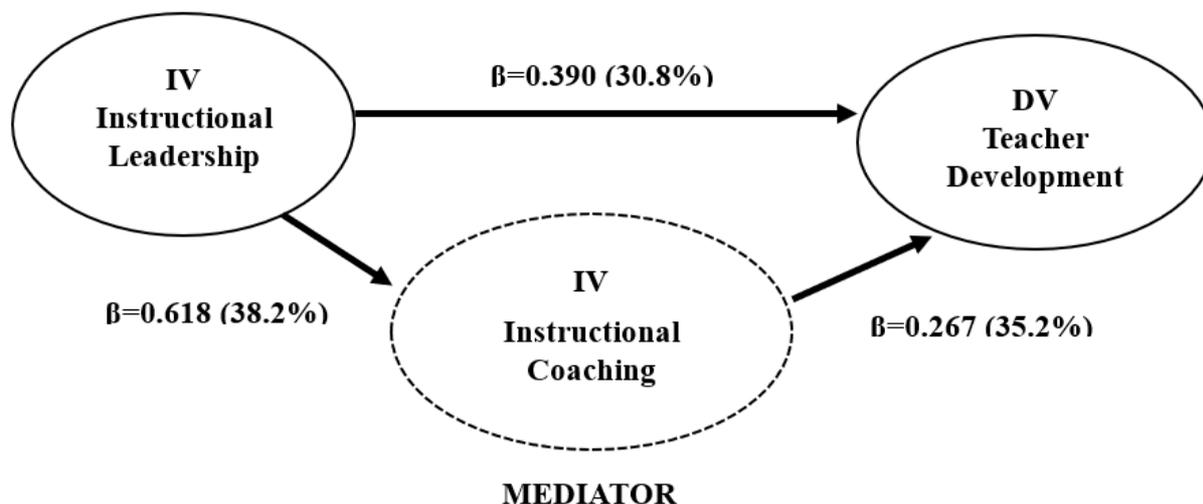


Figure 2. Influence of Instructional Leadership Towards Teacher Development Through Instructional Coaching

Findings of the regression equation show that there are two variables that correlate and affect and contribute to teacher development among leaders who practice instructional leadership and instructional coaching.

4. Discussion

The results of the study yield that instructional coaching is a mediator to help enhance the teachers' repertoire of their teaching and learning strategies. This study also shows that a school leader plays the role of an Instructional Leader when he or she is engaged in coaching, mentoring and facilitating his or her subordinates in order to improve his/her teaching and learning techniques as opposed to the conventional vis-a-vis formal teacher training methods.

Teachers need a strong support from their school leader to help them improve their classroom management control, content of their subject matter, various aspects of their pedagogy and student assessments. According to Feder (2006), Showers (1980), Knight (2007) and Marsh (2009), the implementation of instructional coaching has improved the teachers' practices exponentially. This phenomenon clearly indicates that instructional coaching is a key determinant of the teacher development in building the teachers' capacity in improving the quality of the teachers' teaching and learning repertoires.

Based on the above mentioned discussion, this study reaffirmed that most of the Malaysian School Leaders are adhering to Instructional Coaching practices in enriching their PLC capacity, such as Transformational School Programme 2025 (TS25). The Malaysian Blue Print (2013-2025) has stated that the Principal's role as an Instructional Leader is strongly correlated in the teacher quality and student performances. Hence, it is the onus of the school leaders to serve as key support system for their teachers to perform at their utmost best and succeed as auspicious leaders in their future endeavor.

In sum, the Instructional Coaching method ensures that all teachers should be directly involved in improving their teaching and learning skills and that no one teacher should be excluded from the professional development in line with the saying "no one left behind".

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