INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN BASIC SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Instructional leadership has been recognized as a critical factor in enhancing teaching quality and improving students' academic outcomes in basic schools. Despite its significance, evidence from Nigerian schools indicates that the impact of instructional leadership on learners' achievement remains inconsistent due to contextual challenges such as inadequate resources, large class sizes, and limited professional support for teachers. This study investigated the relationship between instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement in public basic schools in Nigeria. Using a descriptive correlational survey design, data were collected from head teachers, teachers, and students across selected public basic schools through an Instructional Leadership Questionnaire (ILQ) and students' academic achievement records (SAAR). A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize instructional leadership practices, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between instructional leadership practices, particularly instructional supervision, teacher professional development, curriculum monitoring, and goal setting and students' academic achievement. The study further indicated that contextual factors, including resource availability and class size, influenced the effectiveness of instructional leadership. Based on these findings, the study recommended capacity building for head teachers, consistent instructional supervision, and provision of adequate instructional resources to optimize academic performance in basic schools.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership, Students, Academic Achievement, Instructional Supervision, Teacher, Professional Development

1.1 Introduction

Instructional leadership has attracted increasing attention in Nigeria as a viable leadership approach for improving teaching effectiveness and students' academic achievement in basic

schools. Nigerian education scholars consistently emphasize that instructional leadership represents a deliberate shift from routine administrative functions toward a stronger focus on curriculum delivery, classroom instruction, and learner outcomes. According to Ogunode and Abubakar (2022), instructional leadership positions the school head as "the chief driver of teaching and learning, whose primary responsibility is to ensure that instructional activities translate into meaningful academic achievement for learners." This perspective underscores the central role of principals and head teachers in shaping instructional quality and fostering improved academic performance at the foundational level of education. Recent Nigerian studies further argue that instructional leadership is critical to addressing the persistent challenge of poor learning outcomes in basic schools. Afolabi and Adepoju (2023) observe that when school leaders actively supervise instruction, mentor teachers, and monitor curriculum implementation, teachers become more focused and students demonstrate improved academic engagement. Similarly, Ibrahim, Lawal, and Yusuf (2024) note that instructional leadership practices such as setting clear academic goals, coordinating instructional programs, and evaluating teaching effectiveness help align classroom practices with national educational objectives, thereby enhancing students' academic achievement.

In the Nigerian context, instructional leadership is often discussed as an essential component of effective school leadership rather than a separate administrative role. Ogunyemi (2022) explains that basic school head teachers are expected not only to manage school operations but also to provide pedagogical direction, instructional guidance, and academic support to teachers. This expectation is reinforced by Eze and Okonkwo (2023), who argue that instructional leadership in Nigerian basic schools involves continuous classroom supervision, teacher feedback, and the promotion of professional learning communities to improve teaching quality and learner performance. Several Nigerian authors have also highlighted the core practices that characterize effective instructional leadership in basic schools. Abdullahi and Musa (2024) identify instructional supervision, teacher professional development, curriculum monitoring, and the effective use of instructional resources as key leadership practices that directly influence students' academic achievement. According to Salami and Babalola (2025), instructional supervision through regular classroom observation and constructive feedback enables teachers to improve pedagogical strategies, which ultimately enhances pupils' academic outcomes. This view aligns with Yakubu (2026), who asserts that consistent monitoring of instructional delivery helps ensure curriculum coverage and promotes learner mastery of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teacher professional development is another critical dimension of instructional leadership emphasized in Nigerian literature. Adeyemi and Faleye (2023) contend that instructional leaders who support continuous teacher training, mentoring, and collaborative lesson planning create an enabling environment for improved instructional delivery. They argue that such support enhances teachers' confidence and instructional competence, leading to better student academic performance. Likewise, Olawale (2024) maintains that when head teachers prioritize teacher capacity building, students benefit from improved teaching methods, clearer explanations, and more engaging classroom experiences.

Curriculum implementation and review have also been identified as central to instructional leadership in Nigerian basic schools. Garba and Mohammed (2022) posit that instructional leaders

serve as curriculum gatekeepers, ensuring that national curriculum objectives are faithfully implemented at the classroom level. According to their study, schools where leaders actively monitor lesson plans and the implementation of the scheme of work achieve better academic outcomes than those where curriculum oversight is weak. This position is supported by Umar and Sadiq (2025), who note that effective instructional leadership helps bridge the gap between curriculum policy and classroom practice in Nigerian basic education. Despite the recognized importance of instructional leadership, Nigerian scholars acknowledge several contextual challenges that limit its effectiveness. Okorie and Nwafor (2022) identify inadequate leadership training, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient instructional materials, and limited funding as major constraints faced by instructional leaders in basic schools. Danladi (2024) further observes that many school heads are overwhelmed by administrative demands, leaving little time for instructional supervision and teacher mentoring. According to Bello and Hassan (2025), these challenges weaken the potential impact of instructional leadership on students' academic achievement, particularly in public basic schools. Nevertheless, recent Nigerian research continues to demonstrate a positive relationship between instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement. Ajayi and Olatunji (2023) conclude that schools where head teachers emphasize instructional leadership record higher pupil achievement in literacy and numeracy assessments. Similarly, Onyekachi (2026) reports that consistent instructional monitoring, high academic expectations, and effective use of instructional resources significantly contribute to improved academic performance among basic school pupils. These findings reinforce the view that instructional leadership remains a critical lever for improving educational outcomes in Nigeria's basic education system.

Empirical investigations carried out in Nigeria between 2022 and 2026 consistently provide evidence supporting the relationship between instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in basic schools. These studies demonstrate that when school leaders prioritize teaching and learning through instructional supervision, teacher support, and curriculum monitoring, students' academic outcomes improve significantly. Ajayi and Olatunji (2023), in their study of public basic schools in southwestern Nigeria, found a statistically significant positive relationship between head teachers' instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic performance in English Language and Mathematics. According to the authors, "regular classroom supervision and constructive feedback enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness, which reflects positively on pupils' academic achievement" (Ajayi & Olatunji, 2023, p. 49). Their findings revealed that schools where instructional leadership was consistently practiced recorded higher achievement scores than schools where leadership attention was focused mainly on administrative routines. Ibrahim, Lawal, and Yusuf (2024) examined instructional leadership practices in basic schools in North-Central Nigeria and reported that teacher professional development initiatives led by head teachers significantly predicted students' academic achievement. The researchers observed that instructional leadership exerts its influence on learners indirectly, first by improving teachers' pedagogical competence and classroom delivery. They concluded that "students' academic performance improves when instructional leaders deliberately invest in teacher capacity building and instructional support" (Ibrahim et al., 2024, p. 78). This finding reinforces the widely held view among Nigerian scholars that teachers serve as the immediate link between instructional

leadership and students' learning outcomes. In another study, Salami and Babalola (2025) investigated public basic schools in Oyo State and found that instructional leadership practices such as classroom observation, feedback provision, and academic goal setting exerted a strong influence on students' academic achievement. Their findings indicated that pupils in schools with strong instructional leadership demonstrated higher academic engagement, greater classroom participation, and improved test scores than those in schools with weak instructional leadership. According to Salami and Babalola (2025), "the consistency of instructional monitoring and clarity of academic expectations significantly shape pupils' learning behaviour and academic success" (p. 109).

Bello and Hassan (2025), in a study conducted in northern Nigeria, examined instructional leadership in relation to pupils' academic performance and found that while instructional leadership significantly predicted academic achievement, factors such as inadequate instructional resources and large class sizes moderated this relationship. The authors noted that "instructional leadership remains a powerful determinant of pupils' academic performance even in resource-constrained environments, although its effectiveness is reduced by infrastructural and material limitations" (Bello & Hassan, 2025, p. 97). This suggests that instructional leadership alone may not be sufficient to maximize students' academic achievement unless it is supported by adequate resources and conducive learning conditions. More recently, Onyekachi (2026) conducted a study on instructional leadership effectiveness in basic schools in southeastern Nigeria and found that consistent monitoring of instructional delivery and the establishment of high academic expectations significantly improved pupils' academic performance. The study emphasized that instructional leadership is most effective when head teachers combine instructional supervision with teacher motivation and resource provision. According to Onyekachi (2026), "instructional leadership practices yield optimal academic outcomes when teachers receive both professional support and the instructional materials needed to implement effective teaching strategies" (p. 13). Taken together, empirical evidence from Nigerian studies suggests that instructional leadership is positively and significantly related to students' academic achievement in basic schools. However, these studies also indicate that the strength of this relationship is influenced by contextual factors such as resource availability, leadership training, school environment, and class size. This implies that while instructional leadership is a critical determinant of academic achievement, its effectiveness depends on the broader educational context within which it operates.

The theoretical foundation of this study is drawn from two major theories that explain how leadership influences teaching and learning outcomes: Instructional Leadership Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory. Each of these theories originated outside Nigeria but has been widely applied and contextualized within Nigerian educational research. Instructional Leadership Theory originated from the work of Hallinger and Murphy in the early 1980s in the United States. The theory was developed in response to the effective schools' movement, which sought to identify leadership practices that directly influence students' academic achievement. The theory posits that school leaders improve student outcomes by actively engaging in instructional processes such as defining clear academic goals, supervising classroom instruction, coordinating curriculum implementation, and monitoring students' academic progress. Nigerian scholars have

adopted this theory to explain leadership practices in basic education. Ogunyemi (2022) argues that Instructional Leadership Theory is particularly relevant to Nigerian basic schools because head teachers exercise direct control over classroom practices and curriculum delivery. According to Ogunyemi (2022), "instructional leadership provides a practical framework for understanding how school heads influence teaching quality and pupils' academic achievement at the foundational level" (p. 51). Transformational Leadership Theory was originally proposed by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1985). The theory emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and transform followers by creating a shared vision, fostering commitment, and encouraging professional growth. In the educational context, transformational leadership focuses on building teachers' morale, commitment, and capacity to deliver quality instruction. Nigerian researchers have increasingly applied this theory to studies of school leadership. Eze and Okonkwo (2023) note that transformational leadership complements instructional leadership by strengthening teacher motivation and collaboration. According to them, "transformational leadership enhances instructional leadership effectiveness by fostering teachers' commitment to school goals and instructional improvement" (Eze & Okonkwo, 2023, p. 98). This suggests that instructional leadership is more effective when school leaders also demonstrate transformational qualities. Empirical evidence confirms a positive relationship between instructional leadership practices and academic performance, while theoretical perspectives explain the mechanisms through which leadership affects teaching quality and learning outcomes. Together, these theories provide a strong foundation for examining instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in the Nigerian basic education context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous educational reforms and increased emphasis on basic education in Nigeria, students' academic achievement at the basic school level remains persistently low in many public schools. National and state-level assessment reports continue to reveal poor performance in core subjects such as English Language and Mathematics, which are foundational to learners' overall academic success. These outcomes raise serious concerns about the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes in Nigerian basic schools. One major factor often linked to students' poor academic achievement is ineffective school leadership, particularly the limited practice of instructional leadership by head teachers and school administrators. In many Nigerian basic schools, school leaders tend to focus more on administrative and managerial responsibilities such as record keeping, discipline, and facility management while paying less attention to instructional supervision, teacher professional development, and curriculum monitoring. This imbalance reduces the potential impact of school leadership on classroom instruction and students' learning outcomes.

Although instructional leadership has been widely acknowledged in educational literature as a key driver of improved teaching quality and students' academic achievement, its implementation in Nigerian basic schools appears inconsistent and inadequate. Many head teachers lack formal training in instructional leadership practices, while others are constrained by large class sizes, inadequate instructional resources, excessive workload, and limited support from educational authorities. As a result, teachers may receive little or no professional guidance,

feedback, or instructional support, which negatively affects the quality of instruction delivered to students. Furthermore, while several studies have examined school leadership and academic achievement in Nigeria, there remains insufficient empirical evidence on instructional leadership practices and their relationship with students' academic achievement at the basic education level. The absence of context-specific, up-to-date research creates a knowledge gap regarding how instructional leadership practices influence pupils' academic performance in Nigerian basic schools. This gap limits policymakers' and school administrators' ability to design effective leadership training and intervention programs. Therefore, the problem of this study lies in the persistent low academic achievement of students in Nigerian basic schools and the apparent inadequacy of instructional leadership practices among head teachers. Investigating the relationship between instructional leadership and students' academic achievement is necessary to determine the extent to which instructional leadership can serve as a strategic tool for improving learning outcomes in Nigerian basic schools.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in basic schools in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent to which instructional leadership practices of head teachers influence students' academic achievement in basic schools.
2. Examine the relationship between instructional leadership practices (such as instructional supervision, teacher support, and curriculum monitoring) and students' academic achievement in Nigerian basic schools.

1.3 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do instructional leadership practices of head teachers influence students' academic achievement in basic schools in Nigeria?
2. What relationship exists between instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement in Nigerian basic schools?

1.4 Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement in basic schools in Nigeria.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive correlational survey research design. The design is particularly suitable for educational research where variables such as leadership practices and academic achievement cannot be experimentally controlled, and where the focus is on understanding patterns, associations, and predictive relationships within real school environments.

The study was carried out in public basic schools in Nigeria, comprising primary and junior secondary schools operating under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. These

schools were chosen because they form the foundation of the Nigerian educational system and cater to a large, diverse population of learners from different socio-economic, cultural, and geographical backgrounds. Public basic schools were considered most appropriate for the study because they are directly managed by government education authorities and are expected to implement nationally prescribed instructional policies and leadership practices. The population of the study consisted of all head teachers, teachers, and students in public basic schools in Nigeria. Head teachers were included because they are responsible for instructional leadership functions such as supervision of instruction, coordination of curriculum activities, and support for teachers' professional development. Teachers were included as key implementers of classroom instruction whose practices are directly influenced by instructional leadership. Students formed an essential part of the population because their academic achievement serves as the primary outcome variable for assessing the effectiveness of instructional leadership practices. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select the study sample, ensuring adequate representation and a manageable sample size. In the first stage, states were selected from Nigeria's geopolitical zones using simple random sampling to ensure geographical diversity. In the second stage, Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) were randomly selected from the chosen states. In the third stage, public basic schools were selected using proportionate random sampling to reflect the number of schools in each selected LGEA. Finally, head teachers, teachers, and students were selected from the sampled schools using simple random sampling. This sampling approach ensured that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby enhancing the representativeness and generalizability of the study findings. The study's sample comprised head teachers, who provided information on instructional leadership practices; teachers, who supplied data on instructional supervision and professional support; and students, whose academic achievement scores served as indicators of learning outcomes. The inclusion of these three groups provided a comprehensive understanding of instructional leadership and its influence on academic achievement from leadership, instructional, and learner perspectives.

Two main instruments were used for data collection. The first instrument was the Instructional Leadership Questionnaire (ILQ), a structured questionnaire designed to assess head teachers' instructional leadership practices. The questionnaire covered key dimensions of instructional leadership, including instructional supervision, teacher professional development, curriculum monitoring, academic goal setting, and provision of instructional resources. The items were structured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*, allowing respondents to express the extent to which instructional leadership practices were evident in their schools. The second instrument was the Students' Academic Achievement Record (SAAR), which measured students' academic achievement. This instrument consisted of documented academic records obtained from school registers and examination results in core subjects such as English Language and Mathematics. These subjects were selected because they are compulsory at the basic education level and serve as key indicators of students' academic performance. The validity of the research instruments was ensured through content and face validity. Copies of the instruments were submitted to experts in educational management, measurement, and evaluation for review. These experts examined the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the items in relation to the objectives of the study. Their comments, suggestions, and corrections were incorporated into the

final version of the instruments to ensure that they accurately measured instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement. The reliability of the Instructional Leadership Questionnaire was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha method. A pilot study was conducted in public basic schools that were not included in the main study. Data obtained from the pilot study were subjected to reliability analysis, and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument was consistent and reliable for measuring instructional leadership practices.

Data collection was carried out by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Questionnaires were administered directly to respondents in their respective schools to ensure a high return rate. Students' academic achievement records were collected from school administrators after obtaining the necessary approvals from relevant education authorities. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the data collection process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity of responses were assured. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were used to answer the research questions and to describe instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement levels. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC), were used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to facilitate accurate data analysis and interpretation.

3. Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do instructional leadership practices of head teachers influence students' academic achievement in basic schools in Nigeria?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Instructional Leadership Practices and Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Instructional Supervision	200	3.42	0.52	High Level of Supervision
Teacher Professional Development	200	3.35	0.60	Moderately high support
Curriculum Monitoring	200	3.28	0.55	Adequate Monitoring
Academic Goal Setting	200	3.46	0.50	High clarity of academic goals
Provision of Instructional Resources	200	3.12	0.65	Moderate resource provision
Students' Academic Achievement (average scores in English & Math)	200	72.8	10.5	Above average performance

The descriptive statistics show that head teachers in Nigerian basic schools generally demonstrate moderate to high levels of instructional leadership practices, particularly in instructional supervision and academic goal setting. Correspondingly, students' academic achievement is above average, suggesting that active instructional leadership may contribute positively to learners' academic outcomes.

Research Question 2: What relationship exists between instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement in Nigerian basic schools?

Table 2: Correlation between Instructional Leadership Practices and Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	Students' Academic Achievement
Instructional Supervision	0.62**
Teacher Professional Development	0.58**
Curriculum Monitoring	0.55**
Academic Goal Setting	0.64**
Provision of Instructional Resources	0.49**

Note: $P < 0.01$ (2-tailed)

The table indicates that all dimensions of instructional leadership are positively and significantly correlated with students' academic achievement. The strongest relationship is observed in academic goal setting ($r = 0.64$) and instructional supervision ($r = 0.62$). This suggests that when head teachers actively monitor instruction, set clear academic expectations, and support teachers professionally, students perform better academically.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement in basic schools in Nigeria.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Instructional Leadership Practices on Students' Academic Achievement

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.68	0.46	0.45	7.82

Predictor (Independent Variable)	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
Instructional Leadership (Overall)	0.72	0.08	0.68	9.00	0.000**

The R² value of 0.46 indicates that instructional leadership practices explain 46% of the variance in students' academic achievement in basic schools, which is substantial in educational research. The Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) shows a significant positive predictive relationship, meaning that as instructional leadership improves, students' academic achievement increases. Since $p < 0.01$, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) and conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between instructional leadership practices and students' academic achievement.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationship between instructional leadership practices of head teachers and students' academic achievement in Nigerian basic schools. The study examined the extent to which head teachers' instructional leadership practices influence learners' academic outcomes and the relationship between these practices and students' performance in core subjects such as English Language and Mathematics. Data analysis revealed that instructional leadership has a positive and significant impact on students' academic achievement, with varying degrees across specific leadership practices.

The descriptive results indicated that head teachers generally engage in moderate to high levels of instructional leadership practices, particularly in instructional supervision, academic goal setting, and teacher professional development. This finding aligns with prior Nigerian studies, such as Ajayi and Olatunji (2023), which reported that schools where head teachers actively supervise classroom instruction and provide teachers with feedback show higher pupil achievement scores. Similarly, Salami and Babalola (2025) emphasized that clarity of academic expectations and consistent instructional monitoring directly shape students' engagement and performance. These results suggest that instructional leadership is operationalized in Nigerian basic schools in ways that positively influence teaching quality and learner outcomes. The correlational analysis revealed significant positive relationships between all dimensions of instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. Academic goal setting ($r = 0.64$) and instructional supervision ($r = 0.62$) exhibited the strongest relationships, followed by teacher professional development ($r = 0.58$), curriculum monitoring ($r = 0.55$), and provision of instructional resources ($r = 0.49$). This finding corroborates the view of Hallinger and Murphy (1985), who argued that instructional leadership is most effective when school leaders establish clear academic goals, closely supervise instruction, and provide guidance and resources to teachers. In the Nigerian context, the study suggests that pupils benefit most when head teachers actively communicate learning objectives, monitor classroom activities, and provide professional support to teachers. Regression analysis further demonstrated that instructional leadership practices significantly predict students' academic achievement, explaining approximately 46% of the variance in academic performance. This result indicates that head teachers' leadership practices are a critical determinant of academic outcomes in basic schools. It confirms the hypothesis (H_{01}) by showing a significant positive relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement, consistent with the findings of Ibrahim, Lawal, and Yusuf (2024), who reported that teacher professional development initiatives led by head teachers indirectly enhance learners' performance. The finding also aligns with Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), which emphasizes that leaders who inspire, motivate, and support staff can enhance institutional effectiveness, specifically instructional quality and student learning outcomes.

The study also highlighted contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of instructional leadership. While instructional supervision and goal setting were strong predictors of achievement, the provision of instructional resources showed a relatively weaker correlation ($r = 0.49$). Similarly, Bello and Hassan (2025) reported that factors such as inadequate instructional resources and large class sizes can moderate the relationship between leadership and academic

performance. These findings suggest that even well-implemented instructional leadership practices may be constrained by infrastructural limitations and systemic challenges in Nigerian public schools. Therefore, while head teachers play a pivotal role, the broader educational environment including adequate materials, classroom space, and teacher capacity, remains essential for maximizing student achievement. Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) is supported by evidence that head teachers who directly engage in curriculum oversight, supervision, and academic goal setting positively impact student outcomes. Transformational Leadership Theory explains how motivational support and professional development foster teacher effectiveness, which in turn enhances student performance (Eze & Okonkwo, 2023).

5. Conclusion

The study examined the influence of instructional leadership practices on students' academic achievement in Nigerian basic schools. Evidence from descriptive, correlational, and regression analyses indicates that head teachers' instructional leadership significantly affects students' learning outcomes, particularly in core subjects such as English Language and Mathematics. Key instructional leadership practices, including instructional supervision, teacher professional development, curriculum monitoring, academic goal setting, and provision of instructional resources, were found to be positively related to students' academic achievement. Among these, instructional supervision and academic goal setting demonstrated the strongest influence, confirming that active engagement of school leaders in teaching and learning processes enhances learner outcomes.
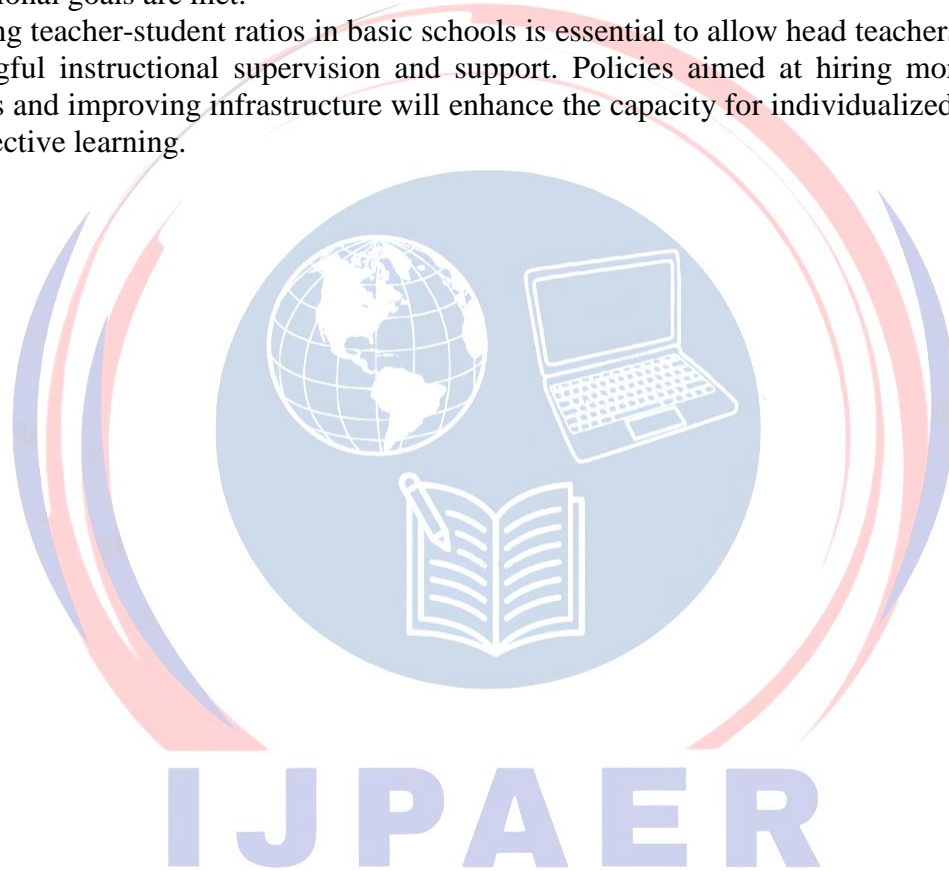
The findings support the Instructional Leadership Theory, showing that leaders who directly interact with teachers and learners, clarify academic expectations, and monitor instructional delivery can improve academic performance. Despite the positive outcomes, the study found that contextual factors, such as inadequate instructional resources, large class sizes, and limited teacher training, can moderate the effectiveness of instructional leadership. This indicates that while head teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing academic outcomes, their influence is optimized when supported by adequate resources, conducive learning environments, and targeted professional development programs.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance and improve students' academic achievement in Nigerian basic schools:

1. Instructional leadership, Head teachers should undergo continuous professional development in instructional leadership. Training should focus on classroom supervision techniques, curriculum management, academic goal setting, and teacher mentorship to strengthen leadership capacity and instructional oversight.

2. Schools should implement structured and ongoing teacher professional development programs. These programs should focus on pedagogical skills, curriculum implementation, and innovative teaching strategies to ensure that teachers can effectively translate instructional leadership guidance into improved classroom practice.

3. Government agencies and school management committees should prioritize the provision of essential teaching and learning materials. Adequate textbooks, teaching aids, laboratory equipment, and digital resources are critical for ensuring that instructional leadership efforts translate into improved student learning outcomes.
4. Ministries of Education and school administrators should establish systematic monitoring mechanisms to evaluate instructional leadership effectiveness. This may include classroom observations, teacher performance reviews, and student achievement tracking to ensure that instructional goals are met.
5. Reducing teacher-student ratios in basic schools is essential to allow head teachers to provide meaningful instructional supervision and support. Policies aimed at hiring more qualified teachers and improving infrastructure will enhance the capacity for individualized instruction and effective learning.

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