

**Research on Instructional Leadership in Vietnamese Context:
Toward Changing the Role of School Leaders or Structure of Educational System**

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Instructional Leadership has been a matter of concern since 1980's around the world as a way leading to effective school. Until now, however, Vietnamese researchers have still very little notice. Nearly all researches in education management in Vietnam mention the role of principal as a manager. The results of interviewing 15 primary principals in Hanoi also show that managerial and administrative tasks tend to dominate principal's working time. Although principals used to be the excellent teachers, then they have no time for teaching afterward. Teaching observation is also usually left for deputy principal. Furthermore, with low level of school autonomy, especially in financial and human resource management, as well as curriculum development, the principal still faces a lot of challenges. In public schools, the principals' concerns about innovation of teaching and learning for their own schools' environment are limited. In term of instructional leadership, the beliefs that guide their work or what their leadership styles are not clear. All selected principals, however, believe that harmony within school and good relationship with higher officials from People's Committee up to the other related levels are important for school development. In order to shift the role of school principal from a manager to instructional leader, we may need to start with raising awareness of this matter for education leaders and policy makers. To contribute to the Strategy of Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform of Viet Nam's education (Đổi mới căn bản, toàn diện giáo dục Việt Nam), the appropriate model of instructional leadership of Vietnamese context must be designed. An paradigm shift should be taken and more comprehensive and effective professional development programs also needed to help principals visualize more clearly their roles as instructional leaders.



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