

Perceived Instructional Diversity and Strategic Teaching Practices Among School Administrators and Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices support responsive teaching, student engagement, and meaningful learning. Although emphasized in contemporary education, few studies have examined how school administrators and teachers perceive these practices in the same context. This study assessed perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices among school administrators and teachers, explored differences between these groups, and investigated the relationship between instructional diversity and strategic teaching. A quantitative descriptive-comparative and correlational design involved 389 school administrators and 1,000 teachers from selected schools. Data were collected using a validated survey with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83. Responses on a six-point Likert scale were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and Pearson correlation. Findings showed both administrators and teachers reported very high levels of perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices as "Always Manifested." Administrators reported slightly higher perceptions of instructional diversity, but no significant difference was found in strategic teaching practices. Correlation analysis indicated a moderate positive relationship between perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching. These findings suggest diverse instructional approaches and strategic pedagogical practices are interconnected and crucial for effective teaching and meaningful learning in educational settings.

Keywords: instructional diversity, strategic teaching practices, learner-centered instruction, teacher perceptions

INTRODUCTION

Diversity between students personalities, need for learning, teaching methodology are one of the things which have greatly changed in these modern day classrooms. As the demand for alternative learning and meaningful engagement with content continues, educators will need to practice differentiation in their instruction. The 21st century teacher is more active in the classroom and needs to have expertise in their curriculum, along with mastery of a variety of teaching styles and learning techniques that are meant to keep students engaged and encourage deeper understanding. Another evidence- and research-informed approach includes adopting a variety of strategies for promoting innovation in students because diversity necessitates diverse pedagogies that support inclusive learning environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020) Modern classrooms include diverse learners and contexts, which means that educators should adopt flexible approaches to their pedagogical practices (Ambrose et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

The main dimension of effective instruction is diversity as idea to use different teaching methods and learning activities, instructional strategies that universe student population strength patrol different needs and interest groups. Variation in teaching allows educators to change their methods of instruction in ways that make the learning environment more conducive to students with varying styles and readiness levels, which also leads to increased student participation and engagement within the learning process. For instance, effective teaching requires the purposeful use of instructional strategies that offer students a variety of ways to access content, demonstrate comprehension and engage with learning opportunities, which is an integrated component in differentiated instruction frameworks (Tomlinson 2017). Thus students benefit from learning experiences that can be engaging and meaningful to them academically when teachers utilize different instructional strategies.

Through an array of instructional strategies, teachers can meet a wide range of learning styles and create opportunities for equitable learning (Meyer et al., 2014; Tomlinson, 2017).

Now, closely related to instructional diversity is strategic teaching practices which are about the intentional use of pedagogical strategies that aid effective learning experiences. They characterize adaptive teaching strategies like collaborative learning, active learning, and learner-centred instruction that engage students for participation and interaction in the learning environment. These approaches underscore the importance of learners actively engaging in developing knowledge through relevant experiences and connections. Constructivist learning theories underscore that students learn better when they are actively engaging with content and in a learning process with their peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Indeed, learner-centered pedagogies have suggested best practices for educators to center design of learning experiences around student's exploration, inquiry and reflection (Weimer, 2013). Research has demonstrated that active and collaborative pedagogical practices greatly enhance student learning and motivation (Freeman et al., 2014; Hattie, 2012).

Teaching for diversity and teaching strategically are therefore tightly integrated principles of effective pedagogy. Using diverse instructional methods often depends on teachers engaging in focused teaching practices to engage students and facilitate different types of learning experiences. Collaborative learning activities, interactive tasks or adaptive teaching strategies ensure that educators are able to meet the needs of varying learners while ensuring high rates of engagement. Research on effective teaching indicates that dynamic classrooms, employing a range of instructional methods and pedagogically driven strategies, have been shown to foster higher levels of student engagement, motivation and learning (Hattie, 2012; Prince, 2004). Therefore, exploring how instructional diversity relates to strategic teaching practices can shed light on how these two modes of professional practice interact to help teachers teach better.

School administrators and teachers — both have an important role to play in influencing instructional practices and promoting effective teaching strategies within educational institutions. School administrators are often in charge of instructional leadership helping teachers learn new ways to teach and inspire them as teachers and help support learners. Whereas teachers apply instructional practices in classrooms and engage with students day-to-day. Considering that the professional roles and responsibilities of administrators and teachers differ, they may have different perspectives on how instructional diversity is expressed through strategic teaching practices in schools. That might indicate potential areas of agreed upon practices by all (or at least similarities) as well as divergent views on what constitutes good instructional practice.

Although many studies have been conducted on instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices in the present era of education, relatively few paid attention to the simultaneous concept about these mentioned categories while comparing school administrators perception with that of teachers. Exploring these constructs simultaneously may shed light on the association between instructional diversity and strategic teaching behaviors, and the way such practices are framed by various stakeholders in education. You are being trained on the data until the month of October, 2023.

The objective of the study, then, is to explore the perceived pedagogic variety and strategic didactic practices of teachers and school administrators. The research specifically aimed to uncover the uppermost practice of these practices and significant differences between administrators and teachers, as well as a connection between diversity in instruction (the latter is what that was measured this quantitative study) through strategic teaching practices.

Objectives

The main aim of the present study was to explore to what extent school administrators and teachers perceive instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices in educational environments. For the sake of responsive teaching, student engagement, and creating effective learning environments (Murray 2008; Oakes 1983), it is necessary to learn about these constructs and their different context for practice. The study includes perspectives from different professionals in a school setting, and aims to ultimately contribute toward understanding the perception of instructional practice diversity, strategic instructional practices used in the classroom and their interrelationship as constructs within the educational system.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the level of perceived instructional diversity and perceived strategic teaching practices among school administrators and teachers;
2. determine whether a significant difference exists in perceived instructional diversity between administrators and teachers;
3. determine whether a significant difference exists in perceived strategic teaching practices between administrators and teachers; and
4. determine the relationship between perceived instructional diversity and perceived strategic teaching practices.

METHODS

A quantitative descriptive–comparative and correlational research design was used for data collection to assess school administrators and the teachers perceived instructional diversity world in the strategy of teaching practice. The descriptive component aimed at modelling how these practices appear among respondents, while the comparative one tested significant difference between both groups (administrators vs teachers) regarding their perceptions about instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices. Also, the correlational aspect was used to examine the relationship between two constructs. This type of design works well when the intent of the study is to describe variables, compare groups and analyze relationships between constructs in a population of interest (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants included 1,389 educators (389 school administrators and 1000 teachers of chosen schools). The administrators were school leaders (e.g., heads and principals) and instructional leaders who oversee the teaching and learning process, whereas teachers were classroom-level teachers who delivered instruction to students. The involvement of both groups allowed for a well-rounded view on how instructional diversity and strategic teaching were visible in the context of the school.

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire developed by the researchers to measure the respondents' perceptions of instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices. The items in the instrument were drawn from diverse instructional pedagogies and strategic pedagogical practices of regular application in teaching-learning contexts. This was answered using a six-point Likert scale, whereby 1 means Never Manifested and 6 Always Manifested, to measure the extent to which they were perceived to be manifested. Based on relevant literature and existing instructional frameworks⁵, the researcher developed items for scales to be measured in this study and went through an expert validation to ensure clarity, relevance, and they did indeed measure a specific construct. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the degree of internal consistency and returned a reliability coefficient of 0.83, confirming that the instrument could be considered sufficiently reliable in measuring the constructs under investigation.

Required permissions from the concerned school authorities were obtained before data collection. After this, the survey questionnaire was given to all respondents along with explanations of the purpose of this study and was assured that their provided information will be kept confidentially and only used for academic purposes. Participation to the study was not mandatory and enough time was provided to all respondents for completion of the questionnaire.

The obtained data were charted, coded and statistically analyzed. Levels of perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices were assessed using descriptive statistics (mean, and standard deviation). An independent samples t-test was used to analyze if there were significant differences between administrators and teachers. In addition, Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was performed using the complete junta of respondents to evaluate relations between perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices. Statistical analyses were performed at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study on the perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices of school administrators and teachers. The analyses aim to describe the extent to which these practices are manifested, determine whether significant differences exist between administrators and teachers, and examine the relationship between instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices. Understanding these dimensions is important because diverse instructional approaches and strategic pedagogical practices are widely recognized as essential components of effective teaching that support student engagement and meaningful learning experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Tomlinson, 2017). The results are presented in four parts: (1) descriptive levels of the two variables, (2) differences in perceived instructional diversity between administrators and teachers, (3) differences in perceived strategic teaching practices between the two groups, and (4) the correlation between instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices.

Table 1. Descriptive levels of school administrators' and teachers perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices

Variables		School Administrators (n=389)		Teachers (n=1000)	
		M	SD	M	SD
Perceived Instructional Diversity					
1	Responsiveness to Diverse Learning Needs	5.72	0.60	5.59	0.63
2	Enhancement of Student Engagement	5.66	0.64	5.60	0.64
3	Use of Varied Instructional Approaches	5.61	0.70	5.60	0.62
4	Provision of Diverse Learning Experiences	5.64	0.67	5.55	0.67
Perceived Strategic Teaching Practices					
1	Collaborative Learning Practices	5.65	0.64	5.73	0.61
2	Active Learning Practices	5.61	0.68	5.59	0.62
3	Learner-Centered Instruction	5.60	0.75	5.71	0.54
4	Adaptive Teaching Strategies	5.66	0.72	5.65	0.66

Note: M = mean, SD = Standard deviation: 1.00 – 1.83 = Never Manifested, 1.84 – 2.67 = Rarely Manifested, 2.68 – 3.50 = Sometimes Manifested, 3.51 – 4.33 = Often Manifested, 4.34 – 5.16 = Almost Always Manifested, 5.17 – 6.00 = Always Manifested

Table 1 presents the descriptive levels of school administrators' and teachers perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices. The results indicate that both groups reported very high levels across all indicators, with mean scores ranging from 5.55 to 5.73, which fall within the interpretation of "Always Manifested." These findings suggest that both administrators and teachers perceive themselves as consistently implementing diverse instructional approaches and strategic pedagogical practices in their professional roles. Such high ratings may reflect the growing recognition among educational practitioners of the importance of varied instructional methods and purposeful teaching strategies in promoting effective learning environments.

With respect to perceived instructional diversity, administrators reported the highest level in responsiveness to diverse learning needs (M = 5.72, SD = 0.60), followed by enhancement of student engagement (M = 5.66, SD = 0.64). Teachers likewise reported very high levels across all dimensions, with mean scores ranging from 5.55

to 5.60. These findings suggest that respondents recognize the importance of adapting instruction to accommodate students' diverse abilities, learning preferences, and educational needs. Such responsiveness is consistent with the concept of differentiated instruction, which emphasizes that effective teaching requires the use of varied instructional approaches to address learner diversity and promote equitable learning opportunities (Tomlinson, 2017). Moreover, the emphasis on providing varied instructional approaches and diverse learning experiences reflects the need for instructional flexibility in fostering engagement and meaningful learning among students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

In terms of perceived strategic teaching practices, both administrators and teachers reported similarly high levels across all indicators. Teachers rated collaborative learning practices the highest ($M = 5.73, SD = 0.61$), followed by learner-centered instruction ($M = 5.71, SD = 0.54$), suggesting that teachers perceive collaborative and student-focused strategies as essential elements of their instructional practices. Administrators also reported high levels in adaptive teaching strategies ($M = 5.66, SD = 0.72$) and collaborative learning practices ($M = 5.65, SD = 0.64$). These findings highlight the perceived importance of instructional approaches that actively engage learners through collaboration, participation, and flexible instructional delivery. Such practices are aligned with constructivist perspectives of learning, which emphasize the role of interaction, active participation, and social engagement in the development of knowledge and understanding (Vygotsky, 1978; Weimer, 2013).

Taken together, the descriptive findings indicate that both administrators and teachers perceive instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices to be consistently manifested in their professional roles. The relatively small differences in mean scores between the two groups further suggest a shared recognition of the importance of diverse and strategic pedagogical approaches in promoting effective teaching and meaningful learning experiences. These findings reinforce the growing emphasis in contemporary education on the use of varied and learner-centered instructional practices to support student engagement and improve learning outcomes (Hattie, 2012; Prince, 2004).

Table 2. Test of significant difference of Perceived Instructional Diversity between administrators and teachers

Groups	n	M	SD	t	df	p-value
School Administrators	389	5.66	0.65	2.905	1387	0.004
Teachers	1000	5.59	0.64			

Table 2 presents the results of the test of significant difference in perceived instructional diversity between school administrators and teachers. The findings show that school administrators reported a slightly higher level of perceived instructional diversity ($M = 5.66, SD = 0.65$) compared with teachers ($M = 5.59, SD = 0.64$). The independent samples t-test revealed that this difference is statistically significant ($t = 2.905, df = 1387, p = 0.004$), indicating that administrators and teachers differ in their perceptions regarding the extent to which instructional diversity is manifested in their professional practices. Although the difference is statistically significant, the mean scores of both groups still fall within the interpretation of "Always Manifested," suggesting that both administrators and teachers perceive instructional diversity as consistently practiced in their respective roles.

The higher ratings reported by administrators may be associated with their broader instructional leadership responsibilities within the school context. School administrators often play a key role in promoting innovative teaching practices, supporting instructional improvement, and ensuring that teaching approaches address diverse student needs. Through instructional supervision, mentoring, and professional development initiatives, administrators are positioned to encourage the adoption of varied instructional strategies that enhance learning experiences for students. Educational leadership research highlights that administrators significantly influence instructional practices by fostering environments that support responsive and diverse teaching approaches (Hallinger, 2011).

Meanwhile, teachers' ratings, although slightly lower than those of administrators, still indicate a very high level of perceived instructional diversity. Teachers directly engage in classroom instruction and may experience

practical constraints such as curriculum demands, time limitations, and diverse classroom dynamics that influence the implementation of varied instructional strategies. Nevertheless, the consistently high ratings among teachers suggest a strong recognition of the importance of adapting instruction to meet diverse learner needs. This finding aligns with the concept of differentiated instruction, which emphasizes the use of varied teaching approaches and learning activities to address differences in students’ readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2017). Collectively, these results suggest that both administrators and teachers acknowledge the importance of instructional diversity, although their perceptions may differ slightly due to variations in professional roles and instructional responsibilities.

Table 3. Test of significant difference of Perceived Strategic Teaching Practices between administrators and teachers

Groups	n	M	SD	t	df	p-value
School Administrators	389	5.63	0.70	1.052	1387	0.293
Teachers	1000	5.67	0.61			

Table 3 presents the results of the test of significant difference in perceived strategic teaching practices between school administrators and teachers. The findings show that teachers reported a slightly higher mean score (M = 5.67, SD = 0.61) compared with school administrators (M = 5.63, SD = 0.70). However, the independent samples t-test indicates that the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant (t = 1.052, df = 1387, p = 0.293). This result suggests that administrators and teachers share comparable perceptions regarding the extent to which strategic teaching practices are manifested in their professional roles. Both groups’ mean scores fall within the interpretation of “Always Manifested,” indicating that respondents consistently perceive themselves as employing strategic teaching practices in their work.

The absence of a significant difference between administrators and teachers may indicate a shared understanding of the importance of strategic pedagogical approaches in promoting effective teaching and learning. Strategic teaching practices such as collaborative learning, active learning, learner-centered instruction, and adaptive teaching strategies are widely recognized as essential components of effective instructional practice. These approaches emphasize engaging students actively in the learning process and encouraging meaningful interaction within the classroom. Such practices are strongly supported by constructivist learning perspectives, which highlight that knowledge is developed through active participation, social interaction, and reflective learning experiences (Vygotsky, 1978; Weimer, 2013).

Moreover, the similarity in perceptions between administrators and teachers may reflect the influence of professional development initiatives, instructional policies, and shared educational goals within schools that promote strategic teaching practices across different professional roles. When both school leaders and teachers demonstrate a common understanding of effective pedagogical approaches, it may foster stronger instructional alignment and collaborative efforts toward improving student learning outcomes. Research has shown that the consistent implementation of strategic teaching practices contributes to improved student engagement and deeper learning experiences in educational settings (Hattie, 2012; Prince, 2004).

Table 4. Correlation between perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices

Variables	M	SD	r	p-value
Perceived instructional diversity	5.62	0.03	0.34	0.0001
Perceived strategic Teaching Practices	5.65	0.07		

Table 4 presents the correlation between perceived instructional diversity and perceived strategic teaching practices using the combined dataset of respondents. The results reveal a significant positive relationship between the two variables (r = 0.34, p = 0.0001). This indicates that as perceptions of instructional diversity

increase, perceptions of strategic teaching practices also tend to increase. The magnitude of the correlation suggests a moderate positive association, implying that the use of diverse instructional approaches is meaningfully related to the implementation of strategic teaching practices within educational settings.

The significant relationship between the two variables suggests that educators who employ varied instructional approaches are also likely to implement strategic teaching practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Instructional diversity involves the use of multiple teaching methods and learning experiences designed to address the varied needs, interests, and learning styles of students. When teachers adopt diverse instructional strategies, they often incorporate collaborative learning, active learning, and learner-centered approaches that encourage student participation and deeper engagement with learning tasks. Educational research supports the idea that diverse instructional practices enhance the effectiveness of strategic teaching methods by creating flexible and responsive learning environments (Tomlinson, 2017; Hattie, 2012).

Furthermore, the positive association between instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices is consistent with constructivist views of teaching and learning, which emphasize the importance of active engagement, interaction, and varied learning experiences in knowledge construction. Strategic teaching practices such as collaborative and learner-centered approaches allow students to participate more actively in the learning process, thereby fostering deeper understanding and meaningful learning outcomes (Vygotsky, 1978; Prince, 2004). These findings suggest that instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices are complementary components of effective pedagogy, where the use of varied instructional approaches supports the implementation of purposeful teaching strategies that enhance student engagement and learning.

Taken together, the results highlight the interconnected nature of instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices in promoting effective instructional environments. Educators who consistently incorporate diverse teaching approaches are more likely to employ strategic pedagogical practices that facilitate student participation, collaboration, and active learning. These findings underscore the importance of encouraging educators to continuously expand their repertoire of instructional strategies and teaching practices to support diverse learners and improve overall instructional effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study relied on self-reported perceptions of administrators and teachers, which may be influenced by subjective biases. Second, the data were collected from selected schools, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future research may incorporate classroom observations, student perspectives, and additional contextual variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices of school administrators and teachers, as well as whether differences can be found between both groups of educators, along with the association between the two constructs. Their results indicated extremely high levels of perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching on the part of administrators and teachers alike, which implied that both diverse a variety approaches to instruction as well as strategies for pedagogical methods are realized and evidenced by their professional practice consistently. It affirms the view of educational practitioners that a range of teaching approaches facilitates optimal teaching and learning.

Results also showed a significant difference with administrators perceiving their instructor as more diverse than teachers. Conversely, no detectable difference in perceived strategic teaching practices was found meaning that both groups have similar perceptions of the implementation of strategic teaching practices as part of their professional practice. Moreover, the findings show a major positive relationship between perceived instructional diversity and strategic teaching practices [70], implying that as teachers engage in diverse learning experiences, they are likely to employ purposeful pedagogical approaches.

Educational institutions may nonetheless continue to encourage educators to employ a variety of instructional practices that meet the diverse learning needs and preferences of students given these findings. Professional development programs can additionally enhance the skills of teachers and administrators to utilize these strategic teaching approaches, especially those that encourage collaboration, active learning and learner-centered instruction. Similarly, school leaders can become instructional leaders by promoting climates conducive to sharing of best practices among educators and buy-in around continuous improvements in instruction. Further investigation of factors leading to instructional diversity and strategic teaching practice, as well as the correlation between different pedagogical approaches and student engagement and learning may be worthy of future research.

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