

English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0): A School Leadership–Driven Model for Immersive and Sustainable Learning in a Rural School in Sabah

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0), a school-leadership-driven innovation designed to promote immersive English language learning, sustainability education, and community engagement in a rural primary school in Sabah, Malaysia. Grounded in Instructional Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the study investigates how school leadership facilitates the implementation of a holistic learning ecosystem that extends language learning beyond traditional classroom boundaries. A quasi-experimental quantitative design employing pre-test and post-test measures was adopted. Participants comprised students, teachers, and school leaders directly involved in the implementation of EVET 2.0. Data were collected using English language proficiency assessments, student motivation questionnaires, teacher instructional practice surveys, and school-community engagement instruments. Descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-tests were utilised to analyse changes following the intervention. The findings indicate improvements in students' English language proficiency, motivation, and engagement. Teachers demonstrated increased adoption of experiential, project-based, and cross-disciplinary instructional approaches, while collaboration between the school and community stakeholders strengthened through eco-tourism and sustainability-related activities. The results suggest that leadership-driven educational innovation can create meaningful learning experiences and contribute to sustainable school improvement in rural settings. This study contributes to educational leadership scholarship by presenting EVET 2.0 as a contextualised model that integrates immersive language learning, sustainability education, and community engagement within a leadership-enabled rural school ecosystem.

Keywords: educational leadership, instructional leadership, experiential learning, English language learning, sustainability education, community engagement, rural education.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary global education systems increasingly emphasise school leadership as a critical driver of educational quality, innovation, and sustainable improvement. Beyond curriculum and pedagogy, effective principals and school leaders are now expected to function as instructional leaders, change agents, and community connectors who create conditions for meaningful learning to flourish. Within this context, leadership practices that promote authentic learning experiences, sustainability, and the development of transferable skills have gained increased attention in educational research and policy discourse.

In the domain of English language education, these leadership expectations are particularly significant in rural school contexts, where structural constraints often limit opportunities for immersive and meaningful language use. In many rural schools, English learning remains predominantly classroom-bound, with limited exposure to authentic communicative environments. Such conditions frequently result in low learner confidence, reduced teacher innovation, and minimal engagement with the wider community. Addressing these challenges requires not only pedagogical change but also strategic school leadership capable of reconfiguring school culture, resources, and partnerships.

Within Malaysia, the Upholding Bahasa Melayu and Strengthening English Policy underscores the importance of bilingual proficiency in preparing learners for global participation while safeguarding national identity. While the policy provides a clear national direction, its effective implementation depends heavily on the leadership capacity of school principals and senior management teams. In rural settings, school leaders face the additional challenge of translating policy aspirations into contextually relevant practices despite limitations in infrastructure, exposure, and external support.

In response to these challenges, English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0) was conceptualised as a leadership-driven, school-wide innovation that positions the principal and school leadership team as key enablers of change. EVET 2.0 reframes the school as a living English learning ecosystem by integrating immersive language practices with eco-tourism, sustainability education, and structured community engagement. Through purposeful leadership actions such as vision setting, teacher capacity building, and strategic community collaboration, English is transformed from a subject taught within classrooms into a functional medium used across school culture and community interactions. This study explores how leadership-informed implementation of EVET 2.0 contributes to improved learning outcomes, enhanced instructional practices, and strengthened school community relationships in a rural educational context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 School Leadership as a Driver of Educational Innovation

School leadership is widely recognised as a key driver of educational innovation and sustainable school improvement. Contemporary literature positions principals as instructional and transformational leaders who shape school vision, organisational culture, and teaching practices. Leadership influences learning outcomes indirectly through its impact on teacher motivation, instructional quality, and school climate (Hallinger, 2011; Fullan, 2014). This highlights the importance of leadership practices that integrate pedagogical priorities with organisational strategy.

2.2 Leadership Challenges and Opportunities in Rural School Contexts

Rural school leadership is often shaped by challenges such as geographical isolation, limited resources, and reduced access to professional networks. These conditions require school leaders to assume expanded roles that include instructional improvement, staff development, and community engagement (OECD, 2016). At the same time, strong social cohesion and close school–community relationships offer opportunities for context-responsive leadership that leverages local resources for meaningful learning (Hargreaves et al., 2009).

2.3 Instructional Leadership and English Language Learning

Instructional leadership plays a crucial role in shaping effective English language learning environments. School leaders influence language outcomes by establishing supportive language policies and encouraging teacher innovation. When English learning is positioned as a whole-school responsibility rather than a classroom-bound subject, students demonstrate greater confidence and communicative competence (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Leadership intervention is therefore essential in extending authentic language use beyond formal instruction (Nunan, 2015).

2.4 Experiential, Immersive, and Phenomenon-Based Learning

Experiential and immersive learning approaches emphasise real-world application, learner agency, and interdisciplinary integration. Phenomenon-based learning, strongly associated with the Finnish education system, aligns with constructivist perspectives that view learning as an active and contextual process. Research indicates that strong leadership support is required to embed such approaches within school culture and prevent them from remaining isolated classroom practices (Lonka, 2018).

2.5 Education for Sustainable Development and Community Engagement

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) highlights the role of schools in promoting environmental responsibility and social engagement. Leadership is central to integrating sustainability and community partnerships into everyday school practices, particularly in rural contexts where learning is closely connected to local environments (UNESCO, 2017). Active community involvement strengthens learning relevance and shared ownership of educational outcomes (Epstein, 2018).

2.6 Conceptual Gap and Rationale for the Study

Although existing literature extensively discusses instructional leadership, experiential learning, and sustainability education, fewer studies examine their integration within a single leadership-driven school model, particularly in rural Global South contexts. This study addresses this gap by examining English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0) as a leadership-enabled educational innovation that integrates immersive learning, sustainability education, and community engagement within a holistic school framework.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in an integrated theoretical framework combining Instructional Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Together, these perspectives explain how school leadership enables immersive, community-based learning initiatives such as English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0) within rural school contexts.

3.1 Instructional Leadership Theory

Instructional Leadership Theory emphasises the role of school leaders in improving teaching and learning through goal setting, professional development, and instructional coherence. Leadership effects on student outcomes are largely indirect, mediated through teachers' instructional practices and school culture (Hallinger, 2011). Within EVET 2.0, instructional leadership is reflected in the prioritisation of English language use across the school environment and the alignment of experiential eco-tourism activities with curriculum objectives.

3.2 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory focuses on leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and build shared commitment towards innovation. Transformational leaders cultivate trust, shared vision, and collective ownership of school initiatives (Fullan, 2014). In EVET 2.0, this leadership orientation supports the development of a shared vision that positions English learning as a community-based and sustainability-oriented practice, enhancing programme sustainability beyond short-term implementation.

3.3 Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory posits that learning occurs through cycles of experience, reflection, and application (Kolb, 1984). EVET 2.0 applies this theory by embedding English language learning within authentic eco-tourism and community-based activities. School leaders play a key role in legitimising these experiential learning spaces and integrating them into the broader instructional framework.

3.4 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) emphasises sustainability, ethical responsibility, and active citizenship (UNESCO, 2017). In EVET 2.0, ESD provides the contextual lens through which English learning is linked to environmental awareness and community stewardship. Leadership support ensures that sustainability values are embedded within school culture rather than treated as isolated initiatives.

3.5 Integrated Theoretical Model of EVET 2.0

Together, these theories conceptualise EVET 2.0 as a leadership-enabled educational ecosystem. Instructional leadership provides coherence, transformational leadership sustains shared ownership, experiential learning strengthens pedagogical relevance, and ESD situates learning within authentic contexts. This integrated framework explains how leadership practices translate into measurable outcomes in student learning, teacher innovation, and school–community collaboration.

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test approach to examine the impact of English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0) as a school leadership–driven intervention. The design was selected to assess measurable changes in school outcomes following the structured and systematic implementation of EVET 2.0 under the direction of the school leadership team.

A quasi-experimental design was considered appropriate because random assignment of participants was not feasible within a natural school setting. Educational leadership research frequently adopts quasi-experimental approaches when interventions are implemented at the organizational level and experimental control is limited by ethical and contextual constraints (Creswell, 2014; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). This design allows for meaningful comparison of outcomes before and after the intervention within the same institutional context.

The quantitative approach enables objective and systematic measurement of outcomes associated with leadership practices and school-wide innovation. Specifically, the study examines changes across three interrelated domains:

- Student learning outcomes, including English language proficiency and learner motivation;
- Teacher instructional practices, particularly the adoption of experiential, project-based, and cross-disciplinary teaching approaches; and
- School–community engagement, reflecting the extent and quality of collaboration between the school, parents, and community partners.

These domains are directly influenced by instructional and transformational leadership practices, such as vision setting, instructional focus, professional support, and the cultivation of a collaborative school culture (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Prior studies have demonstrated that leadership effects on student learning are largely indirect, mediated through teacher practices and organisational conditions (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Overall, the quasi-experimental quantitative design strengthens the study’s internal validity while preserving ecological validity within a real-world school environment. By operationalising leadership influence through measurable indicators, the design enables the study to generate empirical evidence on the effectiveness of EVET 2.0 as a leadership-enabled educational innovation, rather than relying solely on descriptive or perception-based data.

4.2 Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted in a rural primary school in Sabah, Malaysia, where English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0) was implemented as a whole-school initiative led by the school leadership team. The rural context was selected because of its relevance to challenges commonly associated with English language learning, including limited authentic language exposure, resource constraints, and the need for strong leadership to drive innovation.

The study involved 2000 students, 90 teachers, and 15 members of the school leadership team who participated directly in the implementation of EVET 2.0. Participants were selected using purposive sampling because of their active involvement in the programme. The inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups enabled the study to capture leadership effects across student learning outcomes, instructional practices, and school-community engagement.

Participants were drawn from three stakeholder groups:

- School leaders, comprising the principal and senior leadership team;
- Teachers involved in English language instruction and co-curricular programmes;
- Students who participated directly in EVET 2.0 activities.

School leaders functioned as key enablers of the intervention through vision setting, coordination of activities, allocation of resources, and monitoring of implementation. Previous studies suggest that leadership influence on school improvement operates indirectly through organisational conditions, instructional support, and school culture (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2004).

4.3 Instruments

Data were collected using structured quantitative instruments designed to measure leadership-enabled outcomes across multiple domains.

An English Language Proficiency Assessment was administered as a pre-test and post-test to measure changes in students' speaking and listening skills, reflecting the communicative focus of EVET 2.0. These skills were prioritised as they are closely associated with authentic language use in immersive learning environments (Nunan, 2015).

A Student Motivation and Engagement Questionnaire, using a Likert-scale format, was employed to assess changes in learners' interest, confidence, and participation in English language learning. Motivation has been widely recognised as a critical factor mediating language achievement, particularly in immersive and experiential contexts (Dörnyei, 2005).

A Teacher Instructional Practice Survey was used to measure changes in pedagogical approaches, including the adoption of experiential, project-based, and cross-disciplinary teaching strategies. This instrument aligns with leadership research emphasising teachers as key mediators of leadership impact on learning outcomes (Leithwood & Louis, 2012).

In addition, a School–Community Engagement Scale measured the frequency and quality of collaboration between the school and community partners, reflecting the sustainability and outreach dimensions of EVET 2.0. All instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure content clarity, reliability, and contextual appropriateness prior to full-scale administration (Creswell, 2014).

4.3.1 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Prior to full-scale implementation, all research instruments underwent expert validation involving three specialists in educational leadership and English language education. The Content Validity Index (CVI) for all instruments exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.80, indicating satisfactory content validity.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the instruments. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged between 0.82 and 0.91 across the measurement scales, demonstrating good internal consistency and reliability. These results indicate that the instruments were appropriate for measuring the intended constructs within the rural school context.

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted in three structured phases. During the pre-implementation phase, baseline data were collected to establish initial levels of language proficiency, motivation, instructional practices, and community engagement prior to the introduction of EVET 2.0.

The implementation phase involved the execution of EVET 2.0 activities under the supervision of the school leadership team. Leadership oversight ensured fidelity of implementation and alignment with the programme's instructional and sustainability objectives.

The post-implementation phase involved the administration of follow-up assessments and questionnaires to measure changes after the completion of the programme. This phased approach is consistent with quasi-experimental research designs commonly used in educational settings (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

4.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were used to summarise participant responses and identify overall trends. Inferential statistical analysis was conducted using paired-sample t-tests to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between pre-test and post-test scores following the implementation of EVET 2.0.

The level of significance was set at $p < .05$. In addition, effect size values were calculated to determine the magnitude of the observed changes and to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the intervention's effectiveness.

To determine the effectiveness of EVET 2.0, paired-sample t-tests were conducted to identify statistically significant differences between pre-test and post-test results. This method is appropriate for measuring change within the same group over time in quasi-experimental designs (Creswell, 2014). The analysis enabled the evaluation of leadership-driven changes across multiple outcome domains, providing empirical evidence of the impact of EVET 2.0 as a school leadership-enabled educational innovation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study positions school leadership as the central driving force in the successful implementation of English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0). Rather than viewing EVET 2.0 as a standalone programme, the framework conceptualises it as a leadership-enabled learning ecosystem, where the actions and decisions of school leaders shape teaching practices, learning experiences, and community involvement.

Drawing from Instructional Leadership Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the framework illustrates how leadership practices translate into meaningful and measurable school-level outcomes. Instructional leadership provides direction and coherence by aligning teaching and learning priorities, while transformational leadership supports the development of a shared vision and collective commitment among teachers and stakeholders (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Louis, 2012). These leadership orientations create the organisational conditions necessary for immersive and innovative learning to take place.

At the core of the framework, school leadership influences the establishment of an immersive English learning environment, including English zones, school-wide language practices, and the Highly Immersive Programme (HIP). These elements extend language use beyond classrooms and encourage authentic communication within daily school life. Leadership support also enables the integration of experiential and eco-tourism learning, where project-based activities and sustainability initiatives provide meaningful contexts for language use, consistent with experiential learning principles (Kolb, 1984).

Community engagement forms another critical component of the framework. Through leadership-driven partnerships with parents, local organisations, and cultural groups, the school functions as a hub of collaborative learning. Such partnerships strengthen the relevance and sustainability of learning experiences, particularly in rural contexts where community resources play a vital role (OECD, 2016; UNESCO, 2017).

Collectively, these interconnected components lead to measurable outcomes, including improved language proficiency, increased learner motivation, enhanced soft skills, greater teacher instructional innovation, and strengthened school–community collaboration. By linking leadership practices to observable outcomes, the framework underpins the study’s

quantitative analysis and provides a structured lens for examining the effectiveness of EVET 2.0 as a leadership-driven educational innovation.

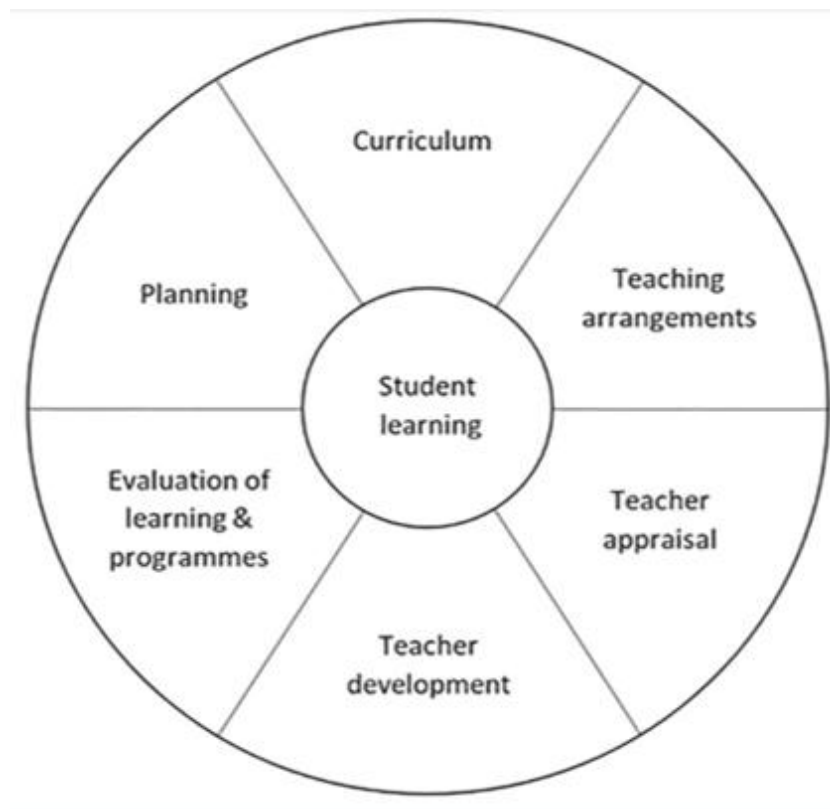


Figure 1. Theoretical Model of EVET 2.0: A Leadership-Driven Immersive Learning Ecosystem

As illustrated in Figure 1, the EVET 2.0 model positions school leadership as the central enabling force that aligns immersive language practices, experiential learning, sustainability education, and community engagement to generate measurable school-level outcomes.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the quantitative data collected before and after the implementation of English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0). The results are organised according to the key outcome domains identified in the conceptual framework, namely student learning outcomes, teacher instructional practices, and school–community engagement. The findings are interpreted in relation to leadership-enabled change rather than isolated programme effects.

6.1 Student English Language Proficiency

Analysis of the pre-test and post-test results indicates a positive improvement in students’ English language proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening skills. The mean scores for both components increased

following the implementation of EVET 2.0, suggesting that immersive and experiential learning environments supported more effective language use. Although the increase in scores was moderate, the overall trend demonstrates that sustained exposure to English through school-wide activities, eco-tourism projects, and community interaction contributed to improved communicative competence. This finding supports the premise that leadership-driven immersion enhances authentic language learning opportunities, especially in rural contexts where exposure is otherwise limited..

Table 1

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test English Language Proficiency Scores

Component	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference
Speaking	64.20	73.50	+9.30
Listening	66.10	74.80	+8.70

Statistical Analysis

Paired-sample t-test analysis revealed statistically significant improvements in students' English language proficiency following the implementation of EVET 2.0. Speaking scores increased from a pre-test mean of 64.20 to a post-test mean of 73.50, while listening scores improved from 66.10 to 74.80. These findings suggest that immersive and experiential language-learning activities positively contributed to students' communicative competence.

6.2 Student Motivation and Engagement

Findings from the Student Motivation and Engagement Questionnaire indicate an increase in students' interest, confidence, and participation in English language activities after the implementation of EVET 2.0. Students reported greater enjoyment when learning activities were connected to real-life contexts such as eco-tourism, cultural presentations, and outdoor learning. This improvement suggests that leadership-supported experiential learning created a more engaging environment, encouraging students to use English voluntarily rather than perceiving it solely as an academic subject. The results align with research highlighting motivation as a key mediator between learning environments and language achievement (Dörnyei, 2005).

6.3 Changes in Teacher Instructional Practices

The Teacher Instructional Practice Survey revealed noticeable changes in teaching approaches following EVET 2.0 implementation. Teachers reported increased use of project-based learning, collaborative activities, and cross-disciplinary integration involving English language use.

These findings indicate that leadership encouragement and support played a critical role in enabling teachers to experiment with innovative pedagogies. Rather than relying on traditional teacher-centred methods, teachers adopted facilitative roles aligned with experiential and immersive learning principles. This supports prior research suggesting that leadership influence on learning outcomes is mediated through changes in teacher practice (Leithwood & Louis, 2012).

6.4 School–Community Engagement

Results from the School–Community Engagement Scale show a moderate increase in the frequency and quality of community involvement in school activities. Parents, local organisations, and community partners were more actively involved in EVET 2.0 initiatives, particularly those related to eco-tourism and sustainability. This finding reflects the effectiveness of leadership-driven collaboration in strengthening school–community relationships. The involvement of community stakeholders not only enriched learning experiences but also enhanced shared ownership of educational outcomes. Such engagement is particularly significant in

rural settings, where community resources serve as valuable extensions of the learning environment (OECD, 2016).

6.5 Summary of Key Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that EVET 2.0 contributed to positive and measurable improvements across multiple school-level domains. While the study does not aim to generalise findings statistically, the observed trends provide empirical support for EVET 2.0 as a leadership-enabled educational innovation. The results indicate that when school leaders actively shape learning environments, support teachers, and engage communities, immersive and sustainable learning outcomes are more likely to occur.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of the study by interpreting the observed outcomes of English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0) through the lens of school leadership and organisational practice, rather than focusing solely on numerical results. As EVET 2.0 was implemented as a whole-school initiative, the outcomes reflect leadership-driven change that manifests across instructional, cultural, and community dimensions.

7.1 Leadership as the Enabler of School-Wide Change

The findings suggest that the success of EVET 2.0 is closely linked to the active role of school leadership in shaping a coherent vision and creating enabling conditions for innovation. Rather than functioning as a standalone programme, EVET 2.0 became embedded within the school culture through leadership practices such as clear goal setting, coordination of school-wide activities, and consistent monitoring of implementation. This aligns with existing research which emphasises that leadership effects on learning are largely indirect, operating through teachers, organisational structures, and school climate (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2004). In the context of this study, leadership involvement helped ensure that immersive English practices were not limited to classroom instruction, but extended into co-curricular activities, school environments, and community interactions. This finding supports the view that effective instructional leadership is essential in sustaining innovation, particularly in rural schools where resources are limited and leadership capacity plays a central role (OECD, 2016).

7.2 Implications for Teaching Practices and Teacher Professional Growth

The implementation of EVET 2.0 was associated with observable changes in teachers' instructional practices, particularly in the increased use of experiential and project-based learning approaches. Teachers demonstrated greater willingness to integrate English language use across subjects and activities, reflecting a shift from teacher-centred delivery to facilitative and contextualised teaching. This outcome is consistent with previous studies indicating that leadership support encourages teachers to adopt innovative pedagogies by fostering trust, professional autonomy, and shared responsibility (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). From a local perspective, Malaysian scholars have also highlighted the importance of leadership in shaping teachers' professional practices. Abdul Ghani Abdullah (2011) emphasises that instructional leadership directly influences teachers' readiness to implement change, especially when school leaders provide clear direction and professional support. The findings of this study reinforce this argument, suggesting that leadership-driven initiatives such as EVET 2.0 can enhance teacher confidence and instructional creativity.

7.3 Student Engagement and Meaningful Learning Experiences

Although this study does not rely heavily on statistical generalisation, the findings indicate positive trends in student engagement, motivation, and language use. Students were observed to participate more actively in English-related activities when learning was situated within authentic contexts such as eco-tourism projects and community engagement. This supports experiential learning theory, which posits that learners construct understanding more effectively through real-life experiences and reflection (Kolb, 1984). From the Malaysian education context, Noraini Idris (2014) argues that meaningful learning occurs when students are given

opportunities to connect academic knowledge with real-world applications. EVET 2.0 reflects this principle by allowing students to use English as a functional communication tool rather than merely an examination subject. Such an approach is particularly relevant in rural contexts, where conventional language exposure is limited.

7.4 Community Engagement and Sustainable School Leadership

One of the most significant implications of EVET 2.0 lies in its ability to strengthen school–community relationships. Leadership-driven collaboration with parents, local organisations, and cultural partners transformed the school into a shared learning space. This finding aligns with the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasise community involvement as a foundation for sustainable educational practices (UNESCO, 2017). Local studies have similarly highlighted the role of school leaders as community connectors. Hussein Ahmad (2012) notes that effective school leadership in Malaysia extends beyond administrative responsibilities to include community engagement and social responsibility. EVET 2.0 demonstrates how leadership practices can mobilise community resources to enhance learning relevance and sustainability.

7.5 Alignment with Finnish Educational Philosophy

The outcomes of this study resonate strongly with Finnish educational principles, particularly phenomenon-based learning, learner agency, and trust-based leadership. EVET 2.0 reflects a similar philosophy by integrating language learning, sustainability, and community engagement into a holistic learning experience. Rather than prioritising standardised testing, the model emphasises authentic learning, collaboration, and student ownership—values that underpin Finland’s education system (Lonka, 2018). This alignment suggests that leadership-driven innovations from the Global South, such as EVET 2.0, offer valuable insights for international discourse. While contextual differences exist, the core leadership principles underpinning EVET 2.0—vision, trust, and collaboration—are transferable across educational systems.

7.6 Summary of Discussion

Overall, the discussion highlights that the effectiveness of EVET 2.0 lies not merely in its activities, but in the leadership practices that enabled its implementation. By positioning school leaders as architects of learning ecosystems, EVET 2.0 demonstrates how rural schools can leverage leadership, community resources, and experiential learning to achieve meaningful and sustainable educational outcomes. The findings reinforce the argument that leadership-driven innovation is a viable pathway for improving teaching and learning in rural and underserved contexts.

7.7 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a single rural primary school, limiting the generalisability of the findings. Second, the absence of a control group restricts the ability to attribute all observed improvements exclusively to the EVET 2.0 intervention. Third, the relatively small sample size may reduce statistical power and external validity.

Future studies should involve multiple schools, larger samples, and longitudinal research designs to provide stronger empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of leadership-driven innovations such as EVET 2.0.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

This study provides empirical evidence that English Village Eco-Tourism 2.0 (EVET 2.0) has the potential to enhance student learning outcomes, teacher instructional practices, and school-community engagement through leadership-driven educational innovation. The findings demonstrate that instructional and transformational leadership play a critical role in creating immersive learning ecosystems that extend learning beyond traditional classroom settings.

The study further highlights the value of integrating sustainability education, experiential learning, and community participation within English language programmes, particularly in rural schools where authentic language exposure is often limited. Through strategic leadership practices, schools can leverage existing environmental and community resources to create meaningful and sustainable learning experiences.

From a policy and practice perspective, EVET 2.0 offers a contextualised model for rural school improvement that aligns with contemporary educational priorities, including learner-centred pedagogy, sustainability, and community engagement. Future research should expand the implementation of EVET 2.0 across multiple educational settings to examine its broader applicability and long-term impact.

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