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# UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER COLLABORATION: INSIGHTS FROM SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study explored the impact of school leadership and management practices on teacher collaboration at Tuntungin-Putho Integrated National High School. Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather insights into teachers' personal experiences and perceptions regarding leadership styles and their influence on collaborative practices. The findings revealed that school leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the extent and quality of teacher collaboration. Specifically, autocratic decision-making practices were found to hinder active teacher involvement, while transformational and participative leadership styles fostered a sense of empowerment and shared responsibility. Based on these findings, the study recommends adopting a more inclusive and consultative approach to leadership, balancing directive and delegative strategies, and implementing professional development programs focused on collaboration, communication, and leadership skills. These initiatives aim to promote a more open, respectful, and collaborative school culture. Overall, the research underscores the vital role of effective leadership in enhancing teacher collaboration and building a supportive educational environment that contributes to school improvement and student success.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The leadership of a school plays a critical role in determining its success in the current educational climate. School principals are influential figures who can shape a school's culture, climate, and collaborative procedures. Given the numerous benefits of collaborative teaching approaches for student outcomes, teacher development, and overall school achievement, one of the many aspects of school leadership that cannot be overstated is the ability to foster teacher cooperation.

However, many schools struggle to maintain meaningful and regular teacher collaboration. This issue may arise from inadequate leadership approaches that fail to create an environment that promotes collaboration and collective problem-solving. The body of research on leadership in education is expanding, but little is known about how different leadership ideologies and principal management techniques impact teacher collaboration. In schools with poor leadership, teacher relationships are usually broken, which can have a detrimental effect on students' overall educational experiences.

When developing policies to raise the standard of education, it is crucial to understand the relationships that exist between a principal's involvement and the leadership of the teachers. Through the identification of numerous management strategies that either promote or hinder collaboration, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how principals may better encourage a collaborative culture among teachers. These insights are crucial because research shows that teacher collaboration improves instruction, boosts morale, and yields a more cohesive approach to teaching and learning for students.

Louis et al. (2010) assert that leaders had a direct influence on the teacher professional community, evaluating teacher collaboration in addition to other factors. Furthermore, there was a correlation between the professional community and advances in math proficiency on state exams. This study supports the notion that principals should collaborate meaningfully with other students at the school (Hallinger, 2003). Expertise and skill sets are typically shared by all workers in a company and do not belong to a single person or even a small group. Therefore, collaboration between school principals and teachers is essential to maximizing the benefits of a common goal expertise. According to research by Marks and Printy (2003), effective principals integrate transformational leadership—which comprises fostering a positive school climate through tactics like cooperative decision-making and participatory learning—with shared instructional leadership.

Teacher cooperation is an essential element of organizational development. When educators collaborate to improve their schools, they are better equipped to identify the needs of the organization, develop efficient and targeted innovations, and then implement those innovations. The researcher thinks that teacher collaboration is greatly enhanced by principal leadership. Principals have the power to ensure that teachers have adequate time and resources, help build teacher teams, guide these groups through processes (such goal setting), and motivate teachers to implement the necessary organizational changes. Fix et al. (2020)

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and Seashore Louis & Murphy (2017) cite empirical data to back up the idea that administrators can help teachers change their practices by creating a supportive environment and involving them in decision-making about the creation and application of innovations.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effect of principals' leadership on teacher cooperation by investigating how different management strategies may help or impede teachers' collaborative efforts. By examining leadership styles and teacher perspectives, the study seeks to offer practical ideas for enhancing school leadership practices that promote a strong collaborative culture.

The researcher hopes to develop the following research objectives:

- To examine the impact of different leadership styles of principals on the level and quality of teacher collaboration within schools.
- To identify the specific school management practices employed by principals that either facilitate or hinder a collaborative culture among teachers.
- To investigate the challenges and barriers teachers face in collaboration as a result of school leadership and management practices.
- To provide recommendations for school leaders on implementing effective leadership strategies that enhance teacher collaboration, contributing to improved teaching practices and student outcomes.

This research will significantly advance the field of educational leadership by providing a greater understanding of the ways in which principals can foster teacher collaboration through targeted school management tactics, thereby enhancing the standard of instruction within schools.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research employed semi-structured interviews to explore how principal leadership influences teacher collaboration from the perspective of school management strategies. The study focused on gathering in-depth insights from selected teachers of Tuntungin-Putho Integrated National High School through purposive sampling, ensuring that participants had relevant experience and direct engagement with school leadership practices. Data collection involved conducting individual interviews, which were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and key themes.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and allowing participants to withdraw at any point. While the study was limited by its small sample size and the subjective nature of qualitative data, it provided rich and meaningful insights into the dynamics of leadership and collaboration in the school setting.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through semi-structured interviews, consistent with the qualitative nature of the study. The responses of the participants were examined using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, insights, and perspectives related to principal leadership and teacher collaboration. Rather than relying on numerical data or statistical tools, the discussion is grounded in the participants' narratives, allowing for a deeper understanding of their lived experiences. The themes that emerged from the data are discussed in relation to the research objectives, highlighting the influence of leadership styles and management practices on collaborative efforts within the school setting.

**Leadership Styles**

Some of the participants indicated that the principal primarily employed a transactional leadership style. They observed that the principal often focused on setting specific tasks and goals, with rewards or recognition provided upon their completion. While this approach was effective in achieving short-term objectives, participants noted that it sometimes limited deeper collaboration and innovation, as the emphasis was more on fulfilling immediate expectations rather than fostering a sustained culture of teamwork and shared leadership.

*"The principal primarily uses a transactional leadership style. For example, our collaboration as teachers is often tied to specific tasks or goals set by the administration. If we complete a task, like preparing reports or successfully organizing a school event, we are rewarded with verbal recognition or sometimes small incentives, like extra resources for our classrooms.*

*While this approach helps ensure that short-term objectives are met efficiently, it sometimes limits deeper collaboration because the focus is often on immediate results rather than fostering a culture of teamwork. I think this style works well for routine tasks, but it doesn't fully encourage innovative or long-term collaborative efforts among teachers. It would be helpful if the principal also focused on creating more opportunities for open discussion and shared leadership, where teachers feel motivated to collaborate beyond just meeting set expectations."*

*(Participant 2)*

*"The principal's leadership style is mostly transactional. For instance, our efforts are often recognized only when specific tasks or goals are completed, like finishing lesson plans or organizing school events. While this approach ensures that immediate objectives are met, it sometimes feels like collaboration among teachers is task-driven rather than relationship-driven. There's little emphasis on fostering a culture of shared vision or ongoing teamwork beyond meeting these specific requirements."*

*(Participant 7)*

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*"I feel like the principal uses a transactional leadership style. Most of our collaboration as teachers happens because we're assigned specific tasks or goals, like preparing reports or handling school events. We usually get recognition or some form of acknowledgment when we accomplish these tasks, which is motivating to some extent. However, it sometimes feels like the focus is just on completing tasks, rather than building a stronger, more collaborative environment in the long run."*

*(Participant 8)*

Some participants noted that their principal occasionally demonstrated an autocratic leadership style, which had a noticeable impact on their experiences with collaboration and decision-making within the school.

*"I noticed that our principal sometimes uses an autocratic leadership style, making decisions on their own without much input from us teachers. While this approach helps in implementing policies quickly, it often makes me feel less involved and limits opportunities for collaboration in the decision-making process."*

*(Participant 1)*

*"There are times when I feel the principal takes an autocratic approach, making decisions without seeking much input from the teachers. While this can lead to quick actions, it sometimes leaves me feeling excluded and reduces the sense of collaboration in important matters."*

*(Participant 3)*

*The principal occasionally makes decisions independently, without involving the staff in the process. While this can ensure quick decisions, it limits opportunities for collaboration and makes me feel less engaged in the overall direction.*

*(Participant 6)*

*At times, the principal makes decisions without consulting teachers, which reduces the chances for collaboration. This approach can be efficient but leaves little room for input or shared decision-making among the staff.*

*(Participant 4)*

Other participants mentioned that the principal also used a transformational and delegative leadership style. They noted that the principal often encouraged innovative ideas and empowered teachers by giving them the autonomy to make decisions in their areas of responsibility. This approach helped foster a sense of ownership and motivation among teachers, allowing for more collaborative efforts and professional growth.

*"I've also noticed that the principal sometimes uses a transformational and delegative leadership style. For example, the principal encourages us to come up with new ideas and gives us the freedom to make decisions in our own areas. This really motivates me and makes me feel more invested in my work. It also creates a more collaborative environment where we can take ownership of our responsibilities and grow professionally."*

*(Participant 9)*

*"I've seen the principal use a transformational and delegative leadership style as well. There are times when we're encouraged to share innovative ideas, and the principal gives us the freedom to make decisions within our roles. This approach makes me feel more empowered and trusted, and it creates an environment where collaboration and professional growth are valued."*

*(Participant 5)*

*"I've noticed that the principal also uses a transformational and delegative leadership style. They encourage us to come up with creative ideas and give us the freedom to make decisions within our roles. This approach makes me feel trusted and motivated, and it helps create a collaborative environment where we can share our expertise and improve together."*

*(Participant 10)*

*"I've experienced the principal using both a transformational and delegative leadership style. They often motivate us to come up with new ideas and give us the freedom to make decisions on our own. This has made me feel more empowered and valued, and it encourages a stronger sense of collaboration among the teachers."*

*(Participant 11)*

**School Management Practices**

The participants stated that leadership and governance at the school are influenced by the principal's approach to decision-making. While some decisions are made quickly with limited input from teachers, fostering clarity and direction, other times the principal adopts a more transformational and delegative style, encouraging collaboration and teacher involvement in school initiatives. This balance in leadership and governance impacts the overall effectiveness of the school environment.

*"Leadership and governance at our school are shaped by the principal's approach to decision-making and how they manage the overall direction of the school. The principal ensures that policies and goals are clear, but there are times when decisions are made quickly without much teacher input. While this helps in some situations, it sometimes feels like our voices aren't always heard in major decisions. However, when the principal uses a more transformational and delegative approach, it really boosts collaboration and makes me feel more involved in shaping the direction of our school. Overall, the balance between leadership and governance impacts how effectively we work together as a team."*

*(Participant 4)*

*"Leadership and governance at our school are shaped by the principal's approach to decision-making and how they guide the overall direction of the school. While the principal ensures that policies and goals are clearly communicated, there are times*

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*when decisions are made quickly with limited input from teachers. This can sometimes make me feel like our voices aren't always heard in important decisions. However, when the principal takes a more transformational and delegative approach, it really enhances collaboration and makes me feel more involved in shaping the direction of the school. Overall, the balance between leadership and governance affects how effectively we work together as a team."*

*(Participant 6)*

Some participants stated that curriculum and instruction at our school are largely influenced by the principal's leadership and the school's overall teaching approach. The principal's decisions guide how lessons are designed and delivered, ensuring they align with educational goals. However, the level of teacher involvement in shaping instructional practices varies, with some decisions being made without much input, while in other cases, teachers are encouraged to contribute their ideas to enhance teaching strategies. This balance plays a key role in the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and student learning.

*"I've noticed that curriculum and instruction at our school are strongly influenced by the principal's leadership. The principal makes decisions about the curriculum to ensure that lessons are aligned with educational goals. While there are times when we, as teachers, aren't involved in shaping these decisions, there are also instances where the principal encourages us to contribute our ideas to improve teaching strategies. This balance between leadership and collaboration affects how well the curriculum is implemented and how students benefit from it."*

*(Participant 9)*

*"From my experience, curriculum and instruction at our school are shaped by the principal's leadership decisions, which guide how lessons are planned and delivered. Although the principal typically makes decisions that align with the school's educational objectives, there are times when we, as teachers, have little input in shaping instructional practices. However, when we are invited to contribute our ideas, it helps refine teaching strategies and improves the overall effectiveness of the curriculum, ultimately benefiting student learning."*

*(Participant 5)*

*I've observed that the principal's leadership plays a significant role in shaping the curriculum and instruction at our school. The principal often makes decisions regarding the curriculum to ensure that lessons align with the school's educational goals. While there are times when teachers, like me, have little input, there are also moments when we are encouraged to contribute ideas to enhance our teaching methods. This balance between direction from leadership and teacher involvement is crucial in determining how effectively the curriculum is implemented and how it impacts student learning.*

*(Participant 11)*

Some participants stated that accountability and continuous improvement play a vital role in the school's success. They highlighted how regular assessments and feedback help ensure that both teachers and students remain focused on their goals. This ongoing process of evaluation and development is seen as key to improving teaching practices and overall school performance.

*I've observed that the principal plays a key role in fostering accountability and continuous improvement in our school. The principal often sets clear expectations for teachers, ensuring we stay focused on our goals. At the same time, we are encouraged to regularly assess our practices and make improvements, which helps enhance our teaching effectiveness.*

*(Participant 1)*

*From my perspective, the principal's leadership is crucial in promoting accountability among teachers. We are held to high standards, and there's a consistent emphasis on improving our teaching practices. Through feedback and self-reflection, the principal supports us in identifying areas for growth and implementing improvements.*

*(Participant 6)*

*I've noticed that the principal encourages both accountability and continuous improvement by setting clear expectations for teachers. We are given the chance to evaluate our work regularly, which motivates us to strive for better teaching practices. This approach helps create a culture of growth and development within the school.*

*(Participant 9)*

**Challenges and Barriers**

Some participants mentioned that while the principal sometimes adopts an autocratic leadership style, there are still opportunities for collaboration among teachers. Despite the decision-making being more top-down at times, the principal ensures that there are still moments for teachers to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on key initiatives within the school. This balance between leadership style and collaboration is seen as essential for maintaining a cohesive and productive teaching environment.

*Even though the principal sometimes uses an autocratic leadership style, I've found that collaboration still takes place. Despite the quick decision-making, the principal ensures that we have opportunities to work together on certain projects, allowing us to share ideas and strategies.*

*(Participant 3)*

*While the principal sometimes uses an autocratic approach, some teachers noted that collaboration is still possible. Despite limited consultation on certain decisions, the principal allows us to collaborate on specific projects and encourages open communication, which helps us stay connected and engaged as a team.*

*(Participant 4)*

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*I've found that the school's management practices have made it easier for teachers to collaborate. The principal encourages open communication and regularly provides us with opportunities to meet and discuss ideas. This support from leadership helps us work together more effectively and share best practices.*

*(Participant 7)*

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to explore the impact of school leadership and management on teacher collaboration within Tuntungin-Putho Integrated National High School. This study specifically focused on understanding how leadership styles and management practices influence collaboration among teachers, with particular attention to the challenges and barriers that arise in this context. Through semi-structured interviews, the study captured the personal experiences of the teachers, providing a detailed and open perspective on the issue.

The findings of this study revealed that leadership practices at the school level significantly shape the teachers' ability to collaborate. While the principal's leadership style plays a key role in fostering a collaborative environment, it was also clear that certain management practices—particularly those characterized by autocratic decision-making—limited the level of teacher involvement and collaboration. However, the study also highlighted the positive impact of more transformational leadership approaches that encourage teacher participation and empower staff to contribute their ideas to the school's direction.

The findings of this study are relevant not only to the specific school in question but also to the broader discussion on the importance of collaborative leadership in educational settings. The relationship between leadership styles, teacher involvement, and collaboration is critical to creating an effective teaching environment that enhances student learning. As schools strive for continuous improvement, understanding the role of leadership in promoting collaboration is essential. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on educational leadership, demonstrating the significant impact that leadership practices have on fostering a positive and collaborative school culture.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to enhance collaboration and improve leadership practices within schools. First, it is important for school leadership to adopt a more inclusive and consultative approach to decision-making. While some decisions may need to be made quickly, actively involving teachers in discussions about key school policies and practices would foster a sense of ownership and collaboration. This could be achieved by holding regular meetings where teachers can share their ideas and concerns, thereby creating a more open and collaborative school culture.

Second, a balanced leadership approach that incorporates both transformational and delegative styles can be effective in encouraging collaboration among teachers. While clear guidance and structure are necessary, empowering teachers to take initiative and contribute to the decision-making process would help improve teamwork and motivation. This approach would also allow teachers to feel more valued and respected, which in turn can enhance job satisfaction and performance.

Finally, professional development programs aimed at enhancing teachers' collaborative skills should be introduced. These programs can focus on building teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution skills, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to collaborate effectively in a supportive environment. Additionally, leadership training for principals and school administrators can help them develop the skills needed to balance directive leadership with a collaborative, inclusive approach.

By implementing these recommendations, school leadership can create a more positive and effective learning environment, where collaboration is encouraged, and teachers feel empowered to contribute to the overall success of the school.

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