

School Leadership Strategies for Enhancing School Culture and Facilitating Educational Change in Schools under Sarpang Dzongkhag

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ABSTRACT:

The focus of this study is on the influence of organizational culture and leadership on employees' attitudes toward educational change. The study was carried out in selected schools under Sarpang Dzongkhag of Bhutan. The study aimed to examine the nature and practices of school culture and influence of leadership culture on employee attitudes toward change and educational leaders' strategies to cope with challenges and align future initiative with organizational culture through the above objective research was conducted. A qualitative approach was used so that the experience and perception of the participants can be understood deeply. There were total of 40 Participants including 20 Principals and 20 Teachers selected from different Schools of Sarpang Dzongkhag through purposive sampling. Based on the results of the research, the inferences indicate that the school culture is understood as collective, cooperative, disciplined, respectful, co-responsible and built from professional relations. Cultural practices were reinforced through multiple avenues including modeling, meetings, mentoring, assemblies, professional development and collaboration with peers. In addition, changing employee towards policies is affected by the leadership culture, the study revealed. A supportive, participatory, and collaborative kind of leadership brought in increased confidence, ownership, and motivation among the teachers and their willingness to adopt new practices. The findings further suggest that resistance was decreased and engagement at each reform level strengthened through professional development, mentoring, peer support, participatory decision-making, recognition of innovation and ongoing leadership support. The major reforms identified were curriculum competency-based and the use of ICT in teaching, learning, assessment and administration.

Key words: leadership strategies, school culture, educational change.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In Bhutan, school leadership plays a significant role in influencing school culture and driving change in the education system. Bhutan is taking various reform initiatives to improve the teaching and learning process as well as strengthen student outcomes, guided by the philosophy of quality and equitable education. The catalysts behind the success of these reforms as institutionalized changes at the school level are primarily the school principals or heads and the administrators to create a good learning environment and team work among teachers.

Teachers' commitment, students' behavior and school functionality is impacted by the values, beliefs, norms and practices which the school culture promotes. So, a culture which promotes invention, constant improvement and educational excellence is a product of leadership practices. Educational leaders in the schools of Sarpang Dzongkhag face challenges and opportunities arising from geographical variation, demand for change, and reaction to reforms. The school leaders should aim to promote change by establishing professional learning communities, participatory decision-making processes, strengthening motivation of teachers and

creating relation with stakeholders. There seems to be a lot of emphasis on the accomplishment of policies and academic achievement. However, not much is known about the influence of leadership practices on culture and educative change in Bhutan. There is no doubt that Sarpang Dzongkhag is an incomparable exemplar of the effects of leadership practices on educative change and culture. An understanding of which leadership practices will allow a deeper insight into school cultures as well as processes of change will help policy-makers school-leaders and teachers to make schools more effective and more educationally productive. In the Bhutanese educational context, a greater focus on reforms has been on curriculum change, accountability, and the infusion of ICT in teaching and learning. Reforms are often viewed as a ‘project’ of outsiders, and little regard is given to the challenge of maintaining the continuity of such reforms even after they are successfully launched. Moreover, their implementation is often at sea due to a mismatch between externally imposed policy directives and the entrenched cultural norms and practices that prevail within schools (Ngugi and Karanja, 2024). Evidence demonstrates that leadership practices and professional socialization during the reform not only influence stakeholder acceptance of change but also affect reform outcomes. Various studies have analyzed the policy and structural dimensions of reform in great detail. Recently, there has been increased recognition of the importance of cultural and human dimensions in the actual success of implementation.

1.2 Context of the study

As Bhutan’s school system undergoes reforms and strives to improve quality and equity, promote educational change and improve student learning, the importance of school leadership has become increasingly pronounced. According to the Bhutan Education Blueprint (2014–2024), principals are at the center of school-level implementation of national policies, strengthening instructional leadership, creating professional development opportunities for teachers, and creating learning environments to facilitate holistic education. The Blueprint further stresses effective, decentralized management of schools. It requires the principals to lead effectively by working with other teachers, School Management Boards, and the local community to meet the goals of education. Bhutan is also

informed by a GNH philosophy that school leaders create supportive school cultures that build positive values and collaborative, well-being cultures that enhance the continuous improvement of teachers and students (Royal Education Council, 2024; Dorji, 2024). Recent studies have indicated that Bhutanese schools have their school climate, teacher motivation, and organizational effectiveness influenced heavily by leadership practices. The primary schools in various parts of Sarpang Dzongkhag are operating in different geographical settings and socio-economic contexts, thus principals in this particular dzongkhag have to adopt adaptive leadership strategies, i.e., responding to local needs while implementing national reforms. Through an education leadership they are expected to improve professional learning communities, engage in collaborative decision making, provide support for change in the curriculum and develop relationship of health among teachers, students, parents and the community. Implementing educational change is difficult due to differences in school culture, capacity of leadership, availability of resources, and resistance to organizational change. Recent research from Bhutan suggests that teacher’s attitude towards innovation and educational change is significantly influenced by cultural values, hierarchical organizational practices, and leadership. Despite studies on instructional leadership, organizational culture, and teacher job satisfaction in selected Dzongkhags, there is limited empirical research that explores the contribution of school leadership strategies in improving school culture and bringing about educational change being implemented in schools under Sarpang Dzongkhag. Hence, this study intends to investigate the leadership approaches that can enhance school culture and subsequently foster effective educational reforms in Bhutan.

1.3 Problem statement

School leadership becomes more and more relevant. Still, many schools are facing on-ground challenges for building a positive school culture and hence implement education reform well. The educational initiatives to improve quality teaching and grade outcomes in Bhutan have been introduced by developing national policy and framework documents, including the Bhutan Education Blueprint (2014-2024). Reforming the education sector is no easy task. On the one hand, the success

of these reforms is likely to depend on the ability of school leaders to develop collaborative cultures, inspire teachers, effectively manage change, and align school practices with the national goals. Research indicates that schools with robust cultures and deliberate leadership are likely to achieve sustainable improvement, whereas schools with weak organizational culture, as indicated by mindsets that are difficult to change, low teacher morale, and inconsistent implementation of change (Fullan 2016; Leith wood et al. 2020). This access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License. Despite these findings, little evidence exists about the influence of strategies of school leadership on school culture and educational change in the Bhutanese context. The schools in Sarpang Dzongkhag are expected to have principals who can lead diverse school communities in response to educational change and policy. Nevertheless, we have heard from accounts and documents about variations in leadership practices, teacher collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and organizational culture that may affect the effectiveness of reform implemented across schools. While studies conducted in Bhutan have examined instructional leadership and school effectiveness, there is no empirical study on the leadership strategies that enhance school culture and bring about educational change in Sarpang Dzongkhag. Policymakers, educational administrators, and school leaders lack sufficient knowledge of which leadership practices support sustainable school improvement. This knowledge gap limits their ability to identify and adopt effective leadership practices. It is, therefore, essential to look into the leadership strategies being employed by the school leaders and their impact on school culture and educational change in schools under Sarpang Dzongkhag so as to develop evidence-based recommendations that will improve school effectiveness and reform outcomes.

1.4 Significances

This study will contribute to the knowledge of school leadership, organizational culture, and educational change in the Bhutanese educational system. Efforts for reform will be hampered unless school leaders provide critical feedback on new initiatives. The new initiatives need to be implemented at the school level. The second most powerful influence on

student learning and school improvement, after classroom teaching, is school leadership, according to examples from school systems worldwide. A school's collaborative culture helps the teachers demonstrate professional commitment, innovate and implement reforms effectively. Effective school leadership helps to create trust, collaboration among education professionals, organizational capacity to sustain change and thus contribute towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 about quality education (Ghamrawi, 2023; OECD, 2024). This study will ultimately help fill the evidence gap in the Bhutanese literature regarding the impact of various leadership strategies on school culture and educational change in schools of Sarpang Dzongkhag.

The study will help school principals to identify effective leadership strategies that can enhance collaboration, improve teacher motivation, and foster positive school cultures for constant improvement. The results of the study may provide the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Royal Education Council, and education planners with evidence useful for the design and implementation of a leadership development program me and professional learning initiatives for the improvement of school effectiveness. Teachers will benefit from the study through the identification of leadership practices that can influence shared decision-making, professional learning communities, and organizational trust. Also, researchers and scholars will get some context-specific evidence on leadership and educational change in Bhutan. More importantly, this study will pave the way for educational leadership and school improvement studies. In the end, it is anticipated that the study will contribute to the establishment of resilient, collaborative, and high-performing schools that have the capacity to implement any educational reform successfully, which is in line with Bhutan's vision of providing equitable, inclusive, and quality education to all.

1.5 Objectives of the research

This study aims to...

1. Examine the Traits and Practices of School Culture in Educational Institutions.
2. Examine how organizational leadership influences employees' attitudes and behaviors toward organizational change.

3. Describe the tactics that can be adopted by educational leaders when implementing change in the organization and future initiatives to an aligned school culture.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the characteristics and prevailing practices of school leadership within educational institutions?

RQ2: How does the culture of leadership influence employees' attitudes towards change?

RQ3: What strategies can educational leaders adopt to overcome challenges of organizational change and align organizational culture with future initiatives?

Chapter II

Literature review

2.1 Organizational culture and its dimensions in education institutions.

The Schein (2017) Organizational Culture Model guided the research it delineates culture at three interrelated levels: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. Artefacts are visible structures and routines like meetings, rituals, and policies. Espoused values are the stated goals, standards, and principles of institutions. Underlying assumptions refer to those taken-for-granted, traffic-impacting, and unconscious behaviors of humans. In educational settings, these cultural layers affect how staff view reform, engage with leadership, and respond to change. Grasping these layers is pivotal to the explanation of why similar reforms yield different results in schools with different cultures. Schein's model is very useful for educational change, as many reforms focus on the visible layers of organizational practice, i.e., policies, procedures, and routines, and fail to excavate deeper layers containing the values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions that shape teachers' professional identities and behavior. When changes challenge assumptions about who gets to do what, how learning occurs, and who is accountable for what, employees may resist changes. In contrast, when reform is aligned with the values, beliefs, and expectations of the organization's members, teachers and staff are more prepared to accept, implement, and sustain the reform over time. For this reason, the study will employ Schein's framework to determine how

alignment or misalignment between the culture of the employees and educational reforms impacts their experiences, perceptions, and responses to these reforms in educational institutions in Northern Uganda.

2.2 Organizational culture and employee responses to change.

Kotter's Change Management Model of leadership, communication, and the end goal that Schein (2017) outlines serve to bolster the view that successful organizational change is essential. As stated by Kotter, leaders establish a sense of urgency, work with a committed guiding team, communicate the vision, allow people to participate in developing the changes, and eventually build sustainability into the organization. School leaders are important agents of change who turn policy reform into practice in schools through trust building, addressing uncertainty, collaboration, and reinforcing expected behavior by the staff in the school. Kotter's framework stresses that change in an organization is a continuous process that relies on consistent leadership commitment, effective communication, and incorporation of new practices into existing cultural frameworks to sustain change for the long term. According to Schein (2017), the term "organizational culture" is used in this text to refer to the way things happen in school. In schools, there is the interaction between teachers in communication, classroom practice, and their responses/feedback which impacts the goals and expectations of the organization as a whole through culture. Research shows that the teachers in school systems that are generally positive, collaborative, and trust-based are, by and large, more positive, innovative, and open to change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2016). Teachers' ability to experiment with new teaching methods, sharing experience and knowledge, and contributing to reform initiatives should be encouraged in a culture of support.

2.3 Leadership culture and organizational change.

The professional relationships in educational organizations depend on the organizational culture of the body. The love shared with my family, colleagues, friends, and other cultural elements such as collaboration, discipline, unity, and shared accountability has worked towards creating stronger relationships, institutional commitment, and connection to

belonging with the Staff. The practices adopted in schools, the institution's traditions, ceremonies, staff meetings, assemblies, and telling oneself of successes and hardships all serve as a way of molding the organizational culture of the place. These shared habits give employees a common feeling and help them take part in change programs even under tough and complex conditions. In an institution like a school in Northern Uganda that works under scarce resources and a historical conundrum, the organizational culture is vital to the sustenance of the institution's effectiveness. Mentoring, working with peers, and solving problems together can help overcome resource limitations schools face. Mugisha (2023) states that attempts to reform schools depend on the staff's mutual understanding, trust, and professional relationships. This often becomes feasible through a robust school culture. By reviewing the organizational culture, we can understand why certain educational reforms work in some institutions and not others. Leadership is crucial in shaping an organization's culture and implementing change in the school sector. The actions, communication, decision-making, and relationships with staff of school leaders influence the culture of the school. According to Fullan (2016), transformational leadership is an effective strategy for building trust and increasing teacher motivation while allowing for the optimum utilization of professional development as the leaders develop a shared vision. As a result, linkages between educational reform and classroom synergy are strengthened through instructional leadership that focuses on quality instruction, feedback, and improved student learning. During educational change, leaders are the chief communicators who affect the staff attitude around change and response to new initiatives. Providing teachers support and resources through guiding, staff development opportunities, mentoring, and emotional support reduces uncertainty and helps them cope with new reform. When teachers perceive the progress made by their peers, they become strengthened to try and do better. It can encourage participation. Leadership that emphasizes shared values and the fostering of trust strengthens relational trust among school community members, which, in turn, heightens teachers' willingness to experiment and persevere through difficult transitions (Bryk and Schneider, 2002).

Chapter III

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology of the study and also explains the procedure that has been adopted for carrying out the study. The research proposal includes research design, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

For the research of the phenomenon, a qualitative research design was adopted. As per Patton (2015), employee responses to change are influenced by their perceptions and beliefs, feelings and experiences, and social connections. Hence, this method is suitable. The methodology of the research exercise gave the researcher a chance to closely investigate the lived experience of the participants, identify key patterns in their behavior and ascertain the contextual factors that influenced their responses towards change in the organization. Thanks to the qualitative approach, the researcher could examine experiences and identify meaningful themes using the individual case or the commonality of experiences, which relates to theory and practice. Additionally, it allowed for the exploration of unforeseen issues that cropped up during the research and the adjustment of data collection. This helped to find a better understanding of the influence of organizational culture on employees' acceptance, adjustment, and engagement with change.

3.3 Research tools

Research tools semi-structured interview guide, a non-participant observation checklist and a documentary analysis checklist were used in the study. The primary tool employed during the semi-structured interview was the semi-structured interview guide. It focused on collecting the perceptions and experiences of the participants with regard to the characteristics and current practices of school culture, the effect of leadership culture on attitudes of the employees towards change, challenges faced during change, and the means of assisting adaptation and aligning organizational culture with future initiatives. The checklist for non-participant observation was used to look at the visible practices related to communication, teamwork, leadership, staff participation, workplace

interaction, and employees' reaction to change. Further, the document review checklist was used to systematically analyse the relevant institutions document that include the organization's policies, meeting minutes, organizational structures, school improvement plan, and professional development to find evidence of organizational culture, behavior, leadership, and change, and future initiatives.

3.4 Research setting and Context

The research was carried out in selected schools under Sarpang Dzongkhag because they operate within a diverse socio-cultural, economic, and institutional environment. The region is a unique context for examining organizational culture and adaptation to educational change in the context of national and global reforms, limited resources, and variable institutional capacity. In this context, educational institutions are subject to ongoing influence from changes to policy, the curriculum, accountability, and improvement efforts in teaching and learning. Amid these features, the role of school leaders and employees takes on a dynamic feature whereby they must shape the organizational culture, change processes, and reforms. The research examined employees' responses to organizational change and how the shared values, beliefs, leadership practices, professional relationships, and institutional norms impact them. By looking at leaders' and staff perspectives, the study aimed for deeper insights into the cultural factors that support or hinder effective change implementation by schools and other educational organizations.

3.5 Participant/ sample

The Sarpang Dzongkhag schools' principals and teachers from primary, middle secondary and secondary schools, making up both school leaders and employees, were the population of the study. The participants for the study were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had relevant experience and knowledge of school-based organizational culture, leadership practices, and organizational change. 40 respondents, including 20 principals and 20 teachers from different schools, constituted the sample. Because we included participants who were well placed, we could access different understandings of the school's nature and culture and of the organizational change process. The individuals involved in signaling change and working to recreate the ongoing order – those with different

responsibilities, levels of authority and exposure to the reform process – may understand and respond to the organizational change in a variety of ways. In view of the above, purposive sampling was appropriate to enable the researcher to deliberately select information-rich participants who were capable of answering the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.6 Data collection methods

This study used a variety of data collection methods to enhance the credibility of the findings through triangulation. To analyze the community's understanding and interpretation of foreign prisoners, the study was divided into three components. The open-ended data collection technique tapped into the participants' viewpoint, making it possible for them to critically ruminate on their experiences. Thus, the researcher acquired data that fitted the study's aim (Kallio et al., 2016). In order to gain additional insights, non-participant observations were made in the workplace to observe workplace behaviors, patterns of interaction, and institutional practices that display the culture of an organization and responses to change. Systematic observations were made using the observation checklist to note aspects like communications, leadership, teamwork, staff engagement in reform processes (Armenkis & Bedeian, 2020). Also, other crucial institutional documents were examined, including policy documents, minutes of meetings, organizational structures, and documents for professional development, which provided contextual information to support evidence gathered. According to Bowen (2009), a document review framework was deployed for systematic literature analysis to enhance the reliability and authenticity of the outcomes.

3.7 Data analysis procedure

Thematic analysis in line with Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyze data collected through interviews, non-participant observations, and document reviews. The analysis process started with going through the data repeatedly in order to make sense of the data gathered. We therefore read the interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents several times so as to understand the data fully. The review of observation data, which included field notes, checklists and contextual records, enabled identification of

relevant behaviors, interactions, routines and environmental factors linked to organizational culture and responses to change. Initial coding was carried out across all data sources. Through the interview and document data, several meaningful statements, experiences, and organizational practices were obtained and coded meaningfully, and based on visible behaviors, interpersonal interactions, institutional routines, and cultural practices, observation data were coded respectively. These codes recorded various elements such as working together, leading practices, professional support, resisting change, transmitting values, among others. The produced codes were later collated into wider themes which represented hobbies or relationships from the various data sources. The combination of the findings from the interview, observation, and documents helped to strengthen and deepen the study. The observation findings provide evidence of behaviors, practices, and actions that are culturally embedded and collaborative and complement participant experiences and institutional records. The reliability, relevance, and meaningfulness of the data were ensured through constant iteration of themes. This comprehensive analysis yielded valuable insights into the intricate relationship between our approach to organizations, leadership, and the adaptation of their employees.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) criteria of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, the trustworthiness of the study was established. The use of member checking, prolonged engagement with our participants, and triangulation of data sources enhanced credibility, contributing to an accurate and fair representation of our participants' experiences. By elaborating on the context of the research, institution, and the participants, transferability was improved as it enabled the audience to check and compare with their context. The processes that were used in the research, decisions taken, and analysis done were documented to ensure dependability. Reflective journaling was used as a means to support confirmability; triangulation techniques were also employed to reduce researcher bias and ensure that findings were grounded in data and not researcher interpretation.

3.9 Ethical consideration

The study was undertaken while following some ethical principles. All subjects' informed consent showed they were aware of the study. To protect their privacy and the confidentiality of the respondents, the data collected has been made anonymous. The participants were assured that they had the right to either take part in the research or withdraw from it at any point, voluntarily unfazed. The entire research data was locked in a safe which could only be opened for the concern of study. They efficiently handled sensitive issues. Prior to initiating data collection, the institution granted ethical approval, adhering to research ethics to uphold participants' rights and the research process, consistent with safeguarding the well-being of the participants.

Chapter IV

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Demographic information of the sample

The demographic details of the respondents give us their vital background characteristics, which include age, sex, educational qualifications, job title, and years of professional experience. An overview of the respondents' characteristics helps to set the context for their perceptions, experiences, and responses, which were examined in the study.

Table 1. Demographic status of the sample.

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Profession		
Principals	20	50
Teachers	20	50
Gender		
Male	25	62.5
Female	15	37.5
Teaching experiences		
15 years +	15	37.5
10-14 years	5	12.5
5-9 years	10	25
1-4 years	7	17.5
Less than 1 year	3	7.5

As illustrated in Table 1, the multiple-choice socio-demographic characteristics of 40 respondents, including school leaders and teachers participating equally, where there are 20 school principals (50%) and 20 teachers (50%). The total was 62.5% male and 37.5% female. Thus, male participants

made the majority of the group. An active cluster of personnel for more than fifteen years had a total of fifteen (15; 37.5%). The next set had professionals whose experience was 5-9 years. The largest number of participants in this cluster was ten (10; 25%). According to the responses, seven participants (17.5%) had a work experience of 1 to 4 years, and five participants (12.5%) had a work experience of 10 to 14 years. The category with the least number of individuals constitutes those classified as less than one year (3 (7.5%)). The sample had participants with varied professional experiences from less than 1 year to more than 15 years, which may create different opinions relevant to the organizational culture, leadership practices, and employees' response to organizational change

4.2. RQ1: What are the characteristics and prevailing practices of school leadership within educational institutions?

4.2.1 Roles of the respondents

The principals (P) and institutional leaders observed were involved in administrative management, allocation of resources, staff supervision, and coordination of professional learning activities. In the classrooms, their staff was observing classroom instruction, reviewing staff performance, and advising them on lesson plans and instructional practice. In supporting this, P1 says;

"The school's leader who supervises staff and implements agenda policies is what I call my role".

P2 placed a particular emphasis on coordinating the essential aspects of a school's operations.

"As a school leader, I have to coordinate staff, monitor teaching and learning, and make sure that the school's plans and policies are effective."

P3 emphasized the supportive aspect of leadership:

"I am not only responsible for overseeing teachers. I must also offer guidance, lend an ear to their issues, and help them improve their teaching."

The views of P2 and P3 were in agreement with the observational and documentary evidence regarding the multi-faceted role of school leaders. While P1 focused on guiding the school, supervising the staff, and ensuring effective implementation of policies, P2 underlined the need to coordinate staff, monitor teaching and learning, and ensure

implementation of school plans. Similarly, P3 also pointed out the supportive nature of leading, that is, guiding, listening to staff concerns, and supporting teachers in improving their practices. The leaders' involvement with classroom observation, staff supervision, resource allocation and staff development, organization chart, supervision records, and policy reports further endorsed these perspectives. Evidence consists of convergence between what participants say, what they do, and what the documentation shows. School leadership is more than management but includes educational leadership, staff support, coordinating and implementing policy. It therefore seems that effective leadership could play an important role in influencing school culture, deepening accountability, and creating conditions that support organizational change (Fullan, 2016; Schein, 2017).

Teachers (T) were the central figures in curriculum implementation and delivering lessons (planning and implementation), assessment of students (peer assessment of students and programs), and mentoring junior colleagues. Collaborative teaching, lesson planning, and ICT integration were often observed, indicative of a collaborative culture.

T3 stated:

"I work directly with students; I instruct, teach, and assess students."

T4 emphasized the importance of collaboration in implementing educational changes, stating,

"We work together when planning lessons and implementing new programmes. Sharing ideas and supporting one another makes it easier for us to adapt to changes."

T5 highlighted the role of teachers in translating reforms into classroom practice, explaining,

"Teachers are the ones who put new policies and reforms into practice. We need to understand the changes, adapt our teaching, and use appropriate methods to ensure that students benefit from them."

The views of T3, T4 and T5 were consistent with the historical and documentary evidence, which suggests that teachers are central to the implementation of educational practice and reforms. While T3 focused on taking responsibility for instructing, teaching, and assessing students T4 was more about working together, team lesson planning as well as sharing ideas

to adapt to the new programmers. Similarly, T5 stressed that it is the duty of teachers to the learnings of policies and reforms in the classroom and through an appropriate teaching process (strategies). The observations of co-teaching, co-planning, ICT integration, and student assessment, together with co-planning, assessment documents, and teaching schedule, endorsed these perspectives. The interview statements, observations, and documents all indicate that teachers do not only bring about educational implementation. However, they also cause organizational changes depending on the support they get from their colleagues, professional backing, engagement, etc. Teachers' main responsibilities for implementing educational reforms were confirmed in lesson plans, assessment records, and teaching schedules. Analysis of interview responses, observations, and documentary evidence demonstrates that teachers are functioning at the interface of organizational culture and classroom practice, and that collaborative and active engagement is assisting them to adapt to change. In the same way, the support staff contributed to implementing institutional changes, especially miscellaneous activities regarding digital reporting, ICT support, record management, and logistics. They maintained the school records, supported teachers with the technology in the classroom, and helped with the operation, hence the day-to-day functioning of the school. By the same token, this evidence and organizational data also show that support staff play a role in the translation of organizational reform actions. The shared contribution to their change agency reflects a culture of shared responsibility, collaboration, and collective accountability; hence, the successful implementation of change involves more than just school leaders and teachers but the entire school community (Fullan, 2020; Schein, 2017).

4.2.2 School culture and atmosphere

It was observed that the schools provided collaborative, student-centered, disciplined, and respectful environments. Within the schools, regular practices included joint teaching, joint lessons and lesson planning, mentoring programme and collaborative problem-solving.

P4 stated that: "Collective participation is key and that joint lesson planning and team-based problem-solving are

encouraged to ensure everyone contributes to the school's success"

T6 made the same point about collaboration: "When we collaborate on the curriculum, it makes our job easier and more effective".

P5 expressed: "When teachers respect each other and take responsibility together, we are able to solve the problems of the school better and create a healthy workplace."

Collaboration among practitioners is important in making professional practices better. According to T7, "Working with colleagues gives us opportunities to share ideas, learn from one another, and find better ways of addressing challenges in teaching and learning."

According to P4, T6, P5, and T7, collaboration, collective participation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility must be cultivated in schools to promote positive school culture. Both joint lesson planning and team-based problem-solving enable all staff to contribute to school success, and P4's input. Similarly, T6 indicated that working on curriculum-related activities together makes the work of teachers easier and more effective. According to P5, if everyone is respectful and responsible, we can solve school problems and create a healthy workplace. In the same vein, T7 noted that working with other colleagues, exchanging ideas, learning from others, and developing effective solutions to teaching and learning challenges was invaluable. The team's observation findings were corroborated by examination of staff meeting minutes and the school's policy documents, which confirmed the existence of norms and practices conducive to teamwork, shared responsibility, and respect for one another. Based on the findings, a school culture where staff collaborate supports teamwork and the initiatives launched at the school.

According to the findings, staff engagement and openness to change are supported by formal and informal cultural mechanisms, like modelling by leadership, peer support, and collaborative practices. In line with Schein's (2017) explanation of organizational culture, the findings indicate that there are three levels of culture that influence the behavior of the institutions. The supporting literature also suggests that collaborative and trust-based approaches in schools create a set of conditions that promote staff involvement, acceptance, and

successful implementation of educational reform (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2022).

4.2.3 School values and tradition functions

Based on observations, the daily practices of the schools reflect core institutional values like integrity, discipline, teamwork, and Buddhist values. Aspects like morning prayer, school assembly, and ethical modelling by leaders will reinforce these values.

P8 mentioned that a leader has to lead by example and went on to state,

“I try to exhibit the values I wish others to exhibit, such as transparency, integrity, and teamwork”.

Likewise, T12 noted that regular devotions affirm shared values. In their own words,

“Our weekly devotions remind us to uphold Christian morals and discipline in everything we do”.

Supporting these views, P10 noted,

“As leaders, we have to demonstrate the values that we want our staff and students to practice; our actions impact the culture of the school.”

T10 similarly observed,

“The values that we promote in the school guide how we behave towards colleagues and students and help us keep discipline and mutual respect.”

Perusal of school codes of conduct and related institutional documents confirmed that these values were formally incorporated in school expectations and practices. Based on observations, perspectives of participants, and documentary evidence, shared values characterize both the formal structure and day-to-day workings of the school – resulting in a highly consistent culture which is supportive. The practices, rituals, traditions, routines, and norms represent the organization’s culture. This work will help change staff behavior, energy, and commitment to our values and goals, and set shared expectations of behaviors. Through the shared goal, the staff would understand, accept, and adjust to the changes and overall educational development of the organization.

4.2.4 Cultural socialization

The new employees were supported through orientation, mentoring, and shadowing experienced colleagues, as per observations.

P11 says;

“Teaming up in lesson planning and learning visits enhanced school routines and practices while giving an inside look into the organizational culture of the school. P9 stated, “New teachers learn about the school culture by observing the senior staff while participating in day-to-day activities of the school”.

Just like T11

“Guiding new staff through their initial period is essential to clarify expectations, values and ways of working at the school”.

T13 says, “Works alongside other teachers so they can learn the routines of the school and become confident to participate in our activities,”.

These perspectives were corroborated in the orientation manuals and mentorship documentation, which outlined formal mechanisms to introduce new staff to institutional expectations and how to work according to the existing practices at the school.

Sources of evidence associated with the report– observation, participant perspective, and documents all indicate that orientation, mentoring, peer interaction, and participation in non-teaching school activities and 'normal' school life are an important conduit for transmitting organizational values, norms, and practices to recruits. The outcomes imply that when a new teacher is introduced to the school via orientation, mentorship, peer support, and participation in established school practices, it ensures the continuity of organizational values and norms. The socialization of employees has the effect of decreasing their uncertainty and increasing the confidence associated with the school. The onboarding process teaches employees about their new workplace. Reformers need to understand prevailing organizational culture to appreciate the scope of misinterpretations and resistance prior to the introduction of new policies and programmers. Employees can better assess how the amendment relates to internal institutional practices. When experienced colleagues give guidance and support on an ongoing basis, it can increase confidence and professional commitment and willingness to engage in reforms. Socialization enables employees to cultivate an organizational culture. With the help of these qualities, the employees can adjust themselves to a changing environment and contribute better to the institutional goals.

4.3 RQ2: How does the culture of leadership influence employees' attitudes towards change?

4.3.1 Changes of 21st century

After analysis, it was found that the schools adopted two major reforms which were CBC (Competency Based Curriculum) and ICT. The implementation of CBC was compelling teachers not to stick to regular teacher-centric methods but instead restructure their lessons so that the students actively participate and develop thinking, problem solving, creativity, collaboration and practical competencies. The educators were noticed modifying their teaching techniques, getting ready student-centered activities, and giving students more opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-life situations.

ICT integration was also visible in lesson delivery, student assessment, and record-keeping and communication, and administrative reporting. This helped staff at the University become efficient and access information quickly.

P15 expressed that

“The change to CBC led to a rethink of how lessons were delivered, keeping in mind students’ participation and skill”.

P14, a principal, acknowledged the leadership dimension of implementing the reforms when he stated:

“With the CBC and ICT, we need to support teachers, make sure they have the resources and create opportunities for them to learn and adapt to things we require of them.”

According to teacher T14,

“CBC has changed our classroom practice. We now give students more chances to think and apply the concepts instead of listening to the teacher.”

T15, another teacher, mentioned that ICT helps in teaching and assessment.

“Using ICT has made lessons, assessment, record keeping and communication convenient. However, teachers require continuous support for effective use of technology”.

P16 has to say;

“To implement these reforms, teachers and school leaders had to change their established routines, acquire new skills and work together in response to new expectations”.

According to P15, P14, T14, T15 and P16, CBC and ICT reforms require tremendous change in teaching practices,

supportive leadership and collaborative staff. In the interview, P15 and T14 both said education should be more than a particular learner. Education should also teach how to think and apply knowledge in situations. T15 further indicated that ICT can be utilized for teaching, learning, assessment, record-keeping, and communication. Continuous support must be maintained they said. According to P14, it is important to give professional learning and resourcing (necessary). P16 highlighted the modification of routines, learning of new skills, and cooperation. Diverse viewpoints centered on how a combination of adaptable staff, strong leadership, the right resources and synergy is key.

This refers to carefully looking at various details of the school practices and seeing whether they are in line with the CBC and the ICT integration. The things that were tested were curriculum maps, ICT policy, lesson plans assessment records and administrative records. Ultimately, the outcomes of various educational reforms affected what happened in the classroom and the school management. Schools also needed to make adjustments on an ongoing basis to ensure policy expectations became real within schools.

4.3.2 Coping and self-realization

The staff's observations showed that they are engaging with the ongoing reforms. Some teachers continued to enthusiastically engage in professional development programmes, experiment with new instructional techniques, and work with colleagues. Others had more difficulty adapting to the increase in demands. As T15 shared,

“I attended all the training sessions and tried out new teaching approaches to make my lessons more interactive.”

These differences in engagement appeared to be linked to confidence in using ICT, workload, and familiarity with new teaching approaches. P17, a principal, said

“Some teachers will quickly latch on to a reform, while others will take some time and guidance to develop the confidence and competence”.

Similarly, T16 said that

“the training and support from colleagues do help us make sense of the reforms”.

Teachers 18 says;

“We are sometimes not able to implement them effectively due to the extra workload and lack of ICT skill”.

T15, P17, and T16 felt that the level of staff engagement with educational reform changes depended on staff confidence, familiarity with the new practices, and availability of support. T15 has been attending training and trying new approaches at their school actively. According to P17, some teachers adjust quickly, while others need more time and assistance. T16 emphasized that training and peer support help teachers understand and implement reforms. The above views, supported by observations of varied levels of participation and professional development records, suggest that ongoing training, mentoring, and collegial support can strengthen teachers’ confidence and enhance their capacity to adapt to change. Records of professional development and notes of observations further confirmed the availability of scaffolds, such as a mentoring system, jointly planning lessons, and workshops for reflection.

Employee responses and experiences of change are shaped through the interplay of structured systems, leader behaviors, and the institutional culture of the organization. A culture that is collaborative, trustworthy, responsible, and more will allow employees to feel more confident and assured. They will partake in every new initiative. When a culture is unsupportive there is likely to be doubt, stress or push-back. Similarly, clear communication, guidance, engagement, and encouragement from strong leadership can help employees come to understand the reasons for the changes and commit more closely to their implementation. Having access to structured support—professional development, mentoring, peers, and what they need—enables workers to build the skills and confidence to change. According to Armenakis and Bedeian (2020) and Kotter (2012), organizational change is defined as preparing, supporting, and engaging individuals to make organizational change successful. The organization may not succeed in one or the other.

4.3.3 Leadership styles and techniques

Different styles and techniques of leadership are utilized to facilitate educational change to develop growth in teacher attitude, motivation, and willingness to act. Communication, collaboration, trust, shared decision-making, and professional

development help reduce resistance and strengthen teachers’ confidence, ownership and commitment to reform. Participatory, transformational, and distributed leadership supports this effort.

P17 says that;

“I feel that supportive leadership should provide guidance and encouragement to the teachers, thus instilling confidence in teachers to willingly accept and introduce changes.

According to P18 (Principal),

“Participatory leadership should engage teachers in discussions and decisions about any change allows teachers to feel it belongs to them and makes them positive towards it.”

As T10 (Teacher) stated,

“When school leaders listen to us and help solve our problems, we feel supported and open to trying out new approaches ourselves.”

T12 (Teacher) noted the importance of leaders’ trust and recognition as per this quote.

“When leaders trust our abilities and recognize our work, we feel motivated to take part in changes rather than see them as an additional burden.”

The opinion of P17, P18, and T10, T11 consistently indicates that supportive and participatory leadership would positively impact the teachers’ attitude towards educational change. P17 talked about coaching and motivation, and P18 spoke about teachers participating in decisions to develop ownership. In the same way, T10 focused on the necessity of having leaders listen to the teachers and address their issues, T12 indicated trust and recognition – sources of motivation. As a whole, it was identified that supportive leadership, participation, trust and recognition can enhance teachers’ confidence, reduce resistance and motivate them to engage in educational reforms.

4.4 RQ3: What strategies can educational leaders adopt to overcome challenges of organizational change and align organizational culture with future initiatives?

4.4.1 Challenges and mitigation work that the leaders should adopt

From the unavailability of resources to opposing staff, increased workload, and difficulty in adopting practices, school leaders face several challenges. To help with these challenges,

leaders need to communicate more, give them enough resources and professional development, involve them in decision-making, and give constant support.

That's what I call it.

T20 says;

"We can't use the computer because many are old and not working."

TR5 pointed out how workload influences teaching;

"It can be challenging to learn new systems and teach as usual, especially when there are limited opportunities to discuss it."

TR6 noted,

"Some teachers need more time to get used to it. It is because they have been using it the traditional way for several years.

P20, a principal, said that resource constraints affected the speed of implementation and level of support provided to teachers.

"Only having limited ICT equipment and other resources affects this."

With respect to decision-making structures, P21, another principal, said,

"If decisions are made almost always at the leadership level, this suggests that teachers have little influence, and thus are less willing to change."

According to the views of the participants, limited resource allocation, overload of existing work patterns or failure to manage activities effectively, unfamiliarity with the new system, and the decision-making process at higher levels were major hindrances that affected the implementation of educational reforms. T20 said they had old, non-working computers; TR5 said it was difficult to learn the new systems while still running regular teaching. Teachers who have been used to teaching in a particular way for a long time do not adapt quickly, as they need time and support to build upon their current teaching practices and adapt to the new ones. According to P20, a lack of ICT equipment and other resources delayed implementation and constrained the kind of support that could be offered to teachers. P21 further elaborated that limited involvement of teachers in decision-making might restrict their ownership and willingness to let go. It was found from this that access to adequate resources, sufficient time,

professional support, and participatory decision-making was essential for reform implementation.

Strategies to mitigate the risks were professional workshops, mentoring, participatory decision-making, and more efficient resource allocation. The measures were finally implemented as evidenced by documents and ultimately helped to diminish staff resistance and strengthen engagement. According to Fullan (2016), the results show that the implementation of practical measures and supportive organizational culture is vital for effective adaptation of education reforms.

4.4.2 Support for changes

Support for change refers to the direction, resources, training, encouragement and opportunity provided to staff to facilitate the adoption of new practice or reform. Support in schools may include professional development and mentoring, collaboration and communication, and leadership support which will build teacher confidence and minimize resistance.

T12 explains,

"When the leaders acknowledged our innovative practices, we felt inspired to try out new modalities."

Some staff hesitated and resisted the new practices upon observing their first implementation. Nevertheless, resistance to the program was slowly addressed through organized mentoring, open and participatory communication, peer support and values-congruent leadership practices.

P14 said,

"A few of the staff were not very keen at first, and this caused some delays."

The principal P10 emphasized the importance of continued support by saying,

"When teachers are always encouraged to try something new, it only gives them the confidence to try it as it becomes something that they do not feel threatened about."

Principal P10 spoke on the importance of involving the staff by stating,

"When teachers are involved in discussions about the change, they get a better understanding of the purpose, which makes them more willing to get involved."

Similarly, T14 said,

“When involved and the school leaders guide us when in difficulty, it is easier to accept the change and apply it in the classroom.”

According to T12, P14, P10, and T14, the opinion is that good support from school leaders will enable staff to accept and adapt to the ongoing organizational change. According to T12, acknowledgement of innovative practices serves as a great motivator. P14 cautioned that some staff may not accept initially, so implementation could be delayed. P10 underlined that continuous encouragement and involving staff in discussions help build confidence and improve understanding of why changes are made. T14 noted that guidance from leadership is critical during difficult times. These points were consistent with observations regarding mentoring, peer support, participatory communication, and other collaborative practices, indicating that recognition, encouragement, involvement, and ongoing guidance can lessen resistance and strengthen the willingness of staff to implement.

The results suggest that relational trust, leadership modelling, and alignment of organizational values with reform objectives are important factors for successful adoption. Trusting school leaders, observing positive behaviors in leaders, and judging the school reform to be consistent with the institution’s values will lead to building confidence, limiting resistance and proactively engaging in the reform implementation (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

4.4.3 Roles in facilitating changes

Observations illustrated how collaboration, leaders’ role-modelling and recognition of innovations facilitate the take-on of educational reforms and innovations. Teachers worked together in joint curriculum planning, collaborative problem-solving and mentorship programmes, all of which helped theorize and implement new practices in practice. In the words of T18:

“Because leadership promoted collaboration, we felt supported and not pressured.”

P18, a principal added,

“When teachers are involved in the planning and decision-making, they develop more ownership of the changes and are therefore more willing to enact them.”

P19, another principal, explained the role of recognition:

“When we recognize teachers who try out new things, others get motivated to experiment and become more amenable to change.”

In their words, T19 summed up,

“When we work together and those senior to us guide us, it helps us understand what is expected and helps us translate that into our classrooms more easily.”

T18, P18, P19 and T19 suggest that collaborative and supportive leadership helps in acceptance and implementation of change by the employees. According to T18, the fact that they were planning together created a feeling of being supported rather than pressured. Similarly, P18 noted that it was the participation of staff that made them feel as though they owned the change. P19 emphasized the importance of providing recognition for new initiatives as such makes others acquainted with trying out something new, while T19 further stated that teamwork is important and elite staff members help guide the experimenters through such processes. As the observations of collaborative planning, mentoring and problem-solving suggest, participation and recognition; peer support; and effective leadership are important mechanisms for strengthening staff engagement for successful adoption of reform.

Document reviews also indicated the presence of structured mechanisms for staff participation and support. In general, collaborative leadership, recognition, mentoring, and joint responsibility can create a supportive organizational climate that can help strengthen staff engagement for the successful implementation of reforms.

Organizational culture can significantly influence an employee's response to educational change according to the findings of the research. A culture where relational trust, collaboration, shared responsibility, and mutual support are prevalent can lessen employees’ resistance to change and enhance their sense of ownership and commitment to reform. When staff feel trusted, valued, and collectively responsible for achieving institutional goals, they are more likely to engage with new practices willingly and maintain them (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Chapter V

5.1 Conclusion

The article states that organizational culture significantly affects employee attitudes and behaviors regarding educational change. The research shows that collaboration, teamwork, discipline, respect, shared responsibility, and positive relationships within a school's culture are vital for effective implementation of reforms. Institutional rituals, Professional Development, Peer Support, Mentoring and Leadership modelling helped to reinforce value expectations. Nevertheless, the limited availability of ICT infrastructure and resources, increased workload, hierarchical decision-making, and differences in staff readiness were barriers to change. The discovery, therefore, indicates that organizational culture is either an enabler or a barrier to reform based on the degree to which institutional values, practices and relationships support it. The research also concluded that the leadership culture is significant in developing employees' positive attitudes towards education change. According to the teachers, the participative leadership practice helped them to increase their confidence, motivation, ownership, and readiness to use innovative practices. When teachers are involved in decision making, their efforts are recognized, ongoing support is provided, and collaboration encouraged, resistance is lessened, and engagement promoted. Through the demonstration of the implementation of CBC and ICT integration, we have learned that sustainable change does not merely happen through policies. It also requires adequate resources.

5.2 Recommendation

To Education Office

1. The Education Office shall ensure that the school has sufficient ICT equipment, internet connectivity, teaching resources and technical support for the issuance of educational reform.
2. Provide continuous professional development at the right time and right place. School leaders together with teachers should be offered relevant training, workshops, mentoring and follow-up support to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to enact reforms.

3. Involving school administrators and teachers in accordance changes through feedback mechanisms. In keeping with a participative approach to change management, the Education Office should establish feedback mechanisms to allow principals and teachers to weigh in on education issues.

To schools

1. It is essential to ensure environments in which the staff members feel safe and are confident to take risks. School have to create a culture of respect, effectiveness and trust so that improvement does not get initiated only in the wake of a crisis, in schools and elsewhere.
2. The involvement of teachers in planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation should be done so that their feeling of ownership would lessen the resistance.
3. In order to ease the transition, schools should intensify their mentoring programs, foster peer learning, allow co-planning, instill professional learning communities and reward innovation.

To teachers

1. Teachers should actively participate in training, workshops, peer learning and mentoring, and other professional development opportunities to keep developing the skills needed to respond readily to reforms.
2. Teacher should collaborate with each other sharing good practices with the support of working colleagues, experimenting with new practices teacher sharing good practices with the support of working.
3. Teachers must show a positive attitude towards change. They must communicate problems in good faith. They must get involved in decision-making. Plus, teachers act jointly responsible for improving teaching-learning practices.

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