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Inclusive Leadership Practices and Teachers Collaboration in Public Junior High Schools Division of Dasmariñas City: Basis for Enhancement Program

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ABSTRACT

Modern education requires shifting from top-down management to collaborative frameworks where school heads facilitate human potential. Amid rising institutional diversity, inclusive leadership has emerged as a foundational practice that moves beyond basic administration. This approach ensures all community members feel valued, heard, and empowered. By prioritizing open communication, equity, and shared decision-making, inclusive leaders transform schools into supportive ecosystems that leverage diverse perspectives for continuous growth.

This practice is driven by global frameworks, empirical data, and local mandates. Globally, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (2023) advocates for collaborative professionalism to manage classroom complexities. Lee and Chen (2025) link inclusive leadership to robust learning environments, while Khalifa et al. (2022) and Saha (2024) establish that it creates a psychological safety net that fosters innovation. Locally, DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2020 (PPSSH) defines school heads as primary facilitators of equity, a directive reinforced by DepEd Order No. 030, s. 2025, which mandates an inclusive employment policy to optimize collaborative climate. While leadership sets the vision, operational success relies on deep teacher collaboration. This practice eliminates instructional isolation, establishing a culture of shared responsibility where educators work interdependently through professional learning communities, peer coaching, and joint planning. When teachers collaborate to design curriculum and analyze student data, they generate a collective intelligence that enhances teaching efficacy and boosts overall student achievement.

This collaborative framework is legally and empirically justified. Locally, DepEd Order No. 042, s. 2017 (PPST) mandates that educators work together to enhance instruction, while DepEd Order No. 042, s. 2022 provides structural support by decentralizing leadership and funding teacher-led innovations. However, Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) caution that workload intensification frequently hinders genuine teamwork. To move past superficial compliance, Darling- Hammond et al. (2023) emphasize providing protected time and resources, which Abella and Cruz (2022) alongside Delos Reyes and Bautista (2022) underscore as the bedrock of school success.

Despite these mandates, a research gap persists regarding how inclusive leadership translates into authentic teacher collaboration within the Schools Division Office of Dasmariñas City. Localized literature shows that discrepancies frequently arise between administrative and teacher perceptions of school practices; specifically, Reyes (2023) notes that these differing viewpoints can undermine school climate and performance. Currently, empirical data is scarce regarding how school heads, department heads, and classroom teachers align on these practices. Timperley (2023) argues that such gaps can only be resolved when institutions foster the transparent dialogue required for genuine improvement.

To address this gap, this study investigates inclusive leadership and teacher collaboration across public junior high schools in Dasmariñas City. This investigation is vital because, as Cabrera et al. (2023)

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suggest, interventions designed with direct stakeholder input are far more likely to achieve sustainable change. By comparing the distinct assessments of principals, department heads, and teachers, this research will pinpoint local operational strengths and growth areas. Ultimately, this study will produce an evidence- based enhancement program designed to bridge theory and classroom reality, providing the division with a roadmap to cultivate high-performing academic environments.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to analyze the relationship between inclusive leadership practices and the extent of teacher collaboration within public junior high schools in the Division of Dasmariñas City. Specifically, the objectives are to evaluate the principals, school administrator, and teachers for the inclusive leadership practices in terms of value of equity and diversity, promotion of decision-making process, teachers' engagement, and teachers' innovation and sustainable growth. To determine if there is a significant difference in the assessment of the three groups of respondents regarding the inclusive leadership practices using the above variables. To identify how the three groups of respondents assess the teachers' collaboration as to goal- driven collaboration, practice-based collaboration, continuity-based collaboration, community involvement, and collaborative professionalism. To determine if there is a significant relationship between the inclusive leadership practices and teachers' collaboration. To find the challenges encountered by the respondents relative to leadership practices and teachers' collaboration. To propose an enhancement program based on the findings of the study. And. to determine the level of acceptability of the proposed enhancement program.

METHODS

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research approach to evaluate the implementation of inclusive leadership practices within public junior high schools in the Division of Dasmariñas City. This variable was systematically analyzed through four specific sub-categories: Value of Equity and Diversity, Promotes Decision-Making Process, Teachers' Engagement, and Teacher Innovation and Sustainable Growth. Data were gathered from 660 respondents, comprising principals, school administrator, and teachers. The researcher used weighted means to assess individual indicators and composite means to rank the overall implementation of each sub-category. To determine if perceptions differed significantly among the respondent groups, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to each sub-variable to test for statistical variance across the school hierarchy.

RESULTS

On the assessment of inclusive leadership across the four variables shows that all areas were rated Highly Evident (HE) by principals, school administrator, and teachers, with an overall composite mean of 4.42. When ranked from highest to lowest implementation, Teachers' Engagement emerged as the top sub-category (CM = 4.47), where the highest-rated statement was that teachers are encouraged to lead projects or activities (CM = 4.52). The Value of Equity and Diversity followed in second place (CM = 4.45), highlighted by the school head's promotion of inclusion for diverse groups (CM = 4.57). Teacher Innovation and Sustainable Growth ranked third (CM = 4.38), primarily driven by the encouragement for teachers to try new teaching strategies (CM = 4.57). Finally, Promotes Decision-Making Process ranked fourth (CM = 4.37), focusing on the consideration of stakeholder input in important decisions (CM = 4.52).

Statistical testing via ANOVA revealed significant differences in the assessments among the three respondent groups across all sub-variables: Equity and Diversity ($F=4.63$, $p=0.031$), Decision-making ($F=10.67$, $p=0.002$), Teachers' Engagement ($F=14.43$, $p=0.001$), and Innovation and Growth ($F=7.93$, $p=0.006$). These results suggest that school leadership has successfully established a human-centric model that prioritizes teacher agency and psychological safety; the high values in Teachers' Engagement and Equity signify that leaders are successfully empowering faculty to take ownership and fostering a culture of fairness. However, the significant ANOVA results and the lower ranking of Decision-Making indicate a perception gap between administrators and teachers, suggesting that while the leadership's intent for inclusion is strong, the experience of participatory governance is not yet uniform across all ranks, requiring more consistent efforts to ensure all staff members feel equally heard in the decision-making process.

The overall assessment of inclusive leadership practices suggests there wasn't a wide gap in opinions; most participants across all groups believe these leadership traits are being practiced.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: The findings demonstrate that inclusive leadership practices are generally perceived as highly evident by all stakeholder groups, with a consistent and strong overall rating. While schools have established foundational excellence in areas such as equity and diversity, the high levels of manifestation reflect a professional environment where leaders value inclusion and fair treatment. This reflects meaningful progress toward an equitable school culture, though minor gaps in equal access to growth opportunities suggest room for further alignment and refinement in leadership strategies.

The analysis highlights a significant variation in perceptions among principals, school administrator, and teachers regarding inclusive leadership. These differences stem from varying levels of administrative involvement and the unique vantage points of each role within the school hierarchy. The findings underscore the need for a more unified approach to school governance to ensure that inclusive policies are felt and experienced consistently by classroom teachers as much as they are by school administrators.

The assessment of teachers' collaboration revealed that educators are consistently perceived as highly collaborative across goal-driven, practice-based, continuity-based, community, and professional dimensions. This demonstrates a strong commitment to shared instructional goals and collective responsibility for student outcomes, contributing to a robust professional learning community within the Division of Dasmariñas City.

The statistically significant and strong positive correlation between inclusive leadership and teachers' collaboration suggests that an inclusive school climate is fundamentally linked to increased teacher teamwork. This implies that when school leaders effectively empower their staff and promote equity, teachers feel more confident and motivated to engage in collaborative professionalism, co-planning, and shared innovation, thereby enhancing the overall quality of the educational environment.

All stakeholder groups identified common challenges in implementing inclusive leadership and fostering collaboration, including heavy workloads that impede active participation and the difficulty of fully integrating community and parental input. These issues underscore the need for targeted interventions and stronger administrative support systems to manage teacher time effectively and ensure that inclusivity extends beyond the school walls to include wider community stakeholders.

A comprehensive set of intervention measures, encapsulated in the enhancement program, was proposed to strengthen inclusive leadership and elevate teacher collaboration. These strategies—ranging from leadership training in participatory decision-making to the promotion of practice-based sharing and community engagement—collectively aim to build a more secure, collaborative, and equitable school environment. By addressing key areas of concern and promoting shared accountability, these interventions support a proactive and well-informed approach to school improvement within the division.

KEYWORDS: *Inclusive Leadership Practices, Teachers Collaboration*

INTRODUCTION

Modern education calls for a shift from top-down management to collaborative frameworks where school heads facilitate human potential. In increasingly diverse schools, inclusive leadership has become essential, ensuring all members feel valued, heard, and empowered. By promoting open communication, equity, and shared decision-making, it transforms schools into supportive, growth-oriented environments.

This practice is driven by global frameworks, empirical data, and local mandates. Globally, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (2023) promotes collaborative professionalism to address classroom complexities, while Lee and Chen (2025), Khalifa et al. (2022), and Saha (2024) link inclusive leadership to strong learning environments, innovation, and psychological safety. Locally, DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2020 (PPSSH) identifies school heads as key facilitators of equity, reinforced by DepEd Order No. 030, s. 2025, which mandates inclusive employment policies to strengthen collaboration.

While leadership sets the vision, operational success relies on deep teacher collaboration. This practice eliminates instructional isolation, establishing a culture of shared responsibility where educators work interdependently through professional learning communities, peer coaching, and joint planning.

When teachers collaborate to design curriculum and analyze student data, they generate a collective intelligence that enhances teaching efficacy and boosts overall student achievement.

This collaborative framework is both legally and empirically supported. DepEd Order No. 042, s. 2017 (PPST) mandates teacher collaboration, while DepEd Order No. 042, s. 2022 strengthens this through decentralized leadership and funding for teacher-led innovations. However, Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) note that workload intensification can limit authentic collaboration. To address this, Darling-Hammond et al. (2023) stress the need for protected time and resources, which Abella and Cruz (2022) and Delos Reyes and Bautista (2022) identify as essential to school success.

Despite these mandates, a research gap remains on how inclusive leadership translates into authentic teacher collaboration within the Schools Division Office of Dasmariñas City. Local studies show mismatches between administrative and teacher perceptions, which Reyes (2023) links to weakened school climate and performance. Empirical evidence on alignment among school heads, department heads, and teachers is still limited. Timperley (2023) asserts that such gaps can only be addressed through transparent dialogue that supports genuine improvement.

To address this gap, the study examines inclusive leadership and teacher collaboration in public junior high schools in Dasmariñas City. This is important because Cabrera et al. (2023) emphasize that stakeholder-informed interventions are more likely to achieve sustainable change. By comparing the perspectives of principals, department heads, and teachers, the research identifies key strengths and areas for improvement. Ultimately, it will develop an evidence-based enhancement program to bridge theory and practice and guide the division in building high-performing academic environments.

Statement of the Problem

The study assessed the Inclusive Leadership Practices and Teachers Collaboration in Public Junior High School Division of Dasmariñas City as basis for an enhancement program.

Specifically, it sought answer to the following sub- problems:

1. How do Principals, School Administrator, and Teachers assess the inclusive leadership practices in public junior high school in the Division of Dasmariñas City in terms of;
   1.1. Value of Equity and Diversity;
   1.2. Promotes Decision Making Process;
   1.3. Teachers Engagement; and
   1.4. Teachers Innovation and sustainable growth?
2. Is there a significant difference on the assessments of the three groups of respondents on the Inclusive Leadership Practices using the above-mentioned variables?
3. How do the three groups of respondents assess the Teachers Collaboration in terms of:
   3.1. Goal-driven Collaboration;
   3.2. Practice-based Collaboration;
   3.3. Continuity-based Collaboration;
   3.4. Community Involvement; and
   3.5. Collaborative Professionalism?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the Inclusive Leadership Practices and Teachers Collaboration?
5. What are the challenges encountered by the respondents relative to Leadership Practices and Teachers Collaboration?
6. Based on the findings, what enhancement program may be proposed?
7. How acceptable is the proposed enhancement program?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to assess the inclusive leadership practice and teachers collaboration in public junior high schools in the Division of Dasmariñas City, as basis for an enhancement program.

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design. This specific methodology is designed to describe and analyze the relationship between two or more variables as they exist in a natural setting, without any intervention or manipulation by the researcher (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021; Flick, 2022). By employing this design, the researcher was able to collect quantitative data to determine the current status of inclusive leadership practices while simultaneously measuring the extent and direction of its relationship with teacher collaboration. Unlike experimental methods, this approach focuses on identifying patterns, trends, and associations within the organizational context of the Division of Dasmariñas City, providing a systematic overview of the variables without attempting to establish direct causation (Snyder, 2023).

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Based on the study, the following findings were drawn:

1. **On how Principals, School Administrator, and Teachers assess the inclusive leadership practices.**

The three groups of respondents perceived the inclusive leadership practices in the Division as Highly Evident, this was supported by the overall grand mean of 4.49.

2. **On the significant difference among the assessments of the three groups of respondents.**

The statistical results show that all p-values are below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected for each variable. This indicates statistically significant differences in perceptions among principals, school administrator, and teachers.

3. **On how the three groups of respondents assess Teachers' Collaboration.**

The overall grand mean of 4.42 indicates that teachers' collaboration was generally interpreted as Highly Evident (HE). These results suggest that across all respondent groups, teachers consistently demonstrated high levels of goal-driven and practice-based collaboration.

4. **On the significant relationship between Inclusive Leadership Practices and Teachers' Collaboration.**

A strong and significant positive relationship was found between the level of inclusive leadership practices and the level of teachers' collaboration. The statistical analysis yielded a p-value below the 0.05 significance level, making the result statistically significant.

5. **On the challenges encountered by the respondents.**

The challenges encountered, was rated as moderately encountered supported by grand mean of 2.91.

6. **On the Enhancement Program.**

The proposed enhancement program gained an overall composite mean of 4.42 which falls under Highly Acceptable, indicating overall strong approval of the program.

7. **On the acceptability of the proposed enhancement program.**

The evaluation of the proposed enhancement program yielded an overall composite mean of 4.42, which is interpreted as Highly Acceptable. This indicates strong, uniform approval across all respondent groups, confirming that the program's objectives, content, and implementation strategy are highly relevant, feasible, and strategically aligned with the operational needs of the division.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Public junior high school heads in Dasmariñas City demonstrate a strong foundation in inclusive leadership. They excel at driving teacher ownership and promoting respect for cultural diversity, though minor refinements are still needed to guarantee equal access to professional development and address subtle institutional biases.

2. The rejection of the first null hypothesis confirms that school position significantly shapes how inclusive governance is experienced. Principals view their own leadership more optimally than department heads and classroom teachers do, highlighting an implementation gap in communication and shared decision-making across professional ranks.

3. Teachers exhibit a deeply embedded culture of mutual respect and alignment with institutional goals. They maintain excellent administrative compliance, particularly in lesson alignment, official documentation, and the consistent recording of professional session minutes.

4. A distinct breakdown occurs when moving from administrative planning to actual classroom execution. Critical, practice- based collaborative dimensions—specifically routine peer feedback, open peer-to-peer observations, and joint action research—are significantly lagging due to localized operational constraints.

5. The strong, positive correlation between inclusive leadership and teacher collaboration proves that teamwork relies heavily on the school head. When leaders model humility and protect psychological safety, they directly drive teachers to move past surface-level cooperation into deep collaborative professionalism.

6. Systemic constraints primarily workload intensification, heavy ancillary duties, and a lack of protected time—serve as the main barriers to school innovation. Teachers' desire to pioneer new strategies is consistently hindered by scheduling conflicts, limited resources, and low external community engagement.

7. The high validation and uniform acceptability of the proposed enhancement program confirm its immediate relevance for the division. By targeting verified problem areas like shared decision-making and protected co-planning time, it provides a practical, evidence-based path to sustain collaborative school environments.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. Schools Division Office and School Heads may officially adopt and implement the proposed enhancement program with adequate institutional support, regular monitoring, and continuous stakeholder involvement to move the school culture toward an integrated, goal-driven collaborative environment. Furthermore, school heads may pursue specialized professional development focusing on systemic bias, transparency, and clear policy guidelines to bridge perception gaps and ensure equitable training access.
2. School Leaders, including Assistant Principals and Department Heads, may consider to take a proactive role in operationalizing practice-based collaboration while strengthening structured cross-pollination sessions and formal co-planning schedules within their respective departments. By leading these innovation sessions and mentoring programs, instructional leaders can ensure that instructional improvements move from isolated activities to shared professional responsibilities.
3. Classroom Teachers may consider to adopt a proactive stance by embracing collaborative professionalism, moving beyond passive participation to take ownership of shared accountability for student outcomes. Teachers may actively contribute to school-wide planning, engage in continuous learning, and utilize protected time for deep pedagogical partnerships to ensure their unique classroom insights help shape inclusive school policies.
4. Non-Teaching Personnel may consider to actively integrate themselves into the school's collaborative climate by aligning administrative, clerical, and support services with the inclusive vision of the school heads. By participating in joint cross-functional dialogue and professional development, non-teaching staff can help streamline operational processes, optimize resource allocation, and foster a more welcoming, inclusive, and seamless school environment for both educators and external stakeholders.
5. Schools Heads and Community Leaders may transform the role of parents and community stakeholders from passive observers to active pedagogical partners by creating dedicated forums and community-focused programs. Schools may integrate local cultural feedback into school initiatives to ensure that the educational environment remains highly responsive to the diversity and specific needs of the families within Dasmariñas City.
6. School Parent-Teacher Association (SPTA) Officers and Members may consider to actively collaborate with school management to co-design and support inclusive school initiatives. By establishing regular dialogical forums and volunteer networks, the SPTA can serve as a vital communicative bridge between the home and the school, ensuring that parents are transformed from passive observers into active partners in student development and school governance.
7. Future Researchers may utilize the findings of this study as a foundational reference for exploring other variables that influence the school climate. It is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies or qualitative inquiries to further examine the long-term impact of inclusive leadership on student performance and to validate the effectiveness of the proposed program across other divisions in the region.

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