

THE EFFECTS OF PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHERS' COMMITMENT TO CHANGE IN THE CURRICULUM REFORM

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the effects of principals' transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform at Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were executed to gather the data. The sample for quantitative study consisted of 213 teachers from 60 Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township. The teachers completed two survey instruments: "*Transformational School Leadership Questionnaire*" developed by Leithwood (2012, as cited in Liu, 2013) and "*Organizational Change Process Survey*" developed by Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1993, as cited in Liu, 2013). Furthermore, the qualitative data were gathered by interviewing 10 principals and 30 teachers from 10 selected primary schools. The findings showed that all teachers perceived that their principals highly performed all dimensions of transformational leadership in their schools. Moreover, they performed their work with a high level of commitment in the curriculum reform. Results of correlation testing indicated that principals' transformational leadership was significantly and highly related with teachers' commitment ($r=.800$, $p<0.01$). Besides, the result of multiple regressions showed that one dimension of "*Setting Direction*" was a positive predictor for changing the teachers' commitment. According to linear regression, the adjusted R squared value ($R^2 = .638$, $p<.001$) indicated that 64% of the variance in teachers' commitment can be predicted from principals' transformational leadership. In conclusion, the more principals practiced the transformational leadership at schools, the more teachers performed their tasks with higher commitment (Liu, 2013). Furthermore, principals' transformational leadership can be effective when the principals guided a clear direction and created a good cooperation among teachers, students, and all stakeholders (Rutledge, 2010).

Keywords: Curriculum Reform, Transformational Leadership, Teacher Commitment

Introduction

With the vision of creating an education system that will generate a learning society capable of facing the challenges of the Knowledge Age, the government of Myanmar has made many efforts to strengthen the education system and has also made education reform as a national priority (Soe, Swe, Aye, & Mon, 2017). To fully realize the benefits of a quality national education system, a new National Education Strategic Plan (NESP), a comprehensive and evidence-based roadmap intended to reform the entire education sector, is implemented during the period of 2016-2021 (MOE-CESR, 2016). Reform is a complex concept. As an educational aspiration, its goal is to realize deep, systemic, and sustained restructuring of schooling (Provenzo & Renaud, 2009).

In the basic education sub-sector, principals will play a key role in the implementation of the curriculum and government policies, organization and supervision of teachers, general administration, as well as adoption of new interactive pedagogy and application of a new assessment system (Liu, 2013). In addition, principal needs to be highly involved in encouraging, directing, observing teaching- learning, and motivating teachers' commitment to change in their schools (Hallinger, 2005, as cited in Kolu, 2015).

At a time when education is in constant flux, teachers are expected to incorporate reforms on a number of levels into their daily practice. Moreover, teachers must be willing to experience

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steep learning curves and invest personal time and energy to translate the ongoing reforms successfully into effective practice (Crosswell & Elliott, 2006). Therefore, most researchers argued that increasing the commitment of teachers is an important step in the process of curriculum reform (Vasudevan, 2013).

Therefore, the transformational leadership practices enacted by principals in the schools are important factors to motivate teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform process. By keeping in view the importance of principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment, the present study will be investigated the effects of principals' transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform by studying the perceptions of teachers from all Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township. The information gathered from this study can be helpful to teachers to understand their principals' transformational leadership practices and to improve their commitment in the curriculum reform. Moreover, this information can be useful in helping principals to develop their transformational leadership practices needed to be enacted in the curriculum reform.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of principals' transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform at Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township.

Research Questions

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of principals' transformational leadership in the curriculum reform?
2. Are there any significant differences in perceptions of teachers on principals' transformational leadership in the curriculum reform based on their demographic information (gender, age, position, academic qualification and teaching service)?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions of their commitment in the curriculum reform?
4. Are there any significant differences in perceptions of teachers on their commitment in the curriculum reform based on their demographic information (gender, age, position, academic qualification and teaching service)?
5. Is there any relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment in the curriculum reform?
6. Which dimensions of principals' transformational leadership significantly predict teachers' commitment in the curriculum reform?

Scope of the Study

1. The scope of this study was limited to Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township because of available time and resources of the researcher.
2. The findings of this study could not be generalized to any group of other Township except the Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township.

Definitions of Key Terms

The terms used throughout this study are identified below to have clarity and understanding.

- **Curriculum Reform:** Curriculum reform is defined as bringing changes to the subject content, teaching method and assessment of curriculum (Simmons, 2009).

- **Transformational Leadership:** Transformational leadership is defined as the leadership that enhances the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement (Begley and Cousins, 1994, as cited in Liu, 2013).
- **Teacher Commitment:** Teacher commitment defined as teacher behavior that is directed toward helping students develop both intellectually and socially where teachers will work hard to ensure student success in school (Hoy & Sabo, 1998, as cited in Liu, 2013).

Operational Definitions of the Study

This study utilizes the following operational definitions.

- **Curriculum Reform:** Curriculum reform in the study refers to curriculum change started in Kindergarten, Grade-1, and Grade-2 according to National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021.
- **Transformational Leadership:** Transformational leadership used in this study is Leithwood's model of transformational leadership which is based on the empirical studies and theories of Bass and Burns. In this study, transformational leadership refers to four practices of transformational leadership such as setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program (Leithwood, 1999, as cited in Liu, 2013).
- **Teacher commitment:** Teacher commitment in this study consists of two parts such as organizational characteristics and teachers' commitment to change.

(1) **Organizational Characteristics:** In this study, organizational characteristics refer to four types of school characteristics such as school culture, strategies for change, school structure, and school environment.

(2) **Teachers' Commitment to Change:** Teachers' commitment to change refers to four dimensions of teachers' personal factors such as personal goals, capacity beliefs, context beliefs, and emotional arousal (Liu, 2013).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework guiding this study is summarized in following figure.

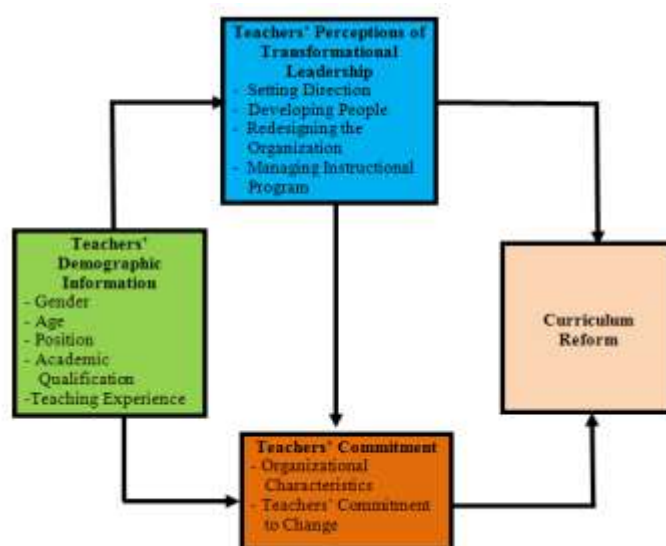


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Review of Related Literature

Curriculum Reform

- Curriculum is the sum total experiences which children undergo at school whereas the syllabus is a brief list of topics for each subject. Curriculum reform is defined as bringing changes to the subject content, teaching method and assessment of curriculum (Simmons, 2009).
- Curriculum reform in the study refers to curriculum change started in Kindergarten, Grade-1, and Grade-2 according to National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

Transformational Leadership

- Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems (Avolio, 2004, as cited in Feizi, Ebrahimi, & Beheshti, 2014).
- Transformational leadership used in this study is Leithwood's model of transformational leadership which is based on the empirical studies and theories of Bass and Burns. In this study, transformational leadership refers to four practices of transformational leadership such as setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program.
- **Setting Direction** means building a school vision, establishing school goals, and creating high performance expectations. **Developing People** means providing individualized support; creating intellectual stimulation; and modeling best practices. **Redesigning the Organization** refers to developing a collaborative school culture, creating structures to foster participation in school decisions. **Managing Instructional Program** means establishing effective staffing practices, providing instructional support, monitoring school activities (Yu, Leithwood & Jantzi, 2002).

Teachers' Commitment

- Teacher commitment is closely connected to teachers' work performance and their ability to innovate and to integrate new ideas into their own practice, absenteeism, staff turnover, as well as having an important influence on students' achievement in, and attitudes toward school (Firestone & Graham, 1996, as cited in Crosswell & Elliott, 2006).
- Teacher commitment is studied in terms of Leithwood's (1999, as cited in Liu, 2013) dimensions. In this study, teacher commitment consists of two parts such as organizational characteristics and teachers' commitment to change.

Organizational Characteristics

- In this study, organizational characteristics or the mediating elements refer to four types of school characteristics such as school culture, strategies for change, school structure, and school environment.
- **School Culture** includes the shared norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions that shape members' decisions and practices. **Strategies** for change include the uses made of school goals, encouragement for teachers to develop improvement plans and to engage in professional development activities. **School structure** includes opportunities for teachers to participate in decision making about both classroom and school-wide issues. **School environment** encompasses teachers' perceptions that the school's efforts to manage the change process allow them to focus on a small number of priorities to implement change (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, as cited in Yu et al., 2002).

Teachers' Commitment to Change

- **Teachers' commitment to change** refers to four dimensions of teachers' personal factors such as personal goals, capacity beliefs, context beliefs, and emotional arousal.
- **Personal goals** refer to desired future states that have been internalized by an individual. **Capacity beliefs** mean psychological states such as self-efficacy, self-confidence, academic self-concept, and aspects of self-esteem. **Context beliefs** refer to beliefs about whether the school administration or the central office will actually provide the money or other resources that teachers require to successfully implementing a change. **Emotional arousal** processes have the functions to create a state of action readiness and to serve to maintain patterns of action (Leithwood, 1999, as cited in Liu, 2013).

Methodology

Research Method

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to collect the required data in this study.

Participants

All teachers from 60 Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township participated in this study. In addition, interview was also conducted with 10 principals and 30 teachers from 10 selected primary schools in order to obtain detailed information about principals' and teachers' perspectives on principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform.

Instruments

In order to collect and analyze quantitative data, two surveys were used to obtain the data needed from the samples. In order to explore the teachers' perceptions of their principals' transformational leadership, "*Transformational School Leadership Questionnaire*" developed by Leithwood (2012, as cited in Liu, 2013) was used. Moreover, "*Organizational Change Process Survey*" developed by Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi, & Steinbach (1993, as cited in Liu, 2013) was used to measure the perceptions of teachers about their commitment to change in the curriculum reform. In addition, interview questions for principals and interview questions for teachers were created by the researcher to obtain detailed information about the principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform.

Data Collection Procedures

Before field testing the instruments with a sample of teachers, the instruments used in this study were reviewed by a panel of experts who have special knowledge and close relationship with this area, from Department of Educational Theory. Next, a sample of 21 Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township was randomly chosen as sample schools for the pilot testing. The preliminary instruments were field tested by 82 teachers (6 male teachers and 76 female teachers) representing 21 schools. Questionnaires were distributed to those schools on September 10th, 2018 and collected after 5 days. All of the teachers responded to those questionnaires. After collecting the data, the researcher reviewed and revised the items which were less than correlation coefficient 0.3.

In order to measure the reliability of instruments, the Pearson product-moment correlation method (**Average Item Total Correlation**) was used for internal consistency reliability. In this study, the reliability of "*Transformational School Leadership Questionnaire*" developed by Leithwood (2012, as cited in Liu, 2013) ranged from .958 to .990 and the average of this

instrument was .974. “*Organizational Change Process Survey*” developed by Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi, & Steinbach (1993, as cited in Liu, 2013) consists of two parts: the reliability of organizational characteristics questions ranged from .844 to .915 and the average of this instrument was .879 and the reliability of teachers’ commitment to change questions ranged from .817 to .903 and the average was .860.

After taking permission from the responsible persons, questionnaires were distributed to teachers from 60 Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township on October 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th, 2018 and collected after lasting one week. Based on the responses of teachers, the study was conducted in order to explore the effects of principals’ transformational leadership on teachers’ commitment to change in the curriculum reform.

In addition, the researcher conducted the interviews with 10 principals and 30 teachers from 10 Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township on December 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th, 2018. Based on the results of responses, this study was conducted in order to investigate the effects of principals’ transformational leadership on teachers’ commitment to change in the curriculum reform.

Data Analysis

Using SPSS, descriptive statistics such as means, and standard deviations for each variable were calculated concerning principals’ transformational leadership and teachers’ commitment to change in the curriculum reform. In order to determine the levels of teachers’ perceptions on principals’ transformational leadership and teachers’ commitment, the levels of mean values were identified as the mean values from 1.00 to 2.33 was “Low Level”, the mean values from 2.34 to 3.67 as “Moderate Level” and the mean values from 3.68 to 5.00 as “High Level”.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent samples *t*-test and Post Hoc multiple comparisons test were also used to determine whether or not there were significant differences in the perceptions of principals’ transformational leadership and teachers’ commitment to change in the curriculum reform according to the demographic information of teachers. In addition, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was utilized to explore the relationship among principals’ transformational leadership and teachers’ commitment. Moreover, regression tests were also used to predict the detailed correlation between the criterion variable and one or more predictor variables.

Responses to open-ended questions were categorized and analyzed to complement findings on differences in teachers’ perceptions of principals’ transformational leadership and their commitment to change in the curriculum reform. Furthermore, responses from principals’ and teachers’ interviews were categorized and analyzed to obtain and complement findings about the principal’s transformational leadership and teachers’ commitment to change in the curriculum reform.

Findings

Quantitative Analysis

(i) Transformational Leadership

In order to explore the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ transformational leadership, “*Transformational School Leadership Questionnaire*” developed by Leithwood (2012, as cited in Liu, 2013) was used. There are four dimensions in this instrument: “*Setting Direction*”, “*Developing People*”, “*Redesigning the Organization*”, and “*Managing Instructional Program*”. Table 1 shows the mean values of principals’ transformational leadership perceived by teachers at Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township.

Table 1 Mean Values of Principals' Transformational Leadership Perceived by Teachers

Dimensions of Transformational Leadership	Mean	SD	Remark
Setting Direction	4.25	.402	High Level
Developing People	4.15	.431	High Level
Redesigning the Organization	4.20	.435	High Level
Managing Instructional Program	4.20	.435	High Level
Overall Transformational Leadership	4.20	.413	High Level

1.00-2.33 = Low 2.34-3.67 = Moderate 3.68-5.00 = High

According to Table 1, the mean values for perceptions of teachers on all dimensions of principals' transformational leadership and overall transformational leadership were above 4.00. Therefore, the level of principals' transformational leadership in Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township was at high level.

(ii) Teachers' Commitment

"Organizational Change Process Survey" developed by Leithwood, Dart, Jantzi, & Steinbach (1993, as cited in Liu, 2013) was used to measure the perceptions of teachers on their commitment to change in the curriculum reform. This survey consists of two parts such as organizational characteristics and teachers' commitment to change. Table 2 shows the mean values of teachers' commitment perceived by teachers themselves.

Table 2 Mean Values of Teachers' Commitment Perceived by Teachers Themselves

	Mean	SD	Remark
Organizational Characteristics	4.17	.398	High Level
Teachers' Commitment to Change	4.15	.364	High Level
Teachers' Commitment	4.16	.374	High Level

1.00-2.33 = Low 2.34-3.67 = Moderate 3.68-5.00 = High

Based on the teachers' perceptions shown in Table 2, it was found that the average mean value of teachers' perceptions of their commitment in the curriculum reform was at high level. In other words, teachers from Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township performed their work with a high level of commitment in the curriculum reform.

(iii) Relationship between Principals' Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Commitment in the Curriculum Reform

The Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was utilized to investigate the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment in the curriculum reform perceived by teachers at all Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township. Table 3 shows the correlations between principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment in the curriculum reform perceived by teachers.

Table 3 Correlations between Principals' Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Commitment in the Curriculum Reform Perceived by Teachers

	1	2	3	4
Transformational Leadership	1			
Organizational Characteristics	.770**	1		
Teachers' Commitment to Change	.802**	.927**	1	
Teachers' Commitment in the Curriculum Reform	.800**	.983**	.980**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

According to Table 3, it was also found that two domains of teachers' commitment such as "Organizational Characteristics" ($r=.770$, $p<0.01$) and "Teachers' Commitment to Change" ($r=.802$, $p<0.01$) were significantly and highly correlated with "Transformational Leadership". Accordingly, principals' "Transformational Leadership" was a significant and positive relationship with "Teachers' Commitment in the Curriculum Reform" ($r=.800$, $p<0.01$). In summary, the more principals practice the transformational leadership at their schools, the more teachers perform their tasks with high commitment.

(iv) Regression Analysis of Variables

In this study, multiple regressions were calculated to explore which dimensions of principals' transformational leadership significantly predict teachers' commitment. Table 4 shows results of multiple regression analysis for principals' transformational leadership on teachers' commitment.

Table 4 Results of Multiple Regressions Analysis for Principals' Transformational Leadership on Teachers' Commitment

Dependent Variables	Predictors	B	Std. Error	β	t	F	R^2
Teachers' Commitment	(Constant)	.980	.165		5.928***	97.716***	.646
	Setting Direction	.537	.134	.577	4.001***		
	Developing People	.139	.119	.160	1.172		
	Redesigning the Organization	-.018	.150	-.021	-.119		
	Managing Instructional Program	.095	.100	.110	.951		

Note: *** $p<0.001$

When studying the results in Table 4, "Setting Direction" ($t=4.001$, $p<.001$) was positive predictor for changing the teachers' commitment in the curriculum reform. The Beta value of "Setting Direction" was .577 and it showed positive effect on teachers' commitment. But the other dimensions such as "Developing People", "Redesigning the Organization" and "Managing Instructional Program" were not predicted to the teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform. Thus, it can be concluded that it is necessary to have more transformational leadership practices on developing people, redesigning the organization and managing instructional program in Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township to successfully motivate the teachers' commitment to change when implementing the new curriculum.

Moreover, simple linear regressions were also done to examine whether there were any predicting relations between teachers' perceptions of principals' transformational leadership and their commitment in the curriculum reform. Table 5 shows the results of linear regression analysis for principals' transformational leadership on teachers' commitment.

Table 5 Results of Linear Regression Analysis for Principals' Transformational Leadership on Teachers' Commitment

Dependent Variables	Predictor	B	Std. Error	β	t	F	R^2
Teachers' Commitment	(Constant)	1.121	.158		7.100***	374.92***	.638
	Transformational Leadership	.725	.037	.800	19.363***		

Note: *** $p<0.001$

According to Table 5, the results of the linear regression demonstrated that there was a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, principals' transformational leadership, and the dependent variable, teachers' commitment, $F(1,211)=374.92$, $p<.001$. The t (19.363, $p<.001$) value indicated that principals' transformational leadership was significantly contributing to predict teachers' commitment. Moreover, the R^2 value 0.638 indicated that 64% of the variance in teachers' commitment was explained by the principals' transformational leadership as perceived by teachers. In other words, the influence of principals' transformational leadership 64% of the variance in teachers' commitment was ($R^2=0.638$, $p<.001$).

Qualitative Analysis

(i) Responses of Principals' Interview

In order to obtain detailed information about the principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform, the researcher conducted interviews with principals and teachers from 10 selected Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township. Five interview questions were used for principals in the qualitative study.

The **first question** asked the principals to describe how they manage their teachers to be successful in teaching-learning process in implementing the new curriculum activities in their schools. Most of the principals said,

("They direct the teachers to learn thoroughly the teacher's manual prescribed by the new curriculum training course, and teach the students. If teachers have some requirements, they fulfill them as much as they can.")

As the **second question**, the researcher asked the principals to express their views on the benefits which the students can get when implementing the new curricular activities. According to principals' responses, most of the principals reported as follow:

("The students begin to take an interest in their environment, have the beauty of nature, have more self-confident cooperate with others, and finally they are active learners in the teaching-learning process.")

The **third question** asked the principals to state whether they get any help or support from the members of school community and parents when implementing the new curriculum activities or not. If they get some support, principals were requested to describe them. Most of the principals reported,

("The members of school community and parents provide school with teaching aids, materials and playthings required for the students, involving the playground, and constructing the school compound needed for the students.")

As the **fourth question**, the principals were asked to describe any difficulty that they encountered when implementing the new curriculum activities. Based on the responses of the principals, most of the principals answered that

("They do not have any difficulty when implementing the new curriculum.")

Furthermore, some principals said that

("They do not have enough teaching aids or materials in their schools.")

The **last question** asked principals to describe their opinions concerning the implementation of new curriculum activities. According to the principals' responses, most of the principals answered,

("The new curricular programs are appropriate and useful for students. By doing so, they will become all rounds development learners. Therefore, the principal, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders need to cooperate with each other for the successful implementation of the new curriculum.")

(ii) Responses of Teachers' Interview

Similarly, 10 interview questions were used for teachers to examine the principals' transformational leadership practices and teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform at selected Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township.

The **first question** asked teachers to describe how their principals direct them to be successful in implementing the new curriculum activities. According to teachers' responses, most of the teachers answered,

("Their principals direct them to teach the lessons systematically using new lesson plans and teaching strategies set by the new curricular program, and advise them to learn and study the teacher's manual concerning the new curriculum thoroughly.")

The **second question** asked teachers to state how their principals help or support to improve their professional development. Based on the teachers' responses, most of the teachers responded that

("Their principals advise them to read the educational journals, papers and books, in leisure time, and buy necessary books for the teachers, and carry out school meeting and discussion groups concerning the new curricular activities.")

The **third question** asked teachers to describe how their principals motivate the members of school committees and associations to participate in implementing the new curriculum activities. According to the responses of the teachers, most of the teachers responded,

("Their principals organize the school committees, board of trustee and parents-teachers associations and carry out regular meeting with them, and explain and discuss with the associations concerning the new curricular activities performed by the school, and encourage them to help the school activities when necessary.")

The **fourth question** asked teachers to state how their principals cooperate with them in making decisions concerning the implementation of new curriculum activities in their schools and describe one example if their principals cooperate with them in a making decision. According to teachers' responses, the principals cooperated with the teachers in the decision-making process concerning the implementation of new curriculum activities. As for one example, most of the teachers responded as follows:

("They lead and perform school activities, discussion groups and competitions concerning the new curricular programs in their schools.")

The **fifth question** asked teachers to express how they solve their difficulties which are occurred in implementing the new curriculum activities. According to teachers' responses, most of the teachers said that

("They frequently carry out sharing the experience with the colleagues, and discuss the difficulties they encountered in the classroom.")

The **sixth question** asked teachers to state the advantages which students can get due to implementation of new curriculum activities. Most of the teachers responded the question as follows:

("The students become active learners in the teaching-learning process.")

Additionally, some teachers said that

("The students improve creativity, innovation, imagination, decision-making skills, knowledge and ability more.")

The **seventh question** was about the teaching methods which teachers employ in implementing the new curriculum activities. Most of the teachers responded as follows:

The teaching methods used by teachers in the teaching-learning process are:

- *Peer-group teaching method,*

- *Discovery method,*
- *Pair-group method,*
- *Field trip method,*
- *Brain storming method,*
- *Inductive method*
- *Deductive method,*
- *Co-operative learning method, and*
- *Story-telling method.*

Among them, peer-group teaching method and discovery method were frequently used by most of the teachers.

As the ***eighth question***, teachers are asked to describe any benefit that they get for implementing the new curriculum activities in their schools and if they have some benefits for implementing the new curriculum activities, most of the teachers answered,

(“They get new experiences, know new knowledge and new vocabulary, and become skillful at cooperating with others by attending seminars and workshops concerning the new curriculum.”)

The ***ninth question*** asked teachers to express the differences between the previous curriculum and the new one. Most of the teachers responded,

(“The new curricular programs do not have the examination system but observe daily activities of the students, and then assess and record the performance or achievement of the students.”)

The ***last question*** asked teachers to state the difficulties encountering in implementing the new curriculum activities. Concerning the responses of teachers, most of the teachers said,

(“They do not have any difficulty when implementing the new curricular programs.”)

Likewise, some teachers told that

(“They do not have enough teaching aids or materials to teach the students in their schools.”)

Based on the qualitative analysis, the principals well managed the teaching-learning process of their schools, directed teachers to implement the school’ activities by using new strategies prescribed by new curriculum training course and provided necessary assistance to teachers and fulfilled them as much as they can. Teachers also performed their instructional work with high commitment in their schools.

Conclusion and Discussion

In order to investigate the effects of principals’ transformational leadership on teachers’ commitment to change in the curriculum reform at Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were utilized in this study. ***Research question one*** explored teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ transformational leadership in the curriculum reform measured by “*Transformational School Leadership Questionnaire*” developed by Leithwood (2012, as cited in Liu, 2013). This questionnaire consisted of 46 items with four dimensions such as setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing instructional program. When examining the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ transformational leadership in the curriculum reform, it was found that all teachers perceived that they had high level of perceptions on all dimensions of principals’ transformational leadership and overall transformational leadership.

In other words, principals from Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township tried to build a school vision and create high performance expectations for their schools. Similarly, they provided individualized support and modeled best practices and organizational values. Moreover, they also developed a collaborative school culture and fostered productive community relationships. Likewise, they also organized staffing the program and monitored

school activity. Therefore, principals from Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township highly performed transformational leadership concerning the curriculum reform based on the perceptions of teachers.

Research question two determined whether or not there were significant differences in the teachers' perceptions of principals' transformational leadership in the curriculum reform based on their demographic information. Based on the research findings, it was found that there were no significant differences in the perceptions of teachers on their principals' transformational leadership according to gender, age and academic qualification of teachers. In other words, both male and female teachers who had different age groups as well as different degree or diploma holders from Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township perceived that their principals performed suitable and useful transformational leadership to motivate their commitment in the curriculum reform.

However, there were significant differences in principals' transformational leadership among positions of teachers. Out of four dimensions of principals' transformational leadership, only one dimension, "Redesigning the Organization", $F(2,210) = 3.563, p < 0.05$, and "Overall Transformational Leadership", $F(2,210) = 3.167, p < 0.05$ according to the positions of teachers. In addition, there were significant differences in perceptions of teachers on "Setting Direction", $F(6,206) = 2.312, p < 0.05$ according to their teaching service.

Research question three examined teachers' perceptions of their commitment in the curriculum reform. Teachers' commitment includes two parts such as organizational characteristics and teachers' commitment to change. The organizational characteristics questions have four dimensions such as "Culture", "Strategy", "Structure", and "Environment". Moreover, teachers' commitment to change questions have four dimensions such as "Personal Goals", "Capacity Beliefs", "Context Beliefs", and "Emotional Arousal". When studying the mean values for teachers' perceptions of organizational characteristics in the curriculum reform, it was found that the levels for overall characteristics of organization including "Culture", "Strategy", "Structure" and "Environment" were high. In other words, teachers from Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township shared norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions that shape their decisions and practices in their schools. In addition, their schools encourage for them to develop improvement plans and to engage in professional development. Moreover, their schools provide the opportunities for them to participate in decision making about both classroom and school-wide issues. Furthermore, their schools effort to manage the change process allows them to focus on a small number of priorities about which there is wide consensus.

When studying the mean values for teachers' perceptions of their commitment in the curriculum reform, it was found that the levels for all dimensions of teachers' commitment to change such as "Personal Goals", "Capacity Beliefs", "Context Beliefs" and "Emotional Arousal" also high. In other words, teachers from Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township had desired future states that are very important in the change process and have been internalized by teachers. Moreover, they had capabilities of psychological states such as self-efficacy, self-confidence, and aspects of self-esteem. Likewise, they had beliefs in which school or central office authorities will prepare allocation for their professional development. Furthermore, they persisted in attempting to accomplish long-range goals, to create a condition of action enthusiasm.

Research question four analyzed whether or not there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of their commitment in the curriculum reform based on their demographic information. It was found that there were no significant differences in the perceptions of teachers on organizational characteristics and their commitment according to their gender and academic qualification. In other words, both male and female teachers who had different degree or diploma

holders from Basic Education Primary Schools in Sinkaing Township perceived that their schools characteristics were good and they performed their instructional work with high commitment.

However, the significant differences were found in perceptions of teachers on organizational characteristics among age differences of teachers. Out of four dimensions of organizational characteristics and four dimensions of teachers' commitment to change, one dimension, "Structure", $F(7,205)=2.165$, $p<0.05$ and one dimension, "Context Beliefs", $F(7,205)=2.448$, $p<0.05$ according to the age differences of teachers. Moreover, there were also significant differences in one dimension of organizational characteristics, "Environment", $F(2,210)=4.756$, $p<0.05$ and "Overall Organizational Characteristics", $F(2,210)=3.383$, $p<0.05$ as well as one dimension of teachers' commitment to change, "Context Beliefs", $F(2,210)=4.358$, $p<0.05$ according to the position of teachers.

Furthermore, the significant differences were found that in perceptions of teachers on all dimensions of organizational characteristics such as "Culture", $F(6,206)=3.060$, $p<0.01$, "Strategy", $F(6,206)=2.303$, $p<0.05$, "Structure", $F(6,206)=2.317$, $p<0.05$, "Environment", $F(6,206)=3.782$, $p<0.01$, "Overall Organizational Characteristics", $F(6,206)=3.063$, $p<0.01$, and one dimension of teachers' commitment to change, "Capacity Beliefs", $F(6,206)=2.210$, $p<0.05$ according to teaching service of teachers.

Research question five investigated whether or not there were any relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment in the curriculum reform. Based on the research findings, principals' "Transformational Leadership" was a significant and positive relationship with "Teachers' Commitment" in the curriculum reform ($r=.800$, $p<0.01$). This study was in congruence with previous study of Liu (2013) which suggested that "Transformational Leadership" was positive relationship with "Teachers' Commitment" and the effects of transformational leadership was moderate on teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform.

Moreover, this study can be replicated many of the features of studies carried out in Canada by Leithwood and his colleagues which have found significant effects of transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change (Leithwood, Menzies, & Jantzi, 1994, as cited in Yu et al., 2002). It can be interpreted that teachers performed their instructional work with high commitment when their principals made many efforts towards setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing instructional program in their schools. In other words, the more principals practice the transformational leadership at schools, the more teachers perform their tasks with higher commitment.

Research question six explored which dimensions of principals' transformational leadership significantly predict teachers' commitment. When studying the multiple regression analysis, "Setting Direction" ($\beta=.577$, $t=4.001$, $p<.001$) was positive predictor for changing the teachers' commitment in the curriculum reform. Moreover, simple linear regressions were also done to predict the detailed correlation between the criterion variable, "Teachers' Commitment" and the predictor variable, principals' "Transformational Leadership". The results of the linear regression demonstrated that there was a significant relation between the independent variable, principals' "Transformational Leadership", and the dependent variable, "Teachers' Commitment", $F(1,211)=374.92$, $p<.001$. The R^2 value 0.638 indicated that 64% of the variance in teachers' commitment was influenced by the principals' transformational leadership as perceived by teachers. In other words, the influence of principals' transformational leadership 64% of the variance in teachers' commitment was ($R^2 = 0.638$, $p<.001$).

In the previous China study of Liu (2013), the four dimensions of transformational leadership together explained 39.3% of the variance of teachers' commitment to change ($F=47.064$, $p<0.05$), which means that transformational leadership moderately affect teachers' commitment to change and motivate teachers to be part of the change process. In this study, it

was found that transformational leadership significantly and highly affect teachers' commitment to change in the curriculum reform.

Based on the qualitative research findings, teachers with different demographic backgrounds have different perceptions for principals' transformational leadership practices and their school characteristics. Therefore, principals should notice that the differences among teacher groups are the precondition to implement curriculum reform process effectively. Moreover, understanding the adjustable organizational factors in-depth and controlling these factors effectively would be conducive to successful school leadership and change process. Therefore, principals should combine and apply different practices of transformational leadership such as setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing instructional program in their schools. This would effectively motivate teachers to be part of the curriculum reform process according to the empirical data described in the study.

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