Teachers' Leadership Experiences with Professional Learning Communities Model: The Case of Birim Central Municipality of Ghana

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Abstract

The study explored basic school teachers experiences with Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in Birim Central Municipality of Ghana. Using a qualitative research approach, supported by semi-structured interview, data was collected from ten (10) basic school teachers who have actively engaged in PLCs for at least two years and purposely selected to be part of the study. Data was thematically analysed. Findings included the vision and mission that guide PLC engagement in the Birim Central Municipality by equipping teachers, having collaborative methods in their teaching and profession, and also sharing ideas that could help their delivery as teachers. Again, the the ways through which basic school teachers support and share leadership responsibilities during PLC engagement included planning, facilitating roles as well as supporting roles played by teachers came out strongly. It was therefore recommended that Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana Education Services (GES) units in the Birim municipality and allied institutions are to ensure that the professional development opportunities provided to teachers align with the vision and mission of the PLCs. These opportunities should focus on equipping teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to implement collaborative methods in their teaching and professional practices.

Keywords: Professional learning communities, professional development activities, collaborative methods, professional practices, leadership responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

Educational reform through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) requires visionary leadership that builds collaborative capacity and sustains systemic change. Leadership is vital to connect teacher learning with instructional contexts, preventing isolated or episodic training initiatives from fading quickly (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Louis & Marks, 1998). For example, Manistee Area Public Schools (MAPS) in Michigan, after adopting PLCs in 2016, implemented data-driven strategies, added late-start Mondays for teacher collaboration, and fostered open problem-solving, which led to notable improvements in student outcomes. Principals and administrators there, built trust and a shared vision, nurtured collegial learning, and encouraged reflective practice through mutual support—demonstrating how leadership anchors PLC success. However, in many regions such as South Africa and Ghana— leadership fails to promote teacher collaboration. Research shows that in South Africa, leaders often discourage peer-sharing, keeping teachers isolated (Botha, 2012). In Ghana, although PLCs were embedded in policy via the National Pre-Tertiary Curriculum Framework, empirical evidence reveals that school leaders have been inconsistent or absent in guiding and sustaining PLC activities. This suggests a gap between policy vision and real practice, where leadership engagement is often the missing link in unleashing PLC potential.

At the heart of PLCs is structured, job-embedded collaboration. Defined as "mutually reflecting and growth-oriented" communities (Stoll, 2011), PLCs focus on collective inquiry and action to improve teaching and learning (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Research consistently finds that PLCs decrease teacher isolation, enhance job satisfaction, and boost instructional effectiveness and student outcomes (Stoll et al., 2006; Hord, 1997).

Empirical studies highlight key collaboration outcomes. Padwad & Dixit (2008) observed that PLCs help teachers better define instructional challenges, adopt critical thinking, and creatively solve classroom issues. Tam (2015) reported increased motivation after PLC participation, while Dogan, Pringle & Mesa (2016) found a shift toward inquiry-based and student-centered pedagogies. Cross-border professional exchanges, studied by Huang (2018) and Edge et al. (2008), showed that engaging in broader networks exposes teachers to diverse perspectives, enriching their practice with global teaching strategies.

Despite their potential, PLCs don't always deliver results. In Singapore, policy-driven PLC efforts launched over a decade ago struggled to reshape pedagogical practices (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012), and in Ghana, informal feedback suggests improper or non-existent PLC practice. Structural and cultural challenges, lack of regular meeting time, collaborative norms, and leadership support often limit PLCs to superficial compliance rather than transformative change.

PLCs are grounded in a shared vision and mission of continuous teacher and student learning, problem-solving, and accountability. DuFour & Eaker (1998) conceptualize PLCs around six core pillars: shared mission/vision/values; collective inquiry; collaborative teams; action orientation and experimentation; commitment to continuous improvement; and results focus. These pillars shift school culture from isolated teaching to collective responsibility for student success. Workshops like those by Solution Tree emphasize building a culture of collaboration with cycles of improvement based on student data (DuFour et al., 2010; Decorah District).

The mission-driven structure within PLCs fosters teacher leadership, reflective practice, and shared accountability. As schools internalize PLC values, such as questioning assumptions, experimenting, and adapting, teachers become agents of reform rather than mere recipients of externally mandated training (Fullan, 2006). This culture builds social capital, deepens professional learning, and aligns efforts across classrooms and grades.

Nevertheless, the mere inclusion of PLCs in policy frameworks, such as Ghana's 2017 Standard-Based Curriculum, does not guarantee transformative implementation. Without authentic vision-driven leadership, practical collaboration structures, or adequate training and resources, PLCs risk remaining superficial, episodic initiatives. For PLCs to fulfill their mission of elevating educational quality, they must be embraced as cultural change requiring systemic support, capacity building, and sustained leadership.

Effective educational restructuring in the 21st century depends on embedding PLCs into daily school life backed by leadership that cultivates trust, shared vision, and data-informed decision-making. Collaboration within PLCs advances teacher learning, pedagogical innovation, and student achievement. For these gains to be realized, the mission and vision of PLCs must permeate practice through authentic, systemic, and culturally embedded structures, beyond policy statements and isolated workshops. Only then can PLCs shift teaching from transmission to transformation and cultivate lifelong learners and educators.

Theoretical Framework

The theory underpinning this study is that of communities of practice model was espoused by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in their groundbreaking publication, Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation (1991). In defining communities of practice, Wenger (2006) states that they are "groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (p.2). To Wenger, learning does not only hinge on one constructing knowledge but also a process in which one constructs his/her identity based on the changing forms of taking part in the

communities of practice (Miyazaki, 2014). Wenger (2006) identified three important elements or characteristics that set apart a community of practice from other communities or groups.

(a) The domain: A community of practice surpasses or goes beyond a club which comprises friends and or just having links with friends through networks. Instead, it has an identity that is clarified by a shared and common goal (Smith, 2003). Members exhibit strong commitment to the organization with shared proficiency making them different from other people.

(b) The community: In an effort to pursue their interest in the organization, members work together on activities and discussions, try to help one another, and share information (Smith, 2003). Members develop a bond of relationships that helps them to learn from one another.

(c) The practice: The community of practice members are professionals. They build a shared resource: "experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems, in short, a shared practice. This takes

time and sustained interaction" (Smith, 2003).

The implication of the theory is that learning forms an important aspect of a person's participation in communities of practice and the context of this study.

Statement of the Problem

With the establishment of the PLCs and its relevant fidelity of informal interviews and interactions with leadership within the study area reveals that most schools in the municipality were not implementing PLCs by the tenets of the fidelity of implementation and in some cases not implementing it at all. To understand the experiences of basic school teachers in terms of professional learning communities in Ghana and in Akim Oda, the place of study, due to the paucity of literature on the subject in Ghana as against most studies on the phenomenon worldwide (Botha, 2012; Hairon & Dimmock, 2016), emphasising on quantitative methods (Burns, Naughton, Priest, Wang, Gordon, Robb, & Smith, 2017), and just few studies have used a qualitative paradigm (Heggen, Raaen & Thorsen, 2018), this study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of basic school teachers in a professional learning community in the Birim Cntral Municipality.

Guiding Questions
In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, the following questions guided the study:
1. 1. How do basic school teachers perceive the vision and mission that guides professional learning communities in Birim Central Municipality?
2. How do basic school teachers collaborate during professional learning communities in Birim Central Municipality?
3. 3. How do basic school teachers support and share leadership in professional learning communities in Birim Central Municipality

Methods

The study used a qualitative methodology, specifically the case study underpinned by phenomenology design was adopted (Cresswell 2014), since a case study is an empirical investigation that explores a current occurrence in its actual setting (Yin, 2014).

Researchers' Role

Throughout the objectives of this study, the researchers played the function of a participant-observer. This is because Yin (2018), states that "participant-observation emphasizes close, intimate, and active involvement, strongly linked with the goal of studying others' cultures" (p. 129). Through participant observation, the researcher was able to share the participants' experiences. The group or community under study's activities, interactions, and experiences were all actively participated in by the researchers to collect first-hand information. Focus is placed on establishing rapport and trust with participants.

Researchers acknowledge the reciprocal character of the study partnership through cooperation and reciprocity in participant observation by grasping of the social, cultural, and environmental elements that affect people's relationships and behavior. We were facilitators for the interactions in the professional learning community in an effort to carry out and supported the participants create the agenda during the reflective dialogue session. The next step was for us to watch what happened during each PLC session, and to record noteworthy exchanges. This strategy had drawbacks since it might be challenging to gather information and present conclusions while inhabiting a participant-observation area.

Site and Sample Selection

The study was conducted in Ghana's Eastern Region in the Birim Central

Municipality of Akim Oda which have been divided into five circuits and were made to follow the tenets of PLC during the interactions. A non-probability sampling approach purposeful (maximal variation) and theoretical sampling techniques (judgmental/selective) were adopted to select yen (10) teachers for te study, due to how the selected participants could offer insightful information of interest. Specifically, teachers from the Primary and Junior High School with emphasis on years of experience, length of time in school, and teachers" role and responsibilities to ensure the selection of participants with a wide variety of backgrounds and perspectives (Korstjens & Moser, 2017).

All participants were teachers who worked in Birim Central Municipal from 2019 till 2022. Teachers who were trained to implement the standard-based curriculum in September 2019 and were active participants in professional learning communities and were known to be willing to engage in professional conversations.

Data Collection Techniques

Interviews and reflective dialogue served as the main techniques of data gathering for this study. In the interviews, the use of series of predetermined open-ended questions were used. It offered a flexible framework for data collection while allowing for probing and additional examination of topics throughout the interview to ensure uniformity and elaboration of experiences.

The reflective dialogue, was used since as posited by Thomas & Montemery, (1998) teachers who engage in reflective dialogue open up their teaching to the public through talk and encourage them to view others' perspectives. This can motivate teachers to know more about their practices when used as a professional development activity.

Managing and Recording Data

Recorded interviews and reflective dialogue exchanges from the data gathering process were kept with password protection. We carefully reviewed, processed, and grouped the data for patterns and themes. The audio recordings of interviews and reflective dialogue were transcribed using F4 and later uploaded into Taguette (a qualitative analysis software) for coding and generation of themes for analysis. Data from documents were generated through open coding that was done manually. The process allowed the team to become intimately familiar with the information. We were able to comprehend the specifics of the phenomena under research.

Ethical Considerations

Although upholding the ethical standards outlined by Creswell (2012), this

study also managed to keep the participants' confidence. We briefed each participant about the nature of the study in a letter that we gave to them in order to get their permission. Participants also verbally understood their right to decline participation or stop participating at any moment, as well as the specifics and steps we would take to ensure confidentiality. We made an effort to keep the research's focus on the welfare of the participants. We pledged to maintain secrecy in the study and did so by referring to each teacher in common descriptive words. Trustworthiness and data authentications were observed for the study

Results
In reporting on the analysis, participants were given pseudonyms **Participant 1, 2, 3, 4……...10**
How do basic school teachers perceive the vision and mission that guide professional learning communities in Birim Central Municipality?
The interest was in exploring teachers views on the vision and mission that guide professional learning communities. In all four (4) themes emerged for the analysis. They include; equipping teachers with the necessary skills, sharing ideas, and collaborative methodology.

Equipping Teachers
Teachers who participated in the study were of the view that the vision and mission of PLCs sought to equip teachers with the needed knowledge and techniques in delivering as teachers. Equipping teachers highlights the importance of providing educators with the necessary tools, skills, resources, and support to effectively fulfill their roles in the education system. This concept recognizes that teachers play a crucial role in shaping the learning experiences and outcomes of students. When
teachers are properly equipped, they are better able to engage students, adapt to diverse learning needs, and create a positive and productive classroom environment. A respondent had this to say:
Encouraging teachers to collaborate and share best practices within their professional community can lead to improved teaching methods and student outcomes. Providing opportunities for peer-to-peer learning can be beneficial
(**Participant 2**).
Another participant was of the view that the education sector keeps changing every day and therefore equipping teachers through PLCs is very important.
The education landscape is constantly evolving. Equipped teachers are more capable of adapting to changes, such as shifts to remote or hybrid learning, changes in curriculum standards, and new educational technologies   (**Participant 5**).
A participant added that when teachers are equipped with materials and resources, they will be able to teach effectively.
Providing teachers with the right teaching materials, textbooks, digital resources, and classroom supplies is essential for effective instruction. Well-equipped teachers can create engaging lesson plans and cater to the   different learning styles of their students (**Participant 3**).
In essence, equipping teachers recognize that investing in the development and support of educators ultimately benefits students and the entire education system. By ensuring that teachers have the tools and skills they need to succeed, we create a foundation for quality education and lifelong learning.

Collaborative methodology
Collaborative methodology emerged as a theme under the vision and mission of PLCs. In this context, it could be an approach in which individuals or groups work together to achieve a common goal, solve problems, generate ideas, and share knowledge. This methodology emphasizes the power of collective intelligence, diverse perspectives, and cooperation to drive innovation and achieve more comprehensive and effective results. Collaborative methodologies are used across various fields, including business, education, research, and creative endeavors, to harness the strengths and insights of multiple stakeholders as expressed by the respondents as follows:
Collaboration often brings together individuals with different backgrounds, skills, and viewpoints. This diversity of expertise can lead to well-rounded solutions and richer outcomes, as each participant contributes unique insights (**Participant 1**).
In a similar vein, a participant added that a professional learning community ensures collaborative methodologies are likely to encourage open communication among teachers.

Collaborative methodologies encourage open communication and the sharing of information. This helps participants learn from one another, build on existing knowledge, and avoid redundant efforts (**Participant 6**).

Innovation could be achieved through collaboration as posited by a participant in this study.

By pooling together various perspectives and ideas, collaborative approaches can lead to innovative solutions that might not have been possible through individual efforts. The cross-fertilization of concepts can spark creativity and out-of-the-box thinking (**Participant 4**).

Collaborative methodology is a powerful tool that capitalizes on the strengths of individuals working together, fostering synergy, promoting innovation, and enabling the achievement of complex goals that might be beyond the reach of any single participant.

Sharing of ideas

It also emerged from the data generated that one aspect of PLC's vision and mission is the sharing of ideas. The exchange of ideas plays a pivotal role in fields such as education and social development. It's a cornerstone of human interaction that drives intellectual growth and societal advancement. Below are excerpts from the participants…

When individuals share their ideas, they contribute to the collective pool of knowledge. This dissemination of information enables others to build upon existing concepts and develop new insights, ultimately advancing fields of study and practice (**Participant 7**).

Likewise, a participant was of the view that during PLC engagements, ideas are shared, and this ensures challenges that confront them as teachers are effectively handled.

Sharing ideas can lead to effective problem-solving. Collaboratively discussing challenges and potential solutions allows for the exploration of multiple viewpoints and strategies, increasing the likelihood of identifying the best course of action (**Participant 8**).

In an increasingly interconnected world, the sharing of ideas remains a

powerful driver of progress and change. Whether through traditional forms of communication or modern digital platforms, the act of sharing ideas contributes to the growth of individuals, organizations, and society as a whole. In summary, basic school teachers perceive the vision and mission that guide the PLC in the Birim Central enclave include equipping teachers, having collaborative methods in their teaching and profession, and sharing ideas that could help their delivery as teachers.

How do basic school teachers collaborate during professional learning communities in Birim Central Municipality?

After exploring teachers views who participated in the study on how they collaborate during professional learning communities. Through coding and generation of themes, four (4) themes emerged for analysis. They are discussion, group projects, brainstorming, and peer-to-peer learning.

Discussion

Discussion is a dynamic and essential process that involves the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and opinions among individuals. It serves as a platform for sharing thoughts, exploring complex issues, and reaching a deeper understanding of various topics. Discussions can take place in a wide range of settings, from casual conversations among friends to formal debates, workshops, and academic forums. The art of effective discussion fosters critical thinking, respectful communication, and the expansion of knowledge.

A participant was of the view that discussion fosters critical thinking. Excerpts are captured below

Engaging in discussions encourages participants to think critically about their viewpoints and those of others. It challenges individuals to analyze, evaluate, and refine their ideas through open and thoughtful dialogue (**Participant 8**).

Similarly, the teachers interviewed express an opinion that discussion brings about

diversity and inclusion since different people from different backgrounds meet for such discussions.

Discussions often involve participants with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. This diversity enriches the conversation by providing a broad range of insights and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the topic (**Participant 9**).

Another participant added in discussions, participants have the opportunity to explore different facets of a topic. This exploration can lead to uncovering underlying complexities, connections to other subjects, and nuances that might not be immediately apparent (**Participant 1**).

From the narrative, it could be said discussions are vital tools for fostering intellectual growth, deepening understanding, and building bridges between individuals from various backgrounds. When approached with an open mind and a commitment to constructive engagement, discussions can lead to valuable insights and the advancement of knowledge.

Group project

Another key issue that emerged as a means of collaboration during PLC for analysis was group projects. Group projects are collaborative endeavors in which a team of individuals works together to achieve a common goal or complete a task. They are commonly used in various educational, professional, and social contexts to promote teamwork, shared responsibility, and the development of essential skills. A participant had this to say…

Engaging in group projects helps participants develop a range of skills, such as communication, leadership, time management, problem-solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution. These skills are valuable in both academic and professional settings (**Participant 4**).

Evidence from another participant is Group projects provide opportunities to learn from peers. Participants can gain insights into new approaches, techniques, and perspectives, enhancing their overall understanding of the subject matter (**Participant 2**).

In educational settings, group projects promote active learning, while in professional environments, they mimic real-world collaboration scenarios. Despite their challenges, well-structured and effectively managed group projects can lead to enhanced learning outcomes, increased creativity, and a stronger sense of shared achievement among participants.

Peer-to-peer learning

Peer-to-peer learning is one of the several ways teachers collaborate during PLC engagement as it emerged from the data. Peer-to-peer interactions empower teachers to connect, collaborate, and share resources, knowledge, or services directly with each other.

Peer-to-peer interactions often involve collaboration among individuals with similar interests or objectives. This can lead to the creation of supportive communities and the sharing of expertise, fostering collective growth (**Participant 6**).

A participant buttressed earlier submissions made by their counterparts as… Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing allows individuals to learn from each other's experiences and expertise. Online platforms and communities facilitate the exchange of information across geographical and cultural boundaries (**Participant 7**).

The peer-to-peer concept underscores the potential for individual teachers to collaborate, share, and learn directly from one another, leveraging their collective strengths to drive progress and innovation across various domains.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming provided reflective exchanges in a creative and collaborative manner that involves generating a wide range of ideas, solutions, or concepts in a group setting. It's a technique used to stimulate creative thinking and encourage innovative approaches to problem-solving, decision-making, and idea development. Brainstorming sessions are designed to foster an open and non-judgmental atmosphere, where participants can freely contribute their thoughts without fear of criticism.

Participant 3 had this to say…teachers are encouraged to build on each other's ideas. This collaborative approach can lead to the development of more refined and comprehensive solutions through the merging or modification of various suggestions.

Another participant commented on the issue of brainstorming as a means of collaboration during PLC engagement.

Brainstorming aims to produce a large quantity of ideas, encouraging participants to think beyond conventional solutions and explore diverse   possibilities (**Participant10**).

Brainstorming can be particularly effective when used as a tool to generate new concepts, overcome creative blocks, or explore potential solutions to complex problems. However, it's important to note that while brainstorming can yield valuable outcomes, the transition from generating ideas to implementing them effectively requires additional planning, evaluation, and refinement. Variations of brainstorming, such as group brainstorming, individual brainstorming, and electronic brainstorming (e-brainstorming), adapt the concept to different scenarios and preferences. When executed with enthusiasm, an open mind, and a willingness to explore unconventional ideas, brainstorming can serve as a powerful technique for fostering innovation and creative problem-solving.

What ways do basic school teachers support and share leadership in professional learning communities in Birim Central Municipality?

Leadership roles and support from teachers during professional learning communities with the Birim Central were also assessed by the researchers. We were interested in finding out from the teachers their support and shared roles in leadership in PLCs. Three (3) themes emerged for analysis. They included; planning roles, facilitation roles, and supporting roles.

Planning roles

The planning role of leadership is a critical and foundational aspect of effective organizational management. Leaders play a pivotal role in charting the course for the future by developing strategic plans that guide the direction of the organization, set goals, allocate resources, and define the steps needed to achieve objectives. This planning process is essential for ensuring the PLC's success, sustainability, and adaptability in a dynamic and competitive environment. Excerpts from participants comment are below;

Planning involves assessing potential risks and challenges that could hinder the organization's progress. Leaders must identify these risks and develop contingency plans to mitigate them.

This proactive approach ensures that the organization is prepared to address unforeseen circumstances (**Participant 9**).

Another participant was of the view that the leadership role in professional learning communities includes the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and the opportunities that come with it. A comment from a participant is captured below.

planning role of leadership isn't just about creating a static roadmap; it also involves the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and seize opportunities. Leaders need to be open to feedback, monitor progress, and adjust plans as needed to stay relevant and competitive (**Participant 6**).

Planning requires a combination of foresight, strategic thinking, collaboration, and adaptability. By fulfilling this role thoughtfully, leaders can guide their organizations toward a future characterized by achievement, resilience, and innovation.

Facilitation role

The facilitator role in professional learning communities (PLCs) is integral to creating a collaborative and productive environment that supports the growth and development of educators. It was suggested that facilitators provide a guide when discussing during PLC engagement.

Facilitators guide discussions by asking thought-provoking questions, encouraging participation from all members, and keeping the conversation focused on the established topics. They help to navigate through various viewpoints and ensure that discussions remain productive and respectful (**Participant 8**).

In a like manner, a participant said facilitators guide and organize the teachers during PLC engagement.

A facilitator in a PLC serves as a guide, organizer, and catalyst for meaningful discussions, shared learning, and collaborative problem-solving among educators. This role is crucial for fostering a culture of continuous improvement, enhancing teaching practices, and ultimately improving student outcomes (**Participant 5**).

The facilitator's role in professional learning communities is instrumental in creating an environment of shared learning, collaboration, and professional growth. Facilitators guide discussions, provide structure, promote reflective practice, and foster a sense of collective responsibility among educators. Through their facilitation, educators are empowered to enhance their teaching practices and contribute to a culture of ongoing improvement within the educational community.

Supporting role by teachers

The supporting role played by teachers during professional learning communities (PLCs) engagement is crucial for fostering a culture of collaboration, sharing, and continuous improvement within an educational institution. Teachers contribute their expertise, experiences, and insights to the PLC process, creating a rich and dynamic environment that benefits both individual educators and the entire teaching community. Teachers bring their unique knowledge, skills, and classroom experiences to the PLC discussions. This expertise provides valuable insights into effective teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and innovative instructional approaches (**Participant 3**)

Teachers share their teaching resources that are of importance to their colleagues during PLC engagement. A participant shared his experience as Teachers share teaching materials, lesson plans, assessment tools, and other resources that have proven successful in their classrooms. This resource-sharing benefits colleagues and enriches instructional practices across the board (**Participant 10**).

Furthermore, the teachers are encouraged to welcome new challenges because that gives them the opportunity for growth.

Teachers encourage each other to embrace a growth mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities for learning and improvement. This mindset shift contributes to a positive and resilient teaching community (**Participant 7**).

In essence, the supporting role of teachers in professional learning communities is about collaboration, collective learning, and mutual support. By actively engaging in the PLC process, teachers create a culture of shared responsibility for student success, continuous professional growth, and the advancement of effective teaching practices.

Discussion of Findings

Teachers perceived vision and mission that guide professional learning communities

The study revealed that the vision and mission that guide PLC engagement in the Birim Central Municipality included equipping teachers, having collaborative methods in their teaching and profession, and also sharing ideas that could help their delivery as teachers. Professional learning communities within the Municipality were made possible by aiding teachers with the resources they need to facilitate their work. New approaches to teaching and learning were also discussed among themselves through collaboration. The finding of this objective corroborates the work of (DuFour et al., 2016; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Wines, 2019). For instance, the work of DuFour et al., (2016) posits that when schools and teachers collaborate during PLC engagement, it helps to develop a truly shared vision.

Similarly, Wines (2019) buttressed the fact when teachers, staff, and administrators worked together under the same guiding belief that all students could learn. When teachers engage in PLCs that focus on equipping them with new skills, strategies, and resources, their teaching practices are likely to improve (Botha, 2012; Hudson, 2015; O"Brien, O"Hara, McNamara, & O"Hara, 2023). Collaborative methods within PLCs promote a culture of teamwork and shared responsibility for student success (Hairon, 2020). Teachers can exchange insights, techniques, and experiences, which can lead to innovative approaches to teaching and problem solving. PLCs provide teachers with ongoing opportunities for learning and growth. Through regular interactions with colleagues, teachers can stay updated on the latest educational research,

methodologies, and technologies, leading to their continuous improvement as professionals (Dampson, 2021; Tempera, & Tinoca, 2022).

Engaging in collaborative activities and sharing ideas can foster a sense of community among teachers. When educators feel supported and valued, their job satisfaction tends to increase, which can lead to greater retention rates and a more positive school environment (Hirsch, 2008; Wray & Kinman, 2021). The finding aligns with Wenger's theory which posits that communities of practice framework espoused by Wenger are exemplified by collaborative activities where teachers are provided with the opportunity to employ new instructional strategies as well as reflect on their outcomes. It revealed that the vision and mission of PLC engagement is a collaboration where teachers meet to deliberate on issues of common interest (Steyn, 2013).

Ways in which basic school teachers collaborate during professional learning communities

The study showed that basic school teachers collaborate during PLCs within the Birim enclave through discussions, group projects, brainstorming of ideas, and peer-to-peer learning. The finding is in line with the works of (DuFour & Eaker,1998; DuFour et al. 2016; Tallman, 2019; Hattie, 2015; Chauraya & Brodie, 2018; D'Auria, 2015). For instance, Chauraya and Brodie, (2018), asserted that PLCs allowed teachers to develop new and shared understandings or a shared repertoire through collaboration. Furthermore, Tallman (2019) added that when teachers collaborate its impacts professional and personal growth which in the long run improves the well-being of the students they teach. The implications that could be inferred from this finding may include the fact that collaborative discussions and brainstorming sessions expose teachers to a variety of teaching approaches, strategies, and ideas (Rakasiwi, 2020; Mustakim, Mustapha, & Lebar, 2018). By pooling their knowledge and experiences, they can brainstorm solutions and receive valuable support from their peers. Peer-to-peer learning involves the exchange of constructive feedback on teaching methods and classroom practices (Zher, Hussein & Saat, 2016; Eskay, Onu, Obiyo & Obidoa, 2012). Simonsmeier, Peiffer, Flaig, and Schneider (2020), opined that sharing ideas and receiving positive feedback from peers can boost teachers' confidence in their abilities.

Ways in which basic school teachers support and share leadership in professional learning communities

The finding of the study revealed that the ways through which basic school teachers support and share leadership responsibilities during PLC engagement include planning, facilitating roles. Leadership roles during PLC engagement were executed through planning, facilitation, and supporting roles. Extant literature aligns with the findings of this work, (Nkengbeza & Shava, 1032016; Seymour, 2017; Morrissey, 2000; Hord,1997). Morrissey (2000) and Hord (1997) asserted that leadership roles played by teachers during PLC engagement play significant influence in school improvement. In like manner, the study of Seymour (2017), which sought to determine the connection of shared leadership, professional learning communities (PLCs), and teacher perception of self-efficacy. The results of the study indicated that it is not officially designated leadership roles that impact teacher self-efficacy, but rather the sharing of leadership responsibilities through PLCs. Implication for teacher collaboration, professional development, and overall school improvement. PLCs are collaborative structures where educators work together to enhance teaching practices and student learning outcomes, hence distribution is crucial since it promotes a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration (Benson, 2021; Thomas, 2018). Furthermore, Jambo and Hongde (2020), argued that sharing leadership responsibilities empowers teachers to take ownership of their professional growth and the improvement of their school.

When teachers collectively plan and implement strategies to improve student learning, they hold each other accountable for student outcomes (Cieminski, 2018; Colmer, Waniganayake & Field, 2014). A culture of shared leadership within PLCs can contribute to a positive and collaborative school climate (Ingraham, Hokoda, Moehlenbruck, Karafin, Manzo & Ramirez, 2016). Teachers feel supported and valued, which can positively impact overall teacher job satisfaction and retention rates. This approach not

only enriches the professional growth of individual educators but also contributes to the overall success of the school community.

Conclusions and Recommendation

1. It is concluded that the Birim Central Municipality and associated organizations within the mission and vision established clear communication and comprehension of the vision and goal within the educational community.
2. The PLC organizers improved collaborative practices which is crucial in the implementation of the PLCs that focuses on the group projects, brainstorming sessions, and peer-to-peer learning.
3. Leadership is very important when organising PLCs in the municipality. The established culture of reflection and continual learning and growth by creating a welcoming environment where instructors feel comfortable questioning accepted procedures and trying out novel ideas.

It is therefore recommended that;

1. The Birim Central Municipality and associated organizations must ensure that its strategic goal and objective are clear. They should make sure that all stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, and parents, are informed on the perceived vision and mission of PLCs.
2. The PLC organizers should be sure to improve collaborative practices, encourage and support various forms of collaboration inside PLCs, such as talks, group projects, brainstorming sessions, and peer-to-peer learning. Once again, in the event that PLCs are organized, efforts should be made to include and support reflective practices and continuous learning. Emphasis should also be placed on the significance of communal inquiry and shared accountability as fundamental parts of PLC involvement.
3. The facilitators should get assistance from professionals for professional learning communities for equitable distribution and leadership development. Planning, leading conversations, and providing assistance to other instructors are all leadership duties in PLCs.

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