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The Impact of School Administrators' Learning Leadership on Teachers' Professional Learning Communities in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine 1) school administrators' learning leadership, 2) teachers' professional learning communities (PLCs), 3) the relationship between school administrators' learning leadership and teachers' PLCs, and 4) the impact of school administrators' learning leadership on teachers' PLCs in a public secondary school. The sample comprised 278 teachers from the Lop Buri Secondary Educational Service Area Office in Thailand during the 2025 academic year. The research instrument was a questionnaire. Data analysis included mean, standard deviation, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, and stepwise multiple regression. The findings indicated that 1) school administrators' learning leadership was generally high across all aspects, 2) teachers' PLCs was also high overall and in each aspect, 3) there was a strong positive correlation between school administrators' learning leadership and teachers' PLCs, which was statistically significant at the .01 level, and 4) school administrators' learning leadership comprising team learning, innovation and use of communication technology for learning, creativity, and a learning environment significantly affected teachers' PLCs in a public secondary schools at the .05 level, explaining 65.40% of the variance in the teachers' PLCs. The research findings can be applied to develop school administrators' leadership for learning, which, in turn, will help increase the extent to which teachers operate as PLCs. Future research should focus on factors that influence both school administrators' leadership in learning and teachers' PLCs. This should also include models for developing school administrators' leadership in learning. The findings explain 65.40% of the variance in teachers' PLCs. Consequently, educational policymakers and school boards should implement targeted learning leadership training programs—specifically focusing on team learning and creating conducive environments. Developing these specific leadership traits will directly enhance collaborative teaching practices, thereby increasing the extent to which teachers effectively operate as PLCs to improve student outcomes.

Keywords: Learning Leadership, Professional Learning Community, Secondary School Administrators, Leadership, Correlation, Stepwise Multiple Regression

Introduction

In the context of the rapidly accelerating pace of global change and the widespread influence of digital technology, the education system plays a vital role in cultivating highly competent human resources equipped to confront the challenges of the 21st century. Thailand has delineated this developmental trajectory within the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E. 2566–2570) (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2022), underscoring the enhancement of human quality through the establishment of a learning society and the promotion of lifelong skills. In alignment with this objective, educational institutions are not merely conduits for knowledge dissemination; they must function

as learning organizations that foster growth among learners and internal personnel alike. Specifically, school administrators are required to serve as change leaders to cultivate a shared culture of learning. Consequently, “Learning Leadership” (Fullan, 2023) emerges as a critical factor in advancing school quality. The absence of this leadership approach among administrators may lead to a lack of clear developmental direction within the school and hinder its ability to genuinely attain educational quality objectives.

Learning Leadership is a process that enhances the design, management, and establishment of a robust environment that fosters learning and innovation (Fullan, 2023). It emphasizes connecting, organizing activities, and facilitating interactions among various stakeholders (Premsuk, Kornpuang & Prachanban, 2024). However, in the Thai academic literature, learning leadership is frequently conflated with instructional leadership. While instructional leadership primarily focuses on curriculum management and direct supervision of teaching, Learning Leadership takes a broader, more systemic approach. It emphasizes the design and management of a robust environment that motivates all personnel to demonstrate enthusiasm for continuous learning alongside their professional responsibilities. This distinct focus on fostering a shared learning culture is crucial for overcoming systemic barriers in public secondary schools, such as high teacher workloads and inconsistent policy implementation. The leader acts as a role model in the pursuit of knowledge, the development of creative thinking, the support for technological integration in the workplace, and the synthesis of knowledge across disciplines. These efforts aim to cultivate an environment conducive to continuous learning, thereby enabling personnel to develop their potential, perform their duties efficiently, and accomplish organizational objectives (Kotthonglang, 2021).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) represent an innovative approach to enhancing educational quality by fostering educators’ and administrative staff’s capabilities, thereby directly influencing student development (Christensen & Jerrim, 2025). The fundamental element is collaboration among teachers and staff who share a

common objective: advancing student achievement. This is accomplished through continuous processes of knowledge exchange, teamwork, and mutual support. Consequently, the PLC serves as a vital mechanism for the effective development of teachers’ knowledge, pedagogical skills, learning management, and related competencies. These developments collectively contribute to improvements in student outcomes across knowledge, critical thinking, skills, and behavior, based on the issues selected by the teacher group for study and development (Wongyai & Patphol, 2019). This concept aligns with DuFour (2004) and DuFour & Mattos (2013) perspective, which asserts that PLCs support professional development and enhance teachers’ accountability for student learning, thereby increasing student achievement. This is achieved through the sharing of effective teaching strategies, critical discussions of instructional challenges, and seeking advice and support from colleagues. PLCs are directly associated with improved student quality. Public secondary Schools that implement PLCs can effectively elevate student performance. Research conducted by Chidthaisong (2018), focusing on a student quality development model in small schools, concluded that adopting the PLC concept increased teacher motivation and fostered positive attitudes, thereby facilitating successful student development. Additionally, Boonbai (2020) emphasizes that school administrators should leverage the PLC process to foster understanding and promote collaboration among teachers, thereby enhancing student quality.

Public Secondary schools have strong potential for administrative reform, yet systemic barriers currently hinder them. High teacher workloads, inconsistent policy implementation, subject-specific educator shortages, and limited resources collectively obstruct the deep-rooted development of PLCs. Despite existing policies intended to support teacher growth, many schools struggle to move beyond “activity-based” initiatives. Practical barriers—such as excessive administrative burdens and a lack of dedicated time for meaningful knowledge exchange—often prevent PLCs from evolving into a genuine organizational culture. Furthermore, the lack of consistent leadership that prioritizes a culture of continuous learning remains

a significant gap across diverse school settings, from large urban centers to small rural institutions ([Lop Buri Secondary Educational Service Area Office, 2025](#)). Despite this known issue, a distinct research gap exists: while the independent concepts of PLCs and educational leadership are widely acknowledged, there is insufficient empirical evidence demonstrating exactly how specific dimensions of administrators' learning leadership directly impact the robustness of teachers' PLCs within the context of Thai public secondary schools. Consequently, research into school administrators' learning leadership is essential to bridge this gap. By examining how leadership styles promote PLCs, we can establish clear guidelines to refine management systems and enhance leaders' competencies.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to study school administrators' leadership learning and its impact on the robustness of teachers' PLCs within the public secondary schools. The goal is to find ways to support administrators in effectively driving their schools. The findings of this research are expected to lead to policy recommendations and practical guidelines that will improve educational quality at both the local, national, and global secondary school levels.

Research Objectives

- To study school administrators' learning leadership.
- To study teachers' professional learning communities.
- To examine the relationship between school administrators' learning leadership and teachers' professional learning communities.
- To investigate how school administrators' learning leadership impacts teachers' professional learning communities in a public secondary school.

Research Hypothesis

- The school administrators' learning leadership is at a high level.
- The teachers' professional learning communities are at a high level.
- The school administrators' learning leadership has a strong, positive correlation with teachers' professional learning communities.

- The school administrators' learning leadership impacts teachers' professional learning communities in a public secondary school, statistically significant at the .05 level.

Conceptual Framework

In the study titled the impact of schools administrators' learning leadership on teachers' PLCs in public secondary schools,' the researcher studied two main variables as follows: 1) schools administrators' learning leadership ([Fullan, 2023](#); [Hallinger, 2011](#); [Hirst et al., 2004](#); [Premsuk, Kornpuang & Prachanban, 2024](#); [Kotthonglang, 2021](#)) and 2) teachers' professional learning communities ([DuFour, 2004](#); [DuFour & Mattos, 2013](#); [Christensen & Jerrim, 2025](#); [Ukam, 2020](#); [Wongyai & Patphol, 2019](#); [Chidthaisong, 2018](#); [Boonbai, 2020](#)). The conceptual framework for this research is detailed in Figure 1.

Synthesis of the Conceptual Framework: Based on the literature review, a synthesized conceptual model demonstrates a theoretical pathway where administrative behaviors directly enable teacher collaboration. Specifically, when administrators model team learning and establish a supportive environment (Learning Leadership), they create the essential prerequisites for teachers to develop shared values, engage in shared leadership, and pursue joint professional development (PLCs). This interdependent relationship forms the basis of the research framework (Figure 1).

School Administrators' Learning Leadership	Teachers' Professional Learning Communities
Team Learning	Shared Vision and Values
Use of Innovation and Technology for Learning	Support and Shared Leadership
Creative Thinking	Collaboration
Environment Conducive to Learning	Joint Learning and Professional Development

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The quantitative research on the impact of school administrators' learning leadership on teachers' PLCs in public secondary schools, with the following details:

Population and Sample

The population for this study comprises 1,090 teachers in 25 schools within the Lop Buri Secondary Educational Service Area Office (LB-SESAO) during the academic year 2025. The sample used in this research comprises 278 teachers from 8 schools under the LB-SESAO for the academic year 2025. The sample size was determined using the ready-made tables of Cohen ([Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018](#)). Sampling was conducted using a two-stage random sampling design to ensure representativeness. Cluster random sampling: schools were first grouped by inter-educational area and then randomly selected within each group. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers within the selected schools to serve as the questionnaire's survey representatives.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire concerning school administrators' learning leadership and teachers' PLCs. The questionnaire is divided into three parts:

- **Part 1:** A checklist-style questionnaire covering the general information of responding teachers, including gender, age, highest educational level, academic standing, and years of service.
- **Part 2:** Questionnaire on teachers' perspectives regarding school administrators' learning leadership. The format is a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1967), as outlined in the conceptual framework.
- **Part 3:** Questionnaire on teachers' perspectives on teachers' PLCs. The format uses a 5-point Likert scale ([Likert, 1967](#)), as outlined in the conceptual framework.

Quality Assessment of the Instruments

Content Validity: The researcher submitted the constructed questionnaire to five experts specializing in educational administration and statistical data analysis. The experts reviewed whether the items were consistent with the operational definitions of the research variables. The scores from the five experts were then analyzed to determine the Index of

Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), as per [Rovinelli and Hambleton \(1977\)](#). The scores assigned by the five experts for each item were totaled to calculate the IOC value, which ranged from 0.60 to 1.00.

Reliability: The researcher conducted a trial with a group sharing similar characteristics to the main sample: 30 teachers from a secondary school not included in the final sample. The reliability of the results was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) Coefficient method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.98.

Data Analysis

1. The school administrators' learning leadership was evaluated by calculating the mean and standard deviation for each item and dimension ([Srisa-ard, 2017](#)).
2. The teachers' PLCs were analyzed by calculating the mean and standard deviation for individual items and each dimension ([Srisa-ard, 2017](#)).
3. The relationship between administrators' learning leadership and teachers' PLCs was analyzed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient ([Worakitkasemsakul, 2011](#)).
4. The impact of school administrators' learning leadership on teachers' PLCs was examined using Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis, with a significance level of .05. This method is obvious and straightforward. By testing different combinations of independent variables, the analysis effectively predicts complex outcomes. In practice, this quantitative research provides a strong empirical foundation—offering the initial data needed to guide the development of future organizational models and long-term strategic plans.

Research Results

The results of school administrators' learning leadership, both overall and by aspect, were at a high level (Table 1).

The results of teachers' PLCs, both overall and by aspect, were at a high level (Table 2).

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation of School Administrators’ Learning Leadership

School Administrators’ Learning Leadership	Teacher's Perspectives			
	X̄	S.D.	Level	Rank
1. Team Learning	4.02	0.53	High	3
2. Use of Innovation and Technology for Learning	4.01	0.49	High	4
3. Creative Thinking	4.07	0.49	High	2
4. Environment Conducive to Learning	4.10	0.51	High	1
Overall	4.05	0.45	High	

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers’ PLCs

Teachers’ Professional Learning Communities	Teacher's Perspectives			
	X̄	S.D.	Level	Rank
1. Shared Vision and Values	4.04	0.54	High	3
2. Support and Shared Leadership	4.01	0.54	High	4
3. Collaboration	4.08	0.49	High	2
4. Joint Learning and Professional Development	4.10	0.51	High	1
Overall	4.04	0.47	High	

The relationship between school administrators’ learning leadership and teachers’ PLCs revealed that school administrators’ learning leadership (X_{tot}) is correlated with teachers’ professional learning communities (Y_{tot}), with $r_{xy} = 0.800$, which is statistically significant at the .01 level (Figure 2).

School Administrator’s Learning Leadership	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_{tot}	Y_{tot}
X_1	1					
X_2	0.731**	1				
X_3	0.733**	0.751**	1			
X_4	0.672**	0.669**	0.733**	1		
X_{tot}	0.888**	0.884**	0.904**	0.869**	1	
Y_{tot}	0.686**	0.680**	0.704**	0.765**	0.800**	1

**Statistically significant at the .01 level

Figure 2 Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficients between School Administrators’ Learning Leadership and Teachers’ PLCs

The impact of school administrators’ learning leadership on teachers’ PLCs in a public secondary school is as follows, Team Learning (X_1) and Environment Conducive to Learning (X_4) all statistically significant at the .01 level, and Use of Innovation and Technology for Learning (X_2), and Creativity Thinking (X_3) are statistically significant at the .05 level. The Multiple Correlation Coefficient (R) is 0.812, the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) is 0.660, the Adjusted Coefficient of Determination (Adjusted R^2) is 0.654, and the Standard Error of Estimate (SEE) is 0.278. This indicates that Team Learning, Use of Innovation and Technology for Learning, Creativity Thinking, and Environment

Conducive to Learning can collectively predict teachers’ PLCs by 65.40%, from which the predictive equation can be written as follows:

The Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis equation in the form of raw scores is:
 $Y = 0.594 + 0.44(X_4) + 0.159(X_1) + 0.148(X_2) + 0.129(X_3)$

The Regression Analysis equation in the form of standard scores is:
 $Z_y = 0.447(Z_{x4}) + 0.177(Z_{x1}) + 0.153(Z_{x2}) + 0.132(Z_{x3})$

The impact of school administrators’ learning leadership on teachers’ PLCs in a public secondary school is presented in Figure 3.

Teacher's Professional Learning Communities	B	S.E.	B	t	Sig.
X ₁	0.159	0.054	0.177	2.921**	0.004
X ₂	0.148	0.060	0.153	2.470*	0.014
X ₃	0.129	0.064	0.132	2.000*	0.047
X ₄	0.414	0.053	0.447	7.768**	0.000
Constant	0.594	0.160		3.705**	0.000

R = 0.812 R² = 0.660 Adjusted R² = 0.654 SEE = 0.278;

**Statistically significant at the .01 level; *Statistically significant at the .05 level

Figure 3 The Impact of School Administrators' Learning Leadership on Teachers' PLCs in a Public Secondary School

Findings & Discussion

Based on the research findings regarding the impact of school administrators' learning leadership on teachers' PLCs in a public secondary school, the following discussion can be presented.

The overall high level of school administrators' learning leadership can be attributed to the proactive behaviors of modern administrators who actively seek knowledge and utilize innovation. Rather than merely managing, these leaders establish a sustainable learning culture. This aligns with [Pietersen \(2010\)](#), reinforcing that self-leadership is the catalyst for motivating organizational efficiency. The findings from school administrators' learning leadership indicated an overall "high" level. This finding is attributed to the fact that leadership learning encompasses the characteristics and behaviors of school administrators who actively encourage and motivate personnel to become enthusiastic about learning alongside their work duties. These leaders serve as role models by seeking knowledge, demonstrating creativity, appropriately utilizing technology and innovation, being open to feedback, adapting to situations, and continuously creating an environment conducive to learning. Furthermore, they link and share knowledge within their teams, support collaboration across sectors, and establish a sustainable learning culture to enable the organization to achieve its goals and enhance future competitiveness. This is consistent with [Chanphensuriya's \(2023\)](#) research, which found that the overall level of learning leadership among school administrators was high. The findings also align with [OECD \(2013\)](#), which found that the public reformed education by introducing a new curriculum and increasing the role of local

authorities in managing primary education, thereby raising student achievement. Learning leadership was utilized as the foundation for development, with teachers being encouraged to learn collaboratively, plan, and systematically measure teaching outcomes. Furthermore, these results are consistent with the concept proposed by [Pietersen \(2010\)](#), who suggested that the starting point for leading others and leading an organization is for the leader first to improve and develop themselves (self-leadership) before they can effectively influence or motivate others. Therefore, it can be concluded that a management style in which the administrator possesses characteristics of learning leadership, beginning with fostering team learning, will result in staff who love the organization and are committed to performing their duties with maximum efficiency and effectiveness, leading toward a sustainable learning organization.

The findings from the study of teachers' PLCs, according to the perspective of teachers, are generally at a "high" level. This is a collaboration among teachers and administrators to exchange knowledge, develop instructional management practices, improve student quality, and foster a supportive environment for continuous, sustainable collaborative learning. This aligns with [Hiranlack \(2021\)](#) research, which found that PLCs in schools were generally at a high level. This is consistent with the research of [Ratts et al. \(2015\)](#), which found that educators who participated in collaborative PLC practices, such as observing colleagues, providing feedback on teaching approaches, analyzing student work, and discussing student-centered education, were more likely to enhance the quality of classroom instruction. Furthermore, involvement in PLCs and the implementation of developed teaching

approaches resulted in increased student academic achievement. Shared responsibility within the PLCs also strengthened teacher effectiveness through cooperation, communication, and relationship-building that support student learning. The high expectations arising from collaborative work helped educators narrow knowledge gaps and led to profound transformations for students and teachers within the school system. This aligns with the concept proposed by [Abdullah & Ghani \(2014\)](#). These findings indicated that teachers perceived the PLC level as high-level.

The findings from the relationship between school administrators' learning leadership and teachers' PLCs showed a high positive correlation with statistical significance at the 0.01 level, aligning with the hypothesis. This is because school administrators who focus on promoting and stimulating teachers' enthusiasm for learning alongside practical work, where the leader acts as a role model in seeking knowledge, possessing creative thinking, appropriately utilizing technology and ideas, and creating an environment conducive to continuous learning, connection, and shared knowledge within the team, are effectively creating a PLC. This enables teachers to exchange knowledge, work as a team, and develop their profession collaboratively, to raise student quality under an atmosphere of cooperation. This is consistent with [Sornhad \(2021\)](#), who found that the academic leadership of school administrators was highly correlated with PLCs overall, statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This also aligns with the research of [Nakornsoongnoen \(2021\)](#), who found that the academic leadership of administrators was strongly positively correlated with the school's PLCs, with statistical significance at the 0.01 level. Furthermore, this is consistent with [OECD \(2013\)](#), which found that a learning-conducive environment fosters a culture of collaborative learning between teachers and students, an important foundation for educational reform and the sustainable development of student quality. Furthermore, this is consistent with Gardner research, which found that transformational leadership behavior was positively correlated with teamwork, customer focus, and commitment to continuous improvement, as well as with the shared vision practice of the learning organization.

The findings of the impact of school administrators' learning leadership on teachers' PLCs in a public secondary school found that four dimensions were selected into the regression equation. Two dimensions were statistically significant at the 0.01 level: Team Learning (X_1) and Environment Conducive to Learning (X_4). Two dimensions were statistically significant at the 0.05 level: Use of Innovation and Communication Technology for Learning (X_2) and Creative Thinking (X_3). These four dimensions can jointly predict teachers' PLCs with 65.40% accuracy. The Standard Error of Estimate (SEE) was 0.278. The effectiveness of PLCs is primarily driven by school administrators who embrace a learning leadership model composed of four mutually reinforcing elements. First, Team Learning is established as administrators promote knowledge exchange and shared experiences, enabling teachers to work systematically toward collective goals through modern communication technology. By modeling the use of new media in professional development, administrators foster a tech-forward culture. Second, the Use of Innovation and Technology for Learning, the school administrator encourages the use of new media and science in teaching and administration, and serves as a role model for using technology to support professional development and learning management. Third, Creative Thinking allows leaders to solve complex institutional problems by departing from conventional methods to invent more efficient approaches. Fourth, the creation of an Environment Conducive to Learning ensures that both physical surroundings and budgetary resources are optimized to support staff and student growth. This framework aligns with the findings of [Kanda, Thadatontichok, & Yuenyaw \(2023\)](#), whose research confirmed that academic leadership dimensions—including quality assessment and supervision—significantly predict the operational success of school PLCs. Furthermore, [Vanblaere & Devos \(2016\)](#) highlight that both transformational leadership, which empowers colleagues, and instructional leadership, which delegates authority to improve teaching, are vital for a collaborative school culture. Ultimately, as [DuFour & Eaker \(1998\)](#) emphasized, the sustainability of school-based learning communities

depends on a leader's ability to define a shared vision, create a supportive climate, and facilitate constant organizational communication.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

Short-Term Strategies

School administrators should establish measurable indicators for creating an 'Environment Conducive to Learning', such as allocating specific weekly time slots for professional dialogue and securing dedicated budgetary resources to support collaborative teacher spaces.

At the policy level, the Educational Service Area Office should implement a structured leadership framework that mandates 'Learning Leadership' as a core competency. This framework should be integrated into the formal appraisal system and prerequisite training modules for all incoming school administrators.

School administrators should emphasize the Use of Innovation and Communication Technology for Learning dimension of Learning Leadership in school administration. This focus is crucial because the research found that this dimension had the lowest positive correlation with the PLCs. Strengthening this area will help further elevate the relationship between the school administrators' Learning Leadership and the teachers' Professional Learning Community, thereby increasing overall effectiveness.

Long-Term Strategies

Integrating learning leadership as a component of the self-development training for school administrators prior to assuming their position in the future, in order to enhance their leadership capabilities.

The Educational Service Area Office and other relevant agencies can utilize the research findings to develop strategic plans aimed at enhancing the school administrators' learning leadership and their influence on teachers' PLCs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research should be conducted on school administrators' learning leadership and its effect on teachers' PLCs in schools under other educational

service areas. The data obtained from such research could then be used to compare results across different service areas.

Further research should be conducted to explore other factors beyond school administrators' learning leadership that impact the teachers' PLCs. Examples include studying the effects of leadership learning on school effectiveness or on teacher behavior.

Conclusion

Study Findings on Variable Levels

The research findings indicated that the level of school administrators' leadership learning and teachers' PLCs is generally high, both overall and across each dimension. This is consistent with objectives 1 and 2, respectively. For school administrators' leadership in learning, the dimension with the highest mean score is creating an environment conducive to learning. The dimension with the lowest mean score is the use of innovation and technology for learning. For the PLCs, the dimension with the highest mean score is joint learning and professional development. The dimensions with the lowest mean scores are support and shared leadership.

Findings on Correlation and Impact

Correlation: The school administrators' learning leadership has a high, positive correlation with the teachers' PLCs. The correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level, consistent with objective 3.

Impact: The dimensions of school administrators' learning leadership, consisting of: Team Learning (X_1), Use of Innovation and Technology for Learning (X_2), Creativity Thinking (X_3), and Environment Conducive to Learning (X_4), can collectively predict the PLCs among teachers with statistical significance. Their combined predictive impact accounts for 65.40% of the variance in the PLCs, which is consistent with objective 4.

Limitations and Future Scope

This study will help enhance the understanding of school administrators' learning leadership within the educational context. However, this research has limitations regarding the population and sample, as the study was conducted exclusively in secondary

schools in Lopburi Province. For future research, it is recommended to conduct studies across other educational levels and provinces. This will enable the collection of more diverse perspectives from school administrators and teachers across contexts.

In conclusion, this study confirms the hypothesis stated at the outset: school administrators' learning leadership—particularly through team learning and a conducive environment—significantly drives and explains 65.40% of the robustness of teachers' PLCs. These findings fulfill the research objectives and provide empirical evidence that developing learning leadership is a vital mechanism for educational reform in public secondary schools.

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