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Assessing the Level of Collaboration among the Lilongwe Academy International School Teachers

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A B S T R A C T

The study aimed at assessing the level of collaboration among The Lilongwe Academy International School Teachers. Collaboration was an important aspect to be embraced by The Lilongwe Academy teachers if the institution was to achieve maximum productivity. The observed behaviour among teachers in classroom teaching when other members of staff are not present on duty points to issues of failure to work as teams in collaboration. Collaboration is key to organizational maximum productivity and failure to collaborate enhances organization ineffectiveness. All teachers teaching at The Lilongwe Academy were eligible to participate in the study. Sample size: The total sample of the study was N=50, and it was assumed that all teachers were going to take part in the study, however the response rate was 35 representing 70% which was good. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather information through the utilization of a questionnaire and interviews were conducted mainly to confirm the results obtained. The data was analyzed using SPPS and data obtained from interviews content analysis was used. A self-administered questionnaire was used together with an interview guide to collect data from respondents. The results of the study have shown that there is lack of collaboration among The Lilongwe Academy teachers. The respondents to this study observed that collaboration was difficult at the work place. Respondents also opined that too much management involvement was affecting collaboration efforts. Again, respondents agreed that collaboration lacked the leaders influence. The findings of the study have also revealed that collaboration led to a lot of benefits for the organization. From the results it can be concluded that collaboration efforts were lacking at The Lilongwe Academy, hence, there was need for teachers and its leadership to embrace collaborative approach to achieve maximum productivity.

Key Words: Collaboration, Teachers, School

INTRODUCTION

Collaboration allows educators to exchange their expertise and experiences to support one another and learn collectively to excel in their roles (Goodlad, 1990). A key element that influences the effectiveness of any organization is the ability of its members to work together as a cohesive unit. As competition intensifies, fostering creativity in the workplace has become crucial for enhancing productivity and nurturing positive employee relationships. Collaboration occurs when two individuals or a group jointly work towards a shared objective by exchanging their ideas and skills. Collaboration among teachers is crucial for reforming schools (Goodlad, 1990).

Although reform initiatives promote collaborative cultures within schools, many teachers still work independently, adhere to a non-interference policy, and lack pedagogical discussions (Goodlad, 1990). Considering the intricate nature of teaching and learning in today's political, social, and economic landscape, it is crucial for teachers to engage in practical collaboration to enhance learning opportunities for all students (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Various factors can influence collaborative teams and obstruct the organization from reaching its desired goals. These elements consist of motivation, perceptions, confidence, job contentment, experience, culture, leadership approach, and the workplace atmosphere. Numerous organizations continue to thrive due to collaboration. Collective action is generally acknowledged as a beneficial factor for the success of any organization or institution. For any organization to reach its goals, collaborating and supporting one another is crucial. Meeting with others can help individuals recognize the significance of collaboration, understand how organizations function, and foster a culture of teamwork that enhances organizational performance.

A social constructivist perspective on education proposed by Lev Vygotsky and others (Moran and John-Steiner 2003) sees collaboration as an innovative approach to planning and instruction for educators. Vygotsky (1978) offers the theoretical framework for viewing collaboration as a social activity in which meaning arises from conversations among group members. Vygotsky (1978), a Russian psychologist whose complete works were released long after his early passing, proposed that individuals learn through social interactions with others, and that "knowledge construction [is] a social, cooperative venture" (Moran and John-Steiner 2003) cited in (Goddard, Neumerski, Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2010). Moreover, a teacher, as stated by Parnell (2011), is the key figure in education who ensures that the educational program is effectively executed by organizing and managing the learning experiences and settings. Educators require self-assurance to perform their responsibilities in challenging and distinctive circumstances and must apply their knowledge in a manner that earns the trust of their clients, stakeholders, and peers (Parnell, 2011).

This study seeks to evaluate the degree of collaboration among teachers at The Lilongwe Academy International School. The behaviors noted among teachers during classroom instruction, particularly when other staff members are absent, indicate challenges in teamwork and collaboration. Teamwork is crucial for achieving optimal productivity in an organization, while a lack of collaboration increases organizational inefficiency. Disregarding the current inadequate collaboration among teachers at Lilongwe Academy would lead to a diminished identity for the school as a prestigious academic institution in light of the intensifying competition from new schools. To achieve this goal, Lilongwe Academy is an expanding institution and therefore needs a team that will collaborate to reach the desired performance outcomes. The anecdotal accounts indicate that teacher performance is declining, as shown by exam results, with only a handful of teachers in their respective subjects achieving high scores above 90%, while many others fall below 50%. Therefore, if The Lilongwe Academy International School wishes to uphold its current status and remain competitive, it is essential to strengthen collaboration among teachers; thus, this study aims to examine the level of collaboration present among staff members.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research shows teamwork really helps companies do better. A study by Silns and Mulford (2002) looked at how leadership, learning, and student results are all tied together. They found that when teachers work together, schools can change and get better. Basically, learners do well when teachers are supported and appreciated (Silns and Mulford, 2002). Jerald and Baron pointed out in 2007 that teams do not work well when people do not want to help each other out, when management doesn't give enough support, and when managers don't want to hand over responsibility. On the other hand, teachers get better when they always want to learn and try to be the best teachers they can be. Also, when teachers share good teaching ideas with each other, the whole school gets better (Jerald and Baron, 2007). When teachers get more skilled and confident, and have more responsibility, they're probably more willing to try new teaching methods and take smart risks, which makes them even better teachers (Jerald and Baron, 2007). Lots of research shows that teachers do best when they have support from each other and work together (Hargreaves, 1994). Good relationships and teamwork are key to making schools better (Hopkins, West, and Ainscow, 1996). The way people talk to each other every day says a lot about how healthy an organization is. Hopkins et al. (1996: 177) said it well: Good schools help people work together by building supportive environments that encourage involvement, training, help, and problem-solving. This is all about professional development and learning that comes from teamwork and networking.

Moreover, research has consistently shown that team performance is greatly affected by team cohesion, shared trust, and mutual support among members, which are all key aspects of efficient collaboration. These essential components are crucial in allowing teams to reach peak performance and overall success (Conoley & Conoley, 2010). Evidence also indicates that collaborative teaching settings, especially those with distributed leadership roles, are linked to markedly improved teacher expectations, morale, and confidence. Additionally, models of collaboration and shared responsibility among educators are linked to increased job satisfaction (Conoley & Conoley, 2010).

In fact, emerging research indicates that instructional focused, transformational leadership affects teachers' instructional practices (Goddard et al., 2010). Good leadership falls within and beyond the scope of the principal, however. Therefore, school leaders should involve teachers in collaborating to bring about school improvement. Indeed, extant research suggests the importance of teacher collaboration to teachers' learning, instructional practice, and differences among schools in academic achievement (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007).

At first, numerous educators perceive the required level of trust and collaboration as overwhelming and hard to accomplish since it pushes the limits of personal independence within which the majority of teachers function. Nevertheless, once attained, the influence of this positive interdependence on diminishing the 'between classroom' disparities in student performance has proven to be significant (Miller, 2012). This is mainly due to staff members collaboratively assisting each other in offering all students the types of learning experiences considered vital for successful learning. The benefits of heightened collective responsibility extend beyond just student learning. School personnel benefit from professional assistance from their peers, resulting in enhanced skills and self-assurance. Consequently, alongside collective responsibility arises the chance for authentic collective and more profound learning (Miller, 2012).

A significant portion of the current literature on teacher collaboration has concentrated on uncovering positive impacts of collaboration on teachers, rather than more immediate effects on students. In particular, beneficial results for teachers have involved enhanced efficacy (Conoley and Conoley, 2010), better attitudes toward teaching, a deeper understanding of students (Pounder, 1999), and increased levels of trust. Identifying time for collaboration is a persistent challenge that educators encounter (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009). Furthermore, educators might encounter difficulties associated with the organization or substance of their collaborative efforts.

Collaborative efforts required time to establish and execute (Williams, 2010). Educators preoccupied with routine responsibilities, scarce resources, and the necessity to show teaching effectiveness may struggle to find time for collaboration with peers. To conserve time, collaborative methods have been limited to exchanging information through computers and printed documents (Williams, 2010).

When teachers feel more confident, the work environment turns more cheerful, enhancing employee morale. The effect will be experienced by students, as when teachers work together and boost their morale, they foster a stronger sense of community and create an atmosphere that promotes positive relationships and, ultimately, student learning (Goldstein, 2015).

Collaboration must transform into a lifestyle for schools, and it currently is not (DuFour et al., 2011 cited by Burton, 2015). Educators continue to operate in solitude, lacking the support of fellow teachers and administrative staff. Establishing a collaborative environment in a school will aid educators in fostering a more collegial culture and will also enhance their dedication to personal growth (DuFour et al., 2011, referenced by Burton, 2015).

Collaboration enables educators to address negative emotions, values, and beliefs head-on while providing different positive options (Williams, 2006, cited by Burton, 2015). This encouraging environment trickles down to students, positively affecting their learning.

When educators collaborate, they exchange experiences and creative strategies; through joint discussions, teachers are empowered to contribute to curriculum implementation and a range of skills to address student learning needs (Williams, 2010). Teacher collaboration is a structured approach enabling educators to evaluate and enhance teaching methods and student achievement (Williams, 2010). Goddard et al (2010) asserted that educators are experts and have distinct insights regarding their students and their learning processes. When successful collaboration takes place, teachers' expertise and experience are shared, leading to improved instruction. Educators with different amounts of experience who collaboratively aim to enhance student learning are most successful in boosting student achievement (Williams, 2010).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Design has been defined by Jancowiz (2005) as a systematic plan   to coordinate research steps to ensure the efficient use of resources and to guide the research according to scientific methods; again, it is a plan to be followed to meet the research objectives, and is the framework within which to solve a specific   problem This study followed a concurrent mixed method research design that used both qualitative and quantitative. The research design is a plan as to what data to gather, from whom, how and when,   and   how   to analyze   the

  data obtained. The purpose of a design is to ensure that the relation between independent and dependent variables is not subject to alternative interpretations. It is the glue that holds all of the elements in a   research   project   together (Cooper and Schindler, 2006).   The quantitative research method was the main approach through the use of questionnaires while the qualitative approach complemented the quantitative method through the use of the prepared interview guide. Therefore, the study was concurrent as both methods were to be used at the same time. This approach was chosen in order to overcome the limitation of a single design.

SAMPLING

All teachers working at The Lilongwe Academy International School were invited to take part in the study. As part of the research, data was to be collected in the minimum time possible as well as at lowest cost. Purposive sampling procedure of the total population was used. The purposive (also known as judgmental or subjective) sampling technique was used in the sampling process of the population of the research. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling in which the decision concerning the individuals to be included in the sample was taken   by   the   researcher   based   on   the   fact   that the study targeted teachers teaching at The Lilongwe Academy International School. The data was quantitatively and qualitatively collected through answering the questionnaire and interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Collaboration is very difficult at my workplace

Collaboration has been touted as an essential aspect of achieving maximum productivity. In view of this statement, the results indicate that 51.4% (n=18) of respondents agreed with the posed question while 28.6% (n=10) of the respondents disagreed and only 17.1% (n=6) of respondents could neither nor agree with the statement. The results below, therefore, indicate that collaboration was difficult at the organization.
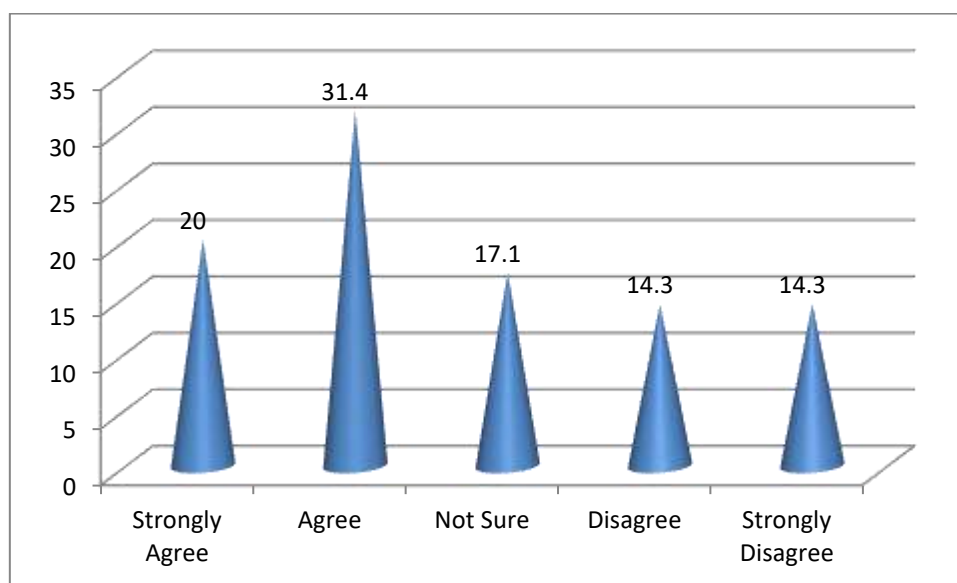

Figure 4.6.Collaboration is difficult at the workplace

Too much management involvement is affecting collaboration

The question was asked to find out whether there was too much management involvement was affecting collaboration. In support of this statement the respondents accounting for 65.7% (n=23), both strongly agree and agree were in agreement with the statement while 25.7% (n=9) of the respondents disagreed with the statement and 8.6%(=8.6) of them were not sure.
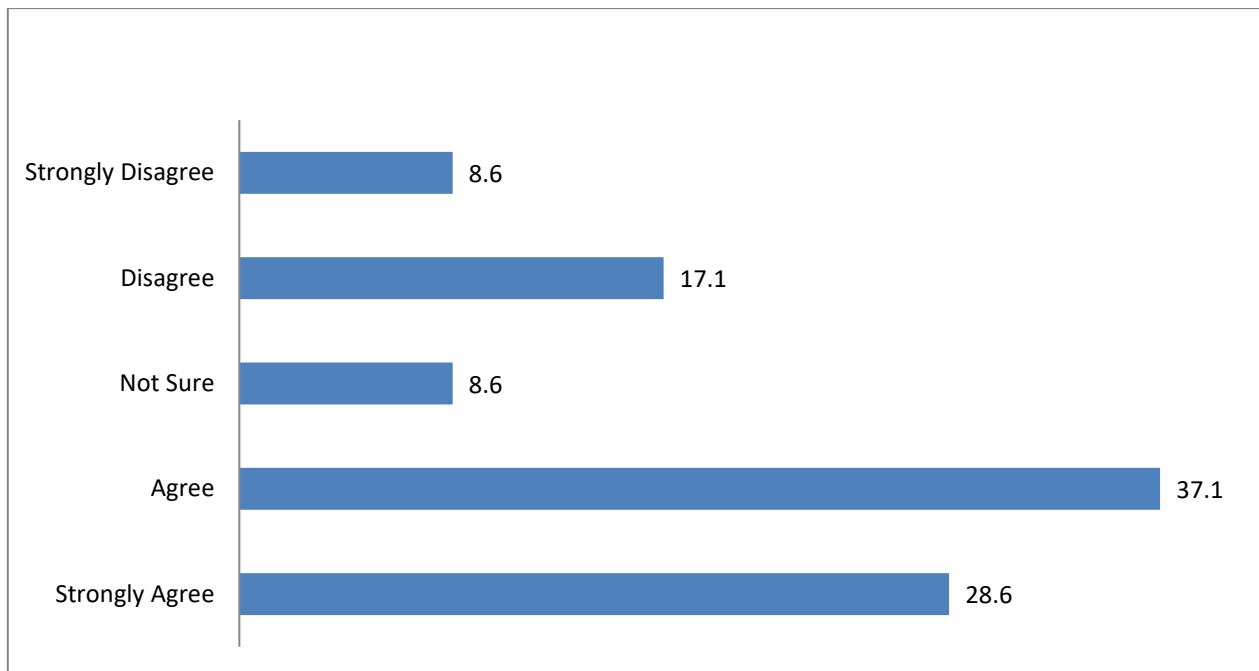

Figure 4.7: Management Involvement Affecting Collaboration

Collaboration lacks leader's influence

As illustrated in Figure 4.8 above, the researcher also wanted to find from respondents about whether collaboration lacked leader's influence. The results show that the majority of the respondents 43.7%(n=13) a combination of agree and strongly agree concurred that collaboration lacked leader's influence while 40.7%(n=14) of respondents showed their disagreement and only 15.6% (n=5) could not ascertain. This means that there was indeed need for the leader to come forward and encourage teachers to be able to collaborate in order to achieve maximum productivity.
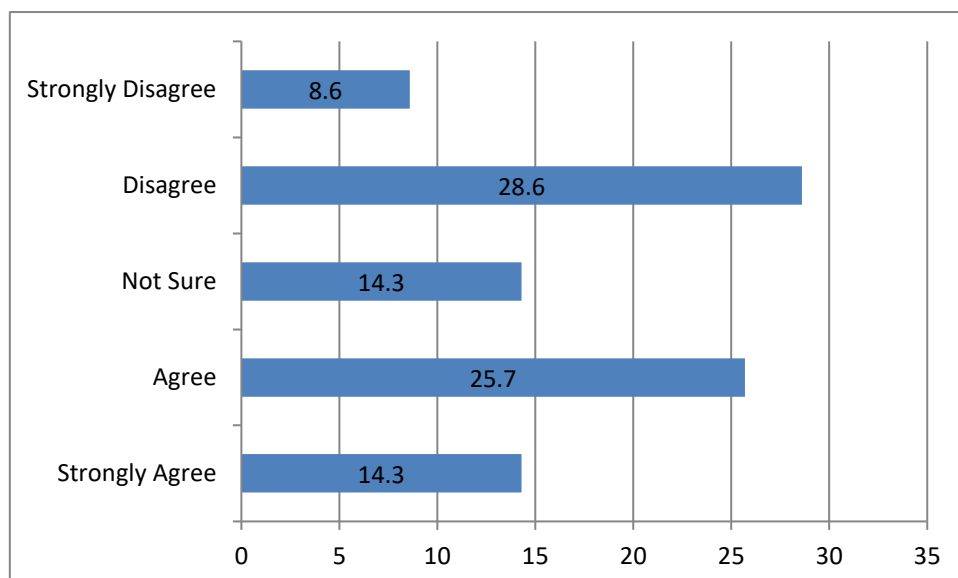

Figure: 4.8.Collaboration lacks leaders influence

4.2.4. I am highly motivated by my colleagues

The researcher wanted to find if respondents were highly motivated by their colleagues. The majority of respondents counting for 68.6% (n=24) disagreed with the statement while 20% (n=7) were not sure and only 2.9%(n=1) agreed with the assertion. The results, therefore, indicate that most teachers were not being motivated by colleagues hence failure of the collaborative process. The results are presented in Figure 4.9 below;
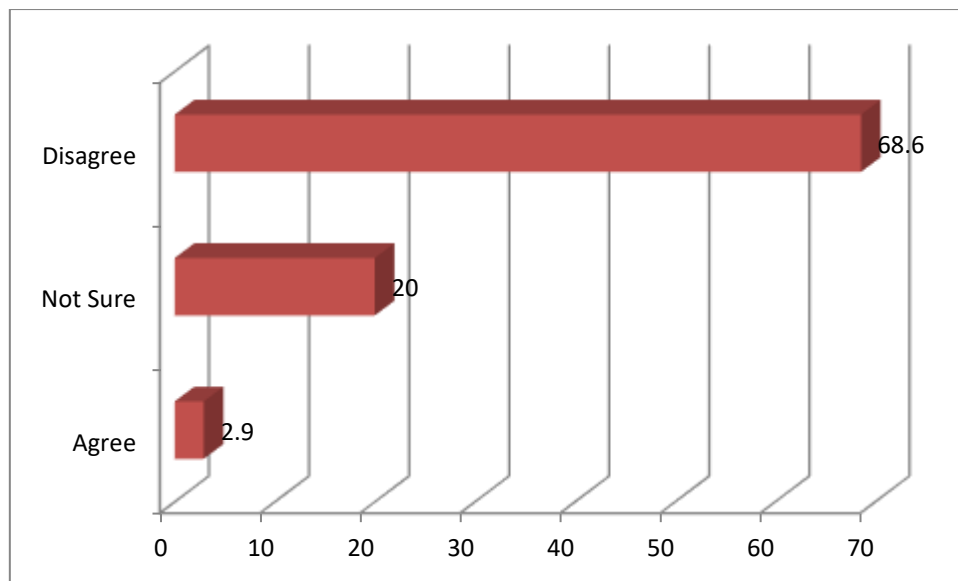
Figure 4.9: I am highly motivated by my colleagues

Even though I achieve good results collaboration is lacking

When asked this question, the majority of the respondents accounting for 45.7% (n=16) alluded that they still achieved good results though there was lack of collaboration while 28.6% (n=10) of the respondents did not agree with the statement and 17.1% (n=6) of the respondents were not sure.
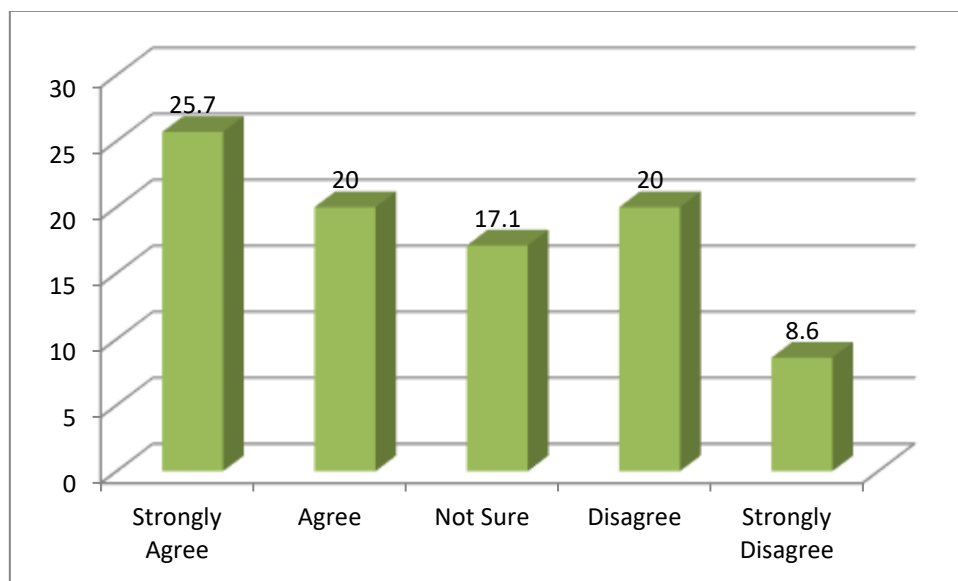

Figure 4.10: Though Achieving Good Results Collaboration is lacking

Collaboration among teachers in my section is good

The majority of respondents accounting for 68.6% (n=24) disagreed with the statement while 20% (n=7) of the respondents agreed and 11.4% (n=4) were not sure if collaboration in their section was good. The results clearly show that collaboration was minimal among teachers. This little collaboration serves to confirm that there was more of working in isolation rather than working together as at a team. The moment teachers do not collaborate the student achievement is compromised.
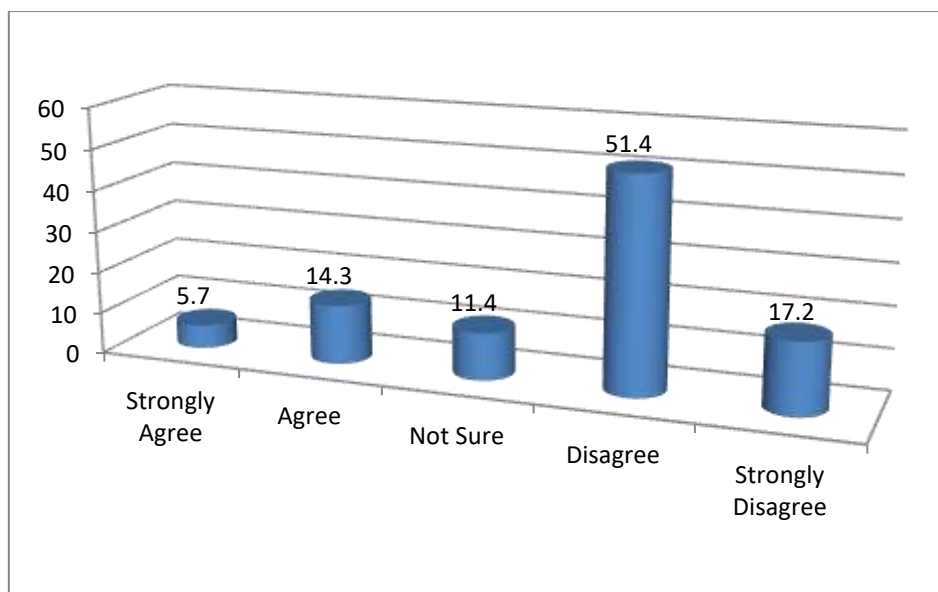
Figure 4.11: Collaboration Among Teachers in my section is good

The school provides adequate resources to use in the delivery of lessons.

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents accounting for 65.7%(n=23) agreed that the school provided adequate resources to use in the delivery of lessons while 17.2%(n=6) of the respondents disagreed with the view .However, 17.1%(n=6) of respondents were not sure if the school provided adequate resources to use in the delivery of lessons .The agreement made by the respondents shows that the school had indeed enough resources to use in the delivery of lessons .
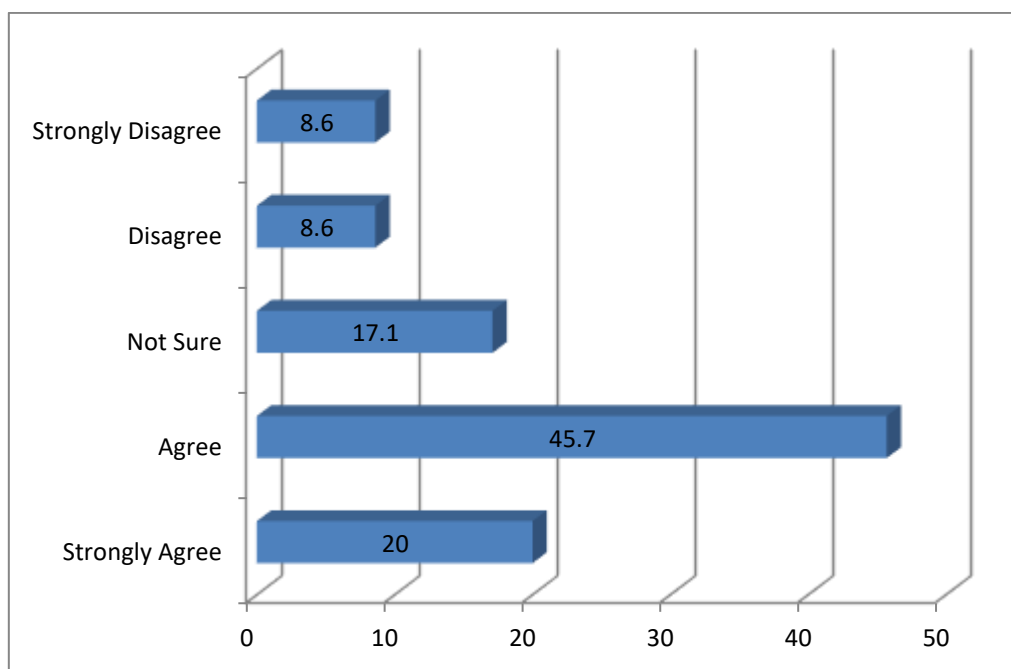

Figure 4.12: **The school provides adequate resources to use in the delivery of lessons**

Some teachers in my section are always helpful

The majority of respondents a combination of disagree and strongly disagree, 91.5% (n=32) disagreed that some teachers in their section were always helpful while 2.9% (n=1) of respondents agreed and 2.9% (n=1) of them were unsure about the statement. The results clearly show that some teachers were not helpful to other teachers. Probably the little collaboration that existed was not to do with teaching but may be something else. The results are shown in Figure 4.13 below;
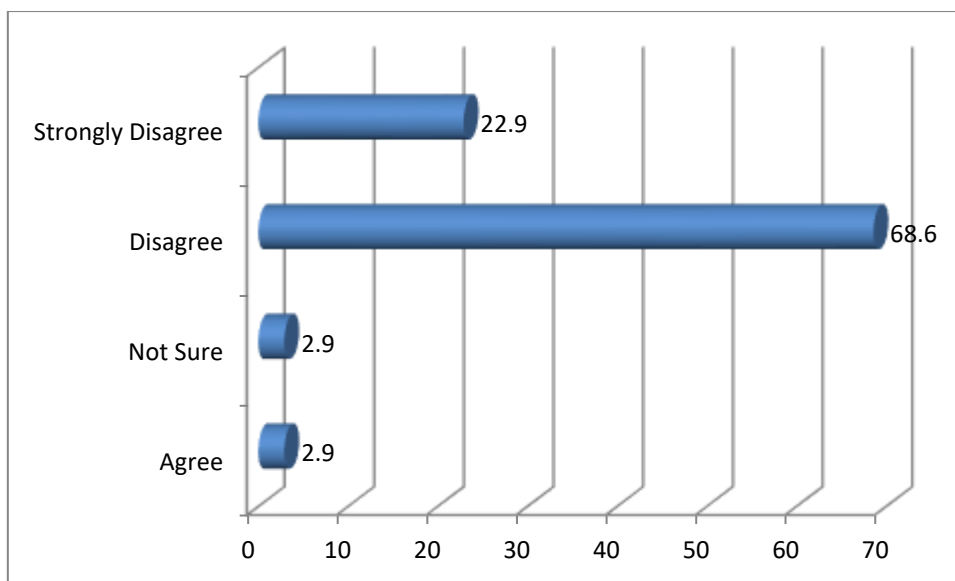
Figure.4.13.**Some teachers in my section are always helpful**

4.2.9. Lack of collaboration among teachers affects student achievement.

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents accounting to 60% (n=21)agreed that lack of collaboration among teachers affected students achievement while 20%(n=7) disagreed with the statement and only 14.3%(n=5) failed to agree or disagree with the statement. The findings indicate that the failure for teachers to collaborate led to poor achievement by students. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.14, the next page;
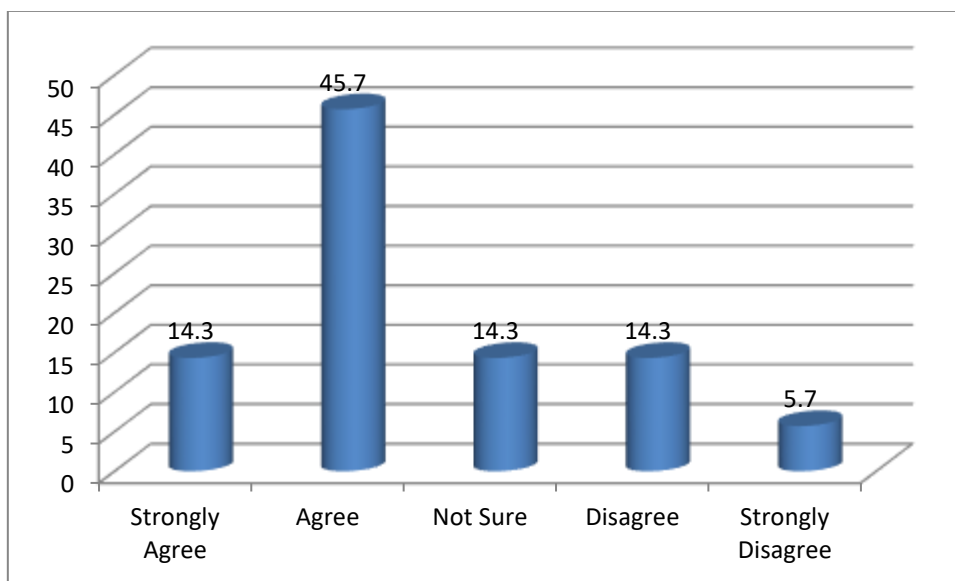

Figure 4. 14. Lack of collaboration among teachers affects student achievement

4.2.10. The work environment is conducive for teachers in my section to collaborate effectively.

When asked this question, 54.3% (n=19) of the respondents were in favour of the statement while 34% (n=12)disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, 11.4% (n=4) of respondents were not sure if the work environment was conducive for teachers in their section to collaborate effectively. The results are shown below;
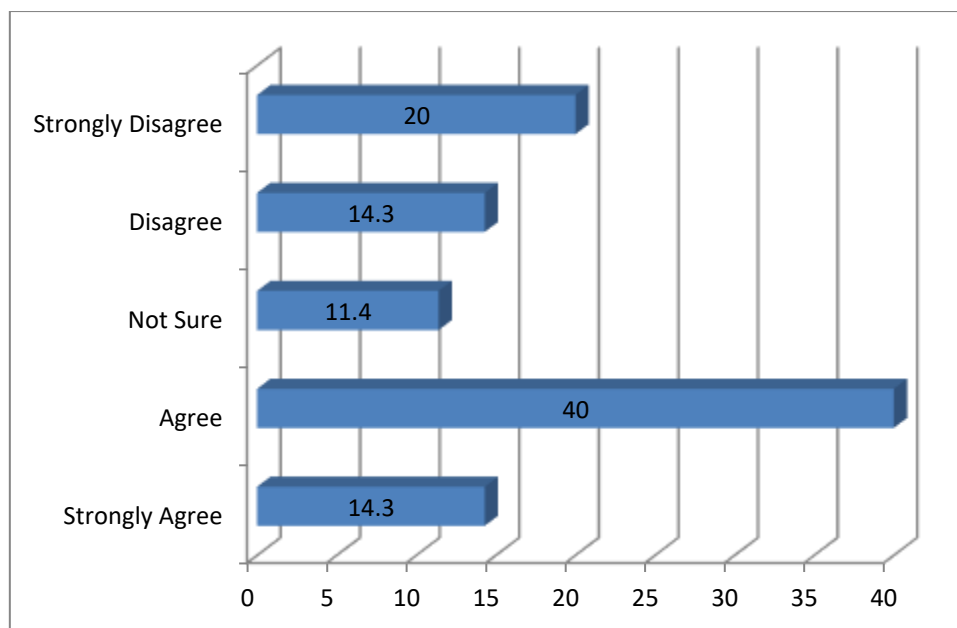
Figure4.15.Work environment is conducive for collaboration

4.2.11. The leadership style is affecting collaboration efforts.

On whether leadership style was affecting collaboration efforts the majority of respondents accounting for 65.7% (n=23)agreed while 17.2%(n=6) disagreed and 17.1%(n=6) of them were not sure if indeed the leadership style was affecting the collaboration efforts. The results are shown in Table 4.2, below;

Table 4.2.Collaboration Efforts Affected By Leadership Style

Respondent Responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	28.6
Agree	37.1
Not Sure	17.1
Disagree	14.3
Strongly Disagree	2.9

The leadership of the school gives clear goals to be followed by all members

The researcher asked the question to find out whether the leadership of the school gave clear goals to be followed by all members. The findings indicate that 45.7%(n=16) of the respondents disagreed a combination of both disagree and strongly disagree while 31.4% (n=11)of the respondents a combination of both agree and strongly agree they agreed with the statement with 22.9%(n=8) of them saying there were not sure. The Figure 4.16 in the next page, illustrates the results of this variable;
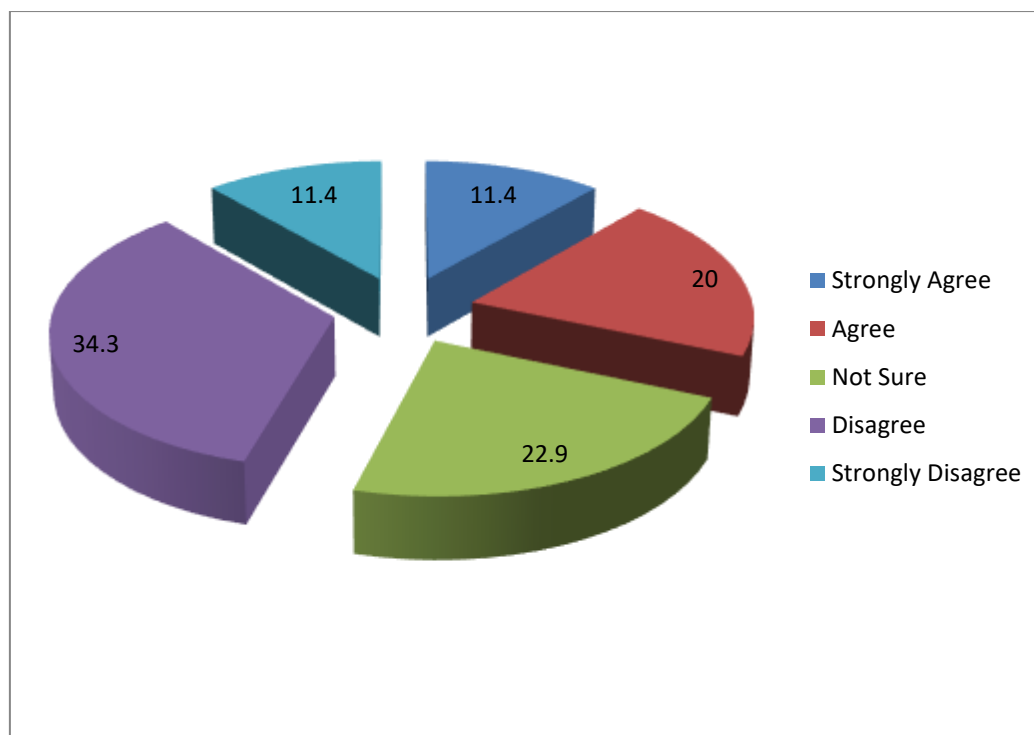
Figure 4.16. The leadership of the school gives clear goals

4.2.13. There is more of achievement of organization objectives than the welfare of teachers hence no collaboration at all.

The majority of respondents accounting for 65.7% (n=23) agreed that there was more of achievement of organization objectives than the welfare of teachers hence no collaboration while 17.1%(n=6) of respondents were not sure and 14.3%(n=5) disagreed with the assertion . This also clearly shows that the school leadership was more concerned with the achievement of the organization objectives rather than the teacher's welfare.

Table 4.3. More of achievement of organization objectives than the welfare of teachers

Respondents Responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	31.4
Agree	34.3
Not Sure	17.1
Disagree	11.4
Strongly Disagree	2.9

Collaboration leads to a lot of benefits for the organization

The majority of respondents accounting for 62.9%(n=22) agreed that collaboration led to a lot of benefits for the organization while 20%(n=7) of the respondents disagreed and only 17.1%(n=6) were not sure as they could not agree or disagree with the raised assertion.
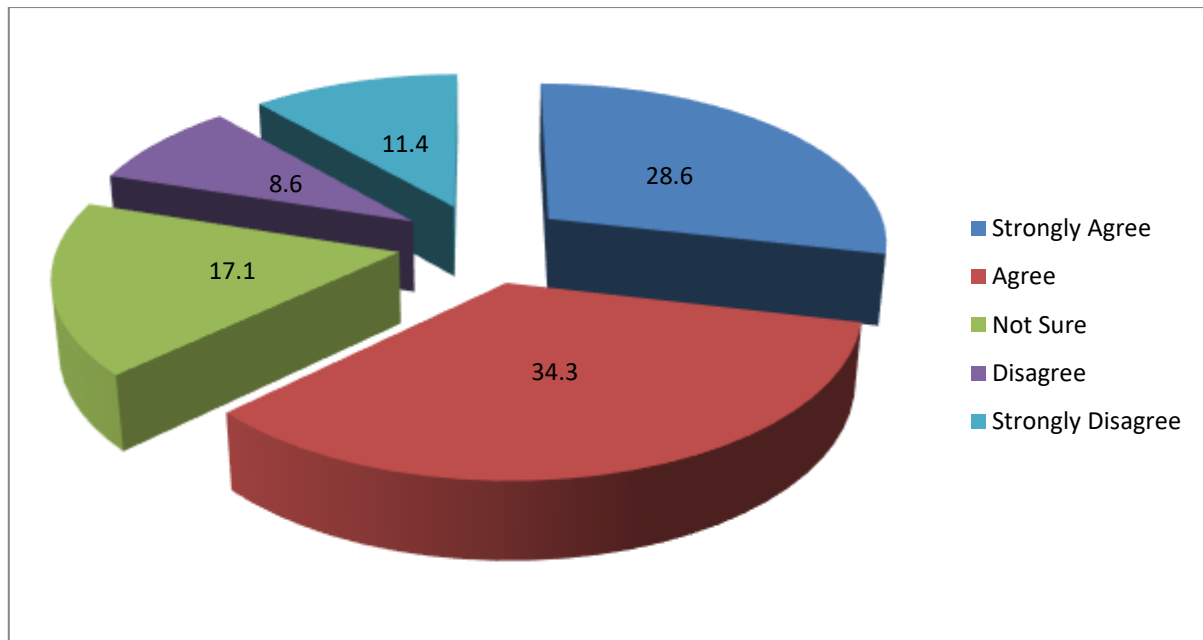
Figure 4.17. Collaboration leads to a lot of benefits

There is the need for the leadership to hold meetings frequently to encourage collaboration among teachers.

The majority of respondents accounting to 80% (n=28)of the respondents agreed that there was need for the leadership to hold meetings frequently to encourage collaboration among teachers while 8.6%(n=3) disagreed with the statement as well as 8.6% (n=3)were not sure.

Table 4.4 Leadership To hold Frequent Meetings

Respondents Responses	Percentage(%)
Strongly Agree	34.3
Agree	45.7
Not Sure	8.5
Disagree	5.7
Strongly Disagree	2.9

Collaboration helps in building trust

On whether collaboration helped in building trust, 94.3% (n=33) totally agreed with the statement while 5.7%(n=2) disagreed. This means that when teachers collaborated it brought in trust among teachers and in the process helping them to work towards the intended goals. This trust helps accelerate the achievement of students.
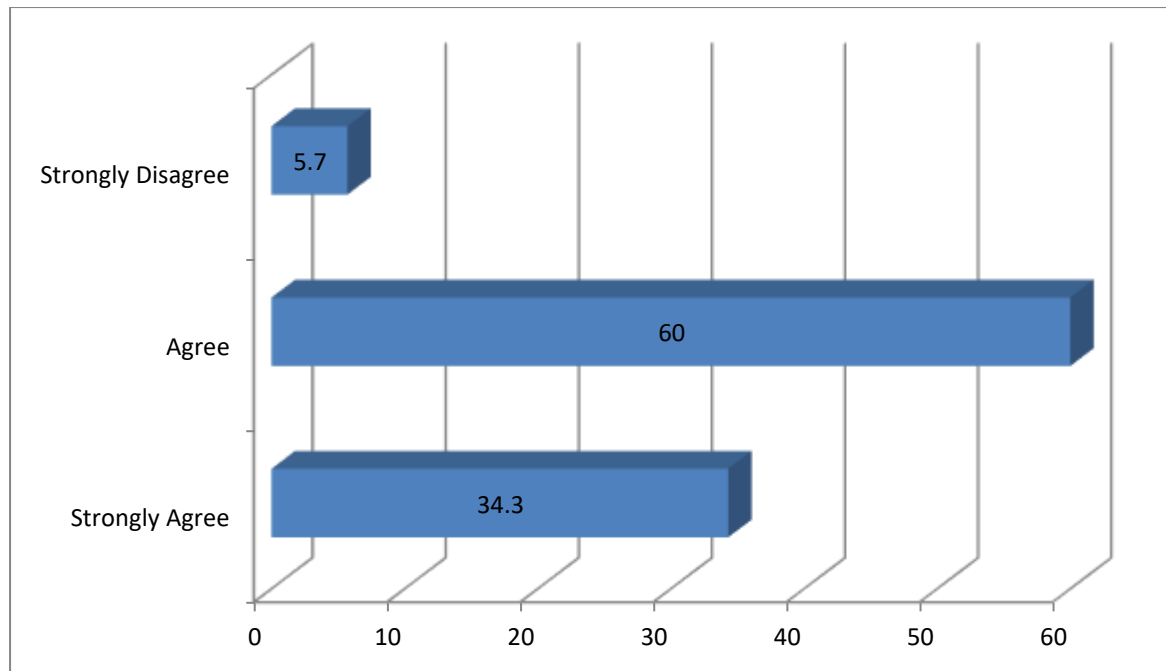
Figure 4.18. Collaboration helps in building trust

Some attitudes affect effective collaboration

This statement wanted to find out whether some attitudes affected effective collaboration, the majority of respondents accounting for 85.7% (n=30) agreed with the assertion while 5.8% (n=2) of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 5.7% (=2) of them were not sure. The results are illustrated in next page, Figure 4.19;
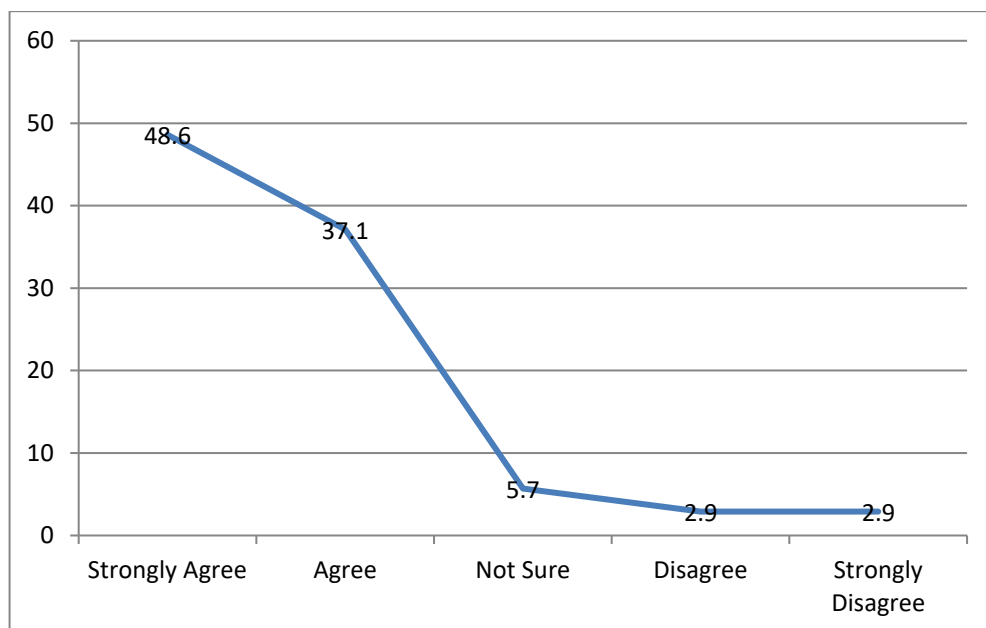

Figure 4.19. Some attitudes affect effective collaboration

Collaboration has an impact on team building

On whether collaboration had an impact on team work, the majority of the respondents 85.7%(n=30) agreed while 11.4%(n=4) of them disagreed. The highest percentage shows that indeed collaboration impacted upon team building. Figure 4.20 below show results;
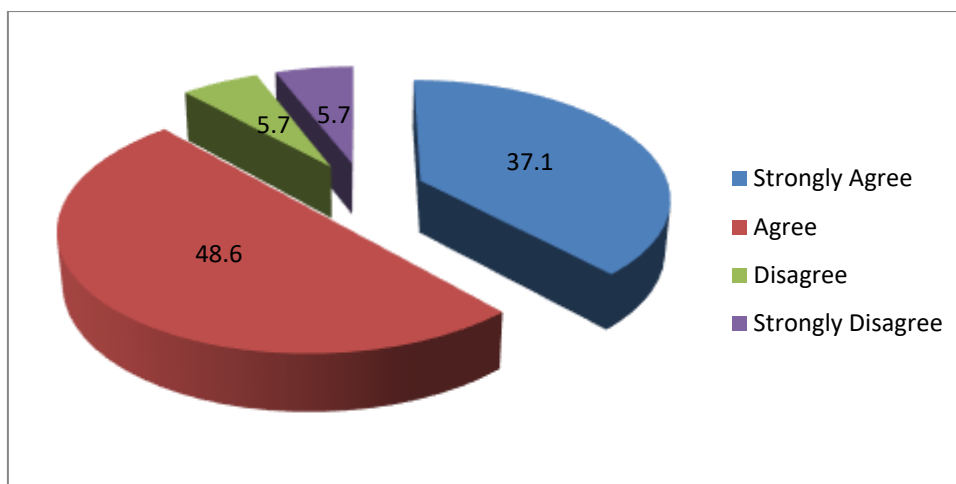
Figure 4.20. **Collaboration has an impact on team building**

As collaborators, we always plan together

The majority of the respondents 62.9%(n=22) disagreed that as collaborators, they always planned together while 17.2% (n=6)of the respondents agreed and another 17.1% (n=6)of them were not sure. The findings show that collaboration was lacking among the teachers hence each one worked independently. The results are presented in Figure 4.21 below
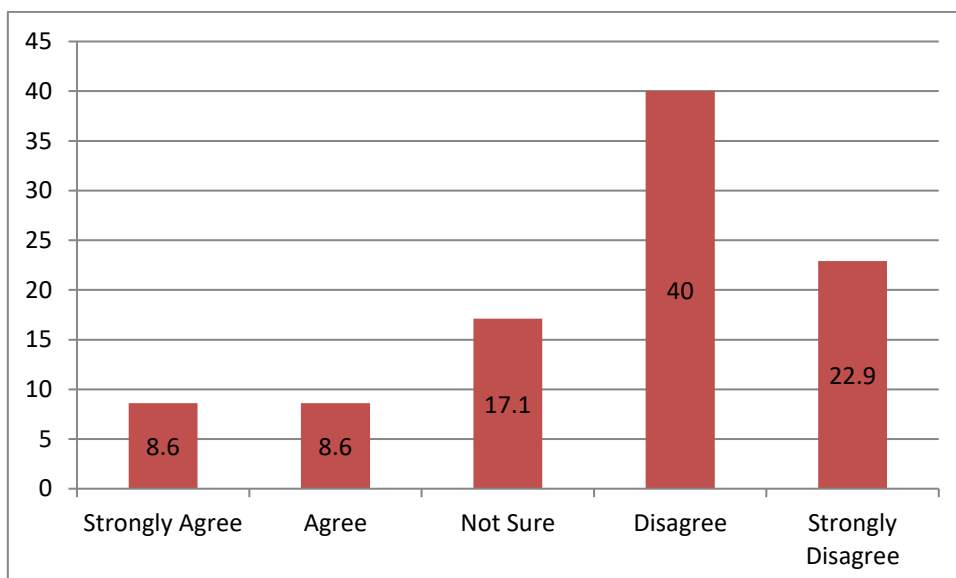

Figure: 4.21. **As collaborators, we always plan together**

Collaboration does not rest in an individual

The majority of the respondents 82.8% (n=29) agreed that collaboration was not resting in an individual while 11.5% (n=4)of the respondents disagreed with the statement and only 5.7%(n=2) of the respondents were not sure. This result clearly cements the situation that collaboration was viewed as an element of working together and individuality. Table 4.5,in the next page provides the results ;

Table 4:5. **Collaboration does not rest in an individual**

Respondents Responses	1. Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	37.1
Agree	45.7
Not Sure	5.7
Disagree	2.9
Strongly Disagree	8.6

Collaboration affects teacher confidence

The majority of the respondents 77.1% (n=27) disagreed that collaboration affected teacher confidence while 17.2% (n=6) of the respondents agreed with the assertion while 5.6% (n=2) were not sure. According to this result, it was not true that collaboration affected teacher confidence rather as teachers collaborated in one way or the other their confidence grow. The Figure 4.22, below shows the results of the responses;
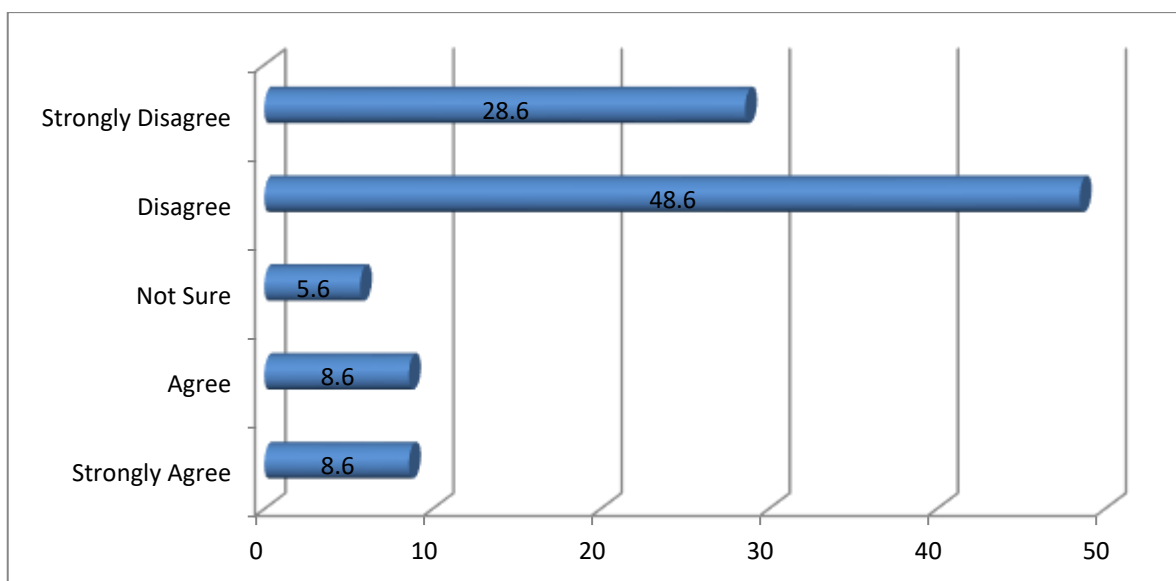

Figure 4.22.Collaboration affects teacher confidence

Decisions are acted upon as a group

When decisions are acted together unity prevails. The majority accounting for 54.3% (n=19) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that decisions were acted upon as a group while 28.5% (n=10) of them agreed and only 14.3% (n=5) were not sure. The result also indicated that there was lack of collaboration among the teachers and whatever they did was making decisions on their own. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.23 below
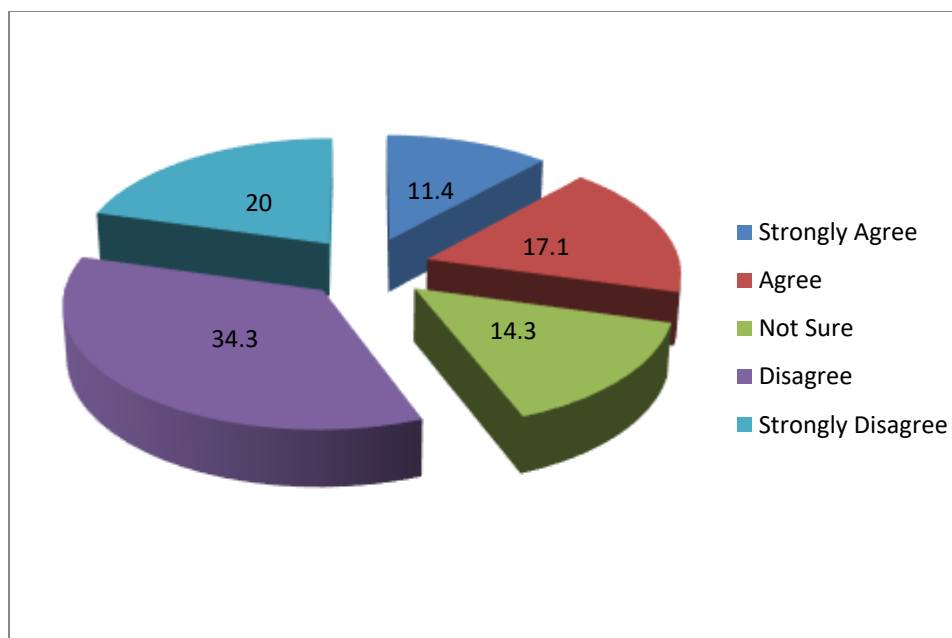
Figure 4.23. **Decisions are acted upon as a group**

**Teacher collaboration transforms teachers into resources for one another.**

The majority of the respondents 85.7% (n= 30) agreed that teacher collaboration transformed teachers into resources for one another while 8.6% (n=3)of them disagreed with the assertion and only 2.9% (n=1)were not sure. The results also show that indeed collaboration helped in transforming teachers into resources for one another.

Table 4.6. Teacher collaboration   transforms   teachers   into resources for one another

2. Respondents Responses	3. Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	40.0
Agree	45.7
Not Sure	2.9
Disagree	5.7.
Strongly Disagree	2.9

Collaboration leads to mutual support and assistance in problem-solving

When asked this question, 91.4% (n=32) of respondents agreed that collaboration led to mutual support and assistance in problem-solving while 8.6% (n=3) disagreed. This high percentage clearly shows that collaboration was an important element which was supposed to be exercised by everyone and in this case teachers are not an exception. The Figure 4.24 below show results of respondents responses;
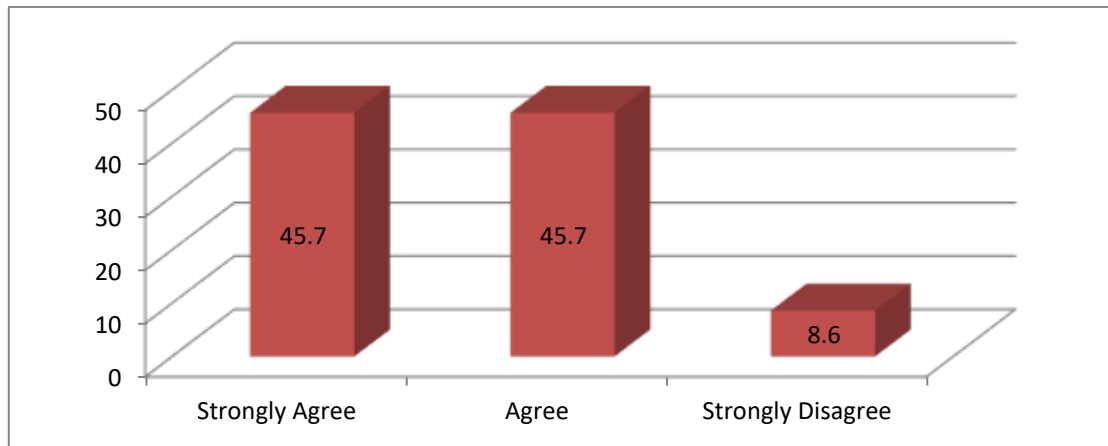
Figure 4.24.Collaboration leads to mutual support

Collaboration leads to sense of belonging among teachers

The majority of the respondents 77.1% (n=27) agreed that collaboration led to a sense of belonging among teachers while 17.1% (n=6) were not sure about the assertion and only 5.8% (n=2) of the respondents disagreed with the statement.
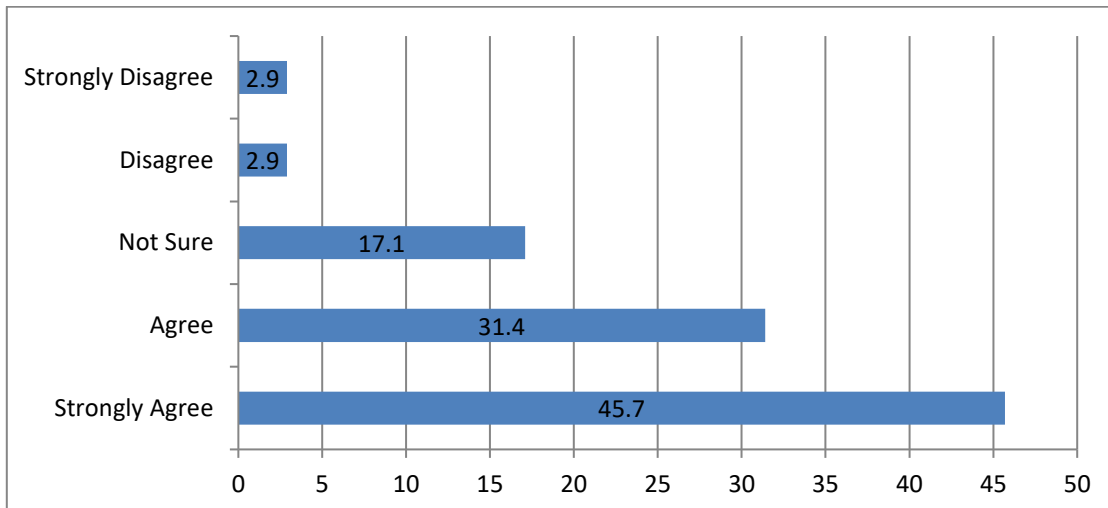
Figure 4.25.Collaboration leads to sense of belong

MAJOR FINDINGS

In order to determine the levels of collaboration among teachers the findings have revealed that collaboration was difficult at the work place. Lots of research shows that teachers do best when they have support from each other and work together (Hargreaves, 1994). Good relationships and teamwork

are key to making schools better (Hopkins, West, and Ainscow, 1996). The way people talk to each other every day says a lot about how healthy an organization is. Hopkins et al. (1996: 177) said it well: Good schools help people work together by building supportive environments that encourage involvement, training, help, and problem-solving. This is all about professional development and learning that comes from teamwork and networking.

The results have indicated that the participants were not significantly driven by their coworkers. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) asserted that motivated employees consistently seek improved methods for performing their tasks. This occurrence resulted in creativity and discovery within the organization. Considering this, the concern of efficiency and quality is effectively tackled, resulting in improved organizational performance.

The findings have also shown that despite achieving positive outcomes, there was a lack of collaboration. The findings align with Bivona (2002), who suggests that collaborative instructional leadership should positively influence how much teachers collaborate to enhance their students' results. This indicates that school leaders can promote teacher collaboration by offering instructional guidance and distributing leadership responsibilities among teachers. Consequently, increased levels of teacher collaboration may result in enhanced student achievement. Most respondents also disagreed that teacher collaboration was effective in their area. When successful collaboration takes place, teachers share their knowledge and experience, leading to improved instruction. Educators with diverse experience who collaboratively aim to enhance student learning are the most successful in boosting student performance (Williams, 2010).

The findings also indicated that the school offered the materials necessary for lesson delivery. To enhance chances for knowledge sharing and innovation, educators need to be deeply engaged in collaboration on instructional issues that affect student success (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). Most respondents () also stated that certain teachers in their section were not consistently helpful. Jerald and Baron (2007) identified barriers to team effectiveness such as a lack of cooperation among members, insufficient support from management, and some managers' reluctance to give up authority. The participants also indicated that it wasn't accurate to say that collaborators were consistently planning together. Opportunities to gain insights from coworkers emerge as knowledge and skills are exchanged and various solutions to issues are created (Bivona, 2002). Collaboration fosters change that extends beyond single classrooms, leading to overall school enhancement; when teachers enhance their skills through collective learning, every student gains advantages. There was an additional dispute regarding whether decisions were executed collectively. Collaboration occurs when two individuals or a group cooperate to reach a shared objective by exchanging their ideas and expertise. Collaboration among teachers is crucial for educational reform (Goodlad, 1990).

On factors that are affecting collaboration among teachers in the organisation, respondents also opined that too much management involvement was affecting collaboration efforts. In fact, emerging research indicates that instructionally focused, transformational leadership affects teachers' instructional practices (Goddard et al., 2010). Good leadership falls within and beyond the scope of the principal, however, school leaders should involve teachers in collaborating to bring about school improvement.

When educators collaborate, they exchange experiences and creative strategies; through joint discussions, teachers are empowered to contribute to curriculum implementation and a range of skills to address student learning needs (Williams, 2010). Teacher collaboration is a structured approach enabling educators to evaluate and enhance teaching methods and student achievement (Williams, 2010). Goddard et al (2010) asserted that educators are experts and have distinct insights regarding their students and their learning processes. When successful collaboration takes place, teachers' expertise and experience are shared, leading to improved instruction. Educators with different amounts of experience who collaboratively aim to enhance student learning are most successful in boosting student achievement (Williams, 2010).

The respondents also agreed that the leadership style was affecting collaboration efforts. Although encouraged in schools' improvement plans, teacher collaboration is not usually monitored or investigated (Goddard & Goddard, 2007). Some collaborative practices are unstructured and inconsistent. This leads to perceptions from teachers that collaboration is unvalued or not obligated (Sawyer and Rimm-Kaufman, 2007). Professional development is usually only offered as a quick-fixed approach to the goals of the school improvement plan, causing a decline in the sustainability of teacher collaborative opportunities.

The respondents further agreed that there was more of achievement of organisation objectives than the welfare of teachers hence no collaboration at all. Thus it can be argued that finding time to collaborate is one of the most consistent hurdles teachers face (Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009). Additionally, teachers may face challenges related to the structure or content of their work together. Effective collaboration takes time to develop and implement (Williams, 2010). Teachers consumed with the daily tasks, limited resources, and pressure to demonstrate instructional competency might not find the time to collaborate with others.

The results from the study have also shown that some attitudes were affecting effective collaboration. This result is complemented by William (2010) who asserted that collaborative groups are composed of diverse personalities and unique belief systems, and this makeup of individuals can create unproductive collaboration experiences and this is also supported by Holmes (2010) who argued that without comprehensive strategies in place, misunderstandings continue to occur among people susceptible to change in organizations due to different values, beliefs, and backgrounds (Holmes, 2010)

On teachers perspectives on collaboration, the results have also shown that lack of collaboration affected students' achievement. Although the results are not uniformly good, teachers who have worked together see substantial improvements in student achievement, behaviour, and attitude. In schools where teachers work collaboratively, students can sense the programme coherence and a consistency of expectations, which may explain the improved behaviour and achievement (Berry, Daughtrey Wider, & Center for Teaching Quality , 2009).

Again, respondents said that the work environment was conducive for teachers in their section to collaborate effectively. Thus it has been argued that a pleasant working environment is very important as an incentive for the most effective performance of employee. Intense interactions that occur daily

between superiors and subordinates will generate various responses that is positive or negative perceptions from the subordinates (Hargreaves, 1994). The work environment is generally determined by six dimensions: responsibility, coordination, team spirit, reward, standards and organizational clarity (Hargreaves, 1994). There was also an agreement by respondents that collaboration never rested in an individual. Teacher effectiveness has less to do with individual attributes, and far more to do with the extent to which teachers work with each other and provide collective leadership for their schools and communities (Berry, Daughtrey, and Wieder, 2009). Mentoring has been shown to increase new recruits' pedagogical practices, teaching effectiveness, and retention (Viadero, 2009, cited by Berry et al, 2009) .The findings have also revealed that it was not true that collaboration affected teacher confidence. Over time, teachers who work closely together on matters of curriculum and instruction find themselves better equipped for classroom work. They take considerable satisfaction from professional relationships that withstand differences in viewpoints and occasional conflict (Little, 1987).

On establishing the benefits of collaboration to the organisation performance, the findings of the study have also revealed that collaboration led to a lot of benefits for the organisation. According to Inger (1993), there were several benefits for teachers who participated in collaborative sessions. These benefits included the construction of new knowledge, preparation to assist each other, a reduction of planning time, an increase in a pool of shared resources, being more open to change, and teachers being willing to assist new teachers. Williams (2006) added another four benefits to collaboration: buy-in, synergy, team accomplishments, and security and/or satisfaction. Again, there was need for the leadership to hold meetings frequently to encourage collaboration among teachers. In view of this Williams (2010) stated that collaboration built self-efficacy by allowing teachers to exert competency of their professional lives. Self-efficacy is defined as belief in one's capabilities to implement a course of action and manage situations (Bandura, 1995, cited in Williams, 2006). Effective teacher collaboration allows teachers to reflect on their instructional practices and become more confident in their professional abilities (Williams, 2010).

The respondents further stated that collaboration helped in building trust among teachers. The results also revealed that collaboration had an impact on team work .With team building it becomes easy to work together. When collaboration is absent and teachers work in isolation, little professional growth occurs (Pounder, 1999). Successful collaboration requires allocated time and specified goals or outcomes (Friend & Cook, 2009). While teachers may have some control over those factors, school leaders are instrumental in providing necessary support and focus for collaboration to be effective.

The study findings have revealed that teacher collaboration transformed teachers into resources for one another. Hopkins, West and Ainscow (1996: 177) note that "successful schools encourage co-ordination by creating collaborative environments which encourages involvement, professional development, mutual support and assistance in problem solving". This implies a form of professional development and learning that is premised upon collaboration, co-operation and networking.

The findings have revealed that collaboration led to mutual support and assistance in problem solving. Meirink (2007) cited by Williams (2010) found that the professional learning community concept of teacher interaction stimulates changes in teacher cognition and leads to change in teachers' individual instructional practices. It is through the interactions of the individuals in a collaborative group that teachers could "become aware of or question their own (tacit) beliefs and understandings" (Meirink, Meijer, & Verloop, 2007, cited by Williams,2010).

Finally, the study results have shown that collaboration led to a sense of belonging among teachers. There is also evidence to show that where teachers work collaboratively and where leadership responsibilities are devolved, teachers' expectations, morale and confidence are significantly enhanced. In addition, where teachers work collaboratively and share responsibilities there is a higher degree of satisfaction expressed among teachers for their work (Conoley & Conoley, 2010).

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Management

- There is need for the leadership of the school to encourage teacher collaboration at the institution. This can be achieved through holding frequent meetings.

- The leadership of the school should give clear goals to be followed by all members if effective collaboration among teachers is to be achieved.

- There is need for management to encourage Professional Development in the area of collaboration and its benefits. When a staff member is absent there is need to cover up the gap to avoid time being wasted.

Practice

- For collaboration to be achieved there is need for teachers to act and work together as a group. This can be achieved by sharing notes and advising one another for the benefit of students.

- There is also need for staff and departmental meetings to be held frequently so that the concept of collaboration is put across to the staff members and its importance spelt out to them.

Education

- It is imperative for teachers to discuss their beliefs about teaching as well as their expectations regarding the collaboration process. In order to accelerate student achievement, teachers can do this during staff meetings.

- Teachers also need to develop respect and trust for one another if effective collaboration is to be achieved. This means that there should not be aftermath gossip where each teacher talks bad about another.

Research

- It will also be important if models for collaboration could be designed for schools.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration among teachers is a needful process that required people to work together in order to achieve the intended objectives. Whether in the workplace or amongst members of a community, effective collaboration could produce extraordinary results. When schools are organized to support it, the advantages are good. When teachers work as colleagues, it produces greater coherence and integration to the daily work of teaching. The findings have revealed that collaboration was difficult at the work place. As shown in the findings the respondents were not highly motivated by their colleagues. The results have also revealed that though there were able to achieve good results collaboration was lacking. The respondents further alluded that collaboration among teachers was not good in their section. The results also revealed that the school provided the resources to use in the delivery of lessons. The majority of respondents also disagreed that some teachers in their section were always helpful. The results have also shown that lack of collaboration affected students' achievement. There is also evidence to show that where teachers work collaboratively and where leadership responsibilities are devolved, teachers' expectations, morale and confidence are significantly enhanced. In addition, where teachers work collaboratively and share responsibilities there is a higher degree of satisfaction expressed among teachers for their work.

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