

Enhancing Teacher Innovation in Curriculum Reform Contexts through School Support

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In response to the global curriculum reform, Taiwan has launched new Curriculum Guidelines for 12-year Basic Education since 2019. Embracing a learner-centered philosophy, these guidelines encourage teachers to adopt innovative approaches to competency-oriented teaching. Given the pivotal role of school support—such as providing human and material resources, recognizing teacher efforts, and fostering supportive interactions—in facilitating teacher engagement with reform, this study investigated how administrative and emotional support from schools could enhance teacher innovativeness and the adoption of competency-oriented teaching. Teacher collaboration, a professional practice emphasized in the Guidelines, was considered a mediator to assess its role in the relationship between school support and teacher innovation. Using a survey design, data was collected from teachers in public upper secondary schools across various geographical regions and sizes in Taiwan, employing stratified cluster sampling. Out of 640 teachers, 624 completed the online questionnaire. Structural equation modeling analysis revealed that administrative support had both direct and indirect effects on teacher innovativeness and competency-oriented teaching. In comparison, the effect of emotional support was relatively weaker, primarily manifesting in a direct relationship with teacher innovativeness. Teacher collaboration significantly contributed to both forms of teacher innovation, aligning with previous literature highlighting its benefits for teacher development. The findings suggest that fostering teachers' adoption of innovative teaching approaches necessitates administrative support, such as providing necessary assistance to overcome challenges during the reform process, facilitating collaborative time and resource allocation for discussion, and offering instruments or examples for course design and assessment. As competency-oriented teaching diverges from traditional pedagogical approaches, it requires teachers to develop new skills, which can be facilitated through collaborative practices of sharing, observing teaching, and joint lesson planning. A final takeaway from the study is that emotional support, though essential for teacher receptiveness to innovation, has less power in triggering innovative teaching compared to administrative support.

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