How do teacher evaluation practices affect school leadership in Japan?

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Abstract

In Japan, as elsewhere in the world, school leadership is increasingly difficult to enact because of the escalating demanding directives that are imposed on schools. As such, the government has been providing head teachers with various resources to help them perform their leadership responsibilities. Teacher evaluation is a case in point. Thus, by utilising quantitative data from a national survey and qualitative data from interviews with head teachers and teachers, this article describes the reorientation of school leadership, with a particular focus on the role of a new teacher evaluation system in this process. The new teacher evaluation system offers better facilitation and empowerment for head teachers to recognise and reward teachers' efforts, including convincing sceptical teachers, and even enforcing recalcitrant teachers into working towards organisational goals. However, the power the new teacher evaluation system grants to head teachers does pose some problems as well. Teachers are increasingly placed in disadvantaged positions vis-à-vis head teachers. Therefore, the need to improve teacher evaluation practices for the purpose of empowering teachers as well as head teachers is addressed in this article.

Keywords: school leadership; head teacher; teacher evaluation; Japan

Managing and leading teachers—an increasingly difficult task

In March 2017, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science of Japan [*Monbukagakusho*] published new Course of Study for kindergarten, primary school and lower secondary school, with the intention of implementing it fully from 2020 onwards. New Course of Study for upper secondary school was published one year later, in March 2018. The Course of Study represents the mandatory national curriculum standards not only for public but also for private schools; therefore, all schools are required to organise and implement the curriculum according to the Course of Study. New features for the next national curriculum include substantial extension of English learning in primary schools, upgrading moral education as an official school subject, and promotion of active and collaborative learning (Chuo Kyoiku Shingikai, 2015). Overall, the chief reason for the revision is concerned with producing a workforce equipped with appropriate skills and attitudes required by a globalised economy.

tem of teacher evaluation, it is easier for head teachers to accord recognition and reward teachers' efforts, including the empowerment of head teachers to persuade sceptical teachers, and to enforce recalcitrant teachers into working towards organisational goals. However, the allocated resources and accorded power granted by the new teacher evaluation system to head teachers pose some problems. Teachers are increasingly placed in disadvantaged positions in relationship to head teachers, thus undermining their commitment to school goals. Consequently, there is a need to improve existing teacher evaluation practices to include the empowerment of teachers as well.

Research methods and data

The data and analysis in this article resulted from a research project examining the ways the new teacher evaluation policies are being enacted in Japanese schools (Katsuno, 2010, 2016). Specifically, this article focuses on ways the new teacher evaluation system assists head teachers in pursuing their leadership responsibilities.

The original data was collected in a nation-wide survey and subsequent interviews. While the survey was concerned with teachers' and head teachers' perspectives on the new teacher evaluation system, the interviews examined the actual enactment of its policies. In the first instance, questionnaires were sent to 3787 head teachers at both primary and secondary schools randomly sampled, with the exclusion of private schools, across the country. The questionnaires were collected from 1368 head teachers with the response rate being 36.1%, out of which 146 head teachers agreed to distribute questionnaires to teachers in their schools. Consequently, 567 returns were collected from teachers, which meant that, on average, 3.9 teachers from every cooperating school took part in the survey. This article reports only returns from 131 head teachers and 501 teachers, with the further exclusion of 15 head teachers and 63 teachers who reported that they had not yet taken part in the new teacher evaluation processes. The study sample represented the national population in terms of school type, age, and gender. The interviews were conducted with twelve teachers and four head teachers in four focus schools—three upper secondary schools and one special school. In the school selection process, a 'convenience-sampling approach' was used (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p. 103). The representativeness of the sample schools might be limited due to the author's previous contacts with the schools as the school governor or friend of a staff member. Nevertheless, by exploring theoretical issues concerned with the implementation of teacher evaluation, a particular set of results can be generalized to a broader theory (Yin, 2009).

The purpose of conducting the survey was not to confirm or refute any hypothesis, but to obtain a holistic nationwide picture of the views held by teachers and head teachers. With regard to the qualitative analysis, a 'thematic analysis' strategy was employed (Creswell, 2009; Mutch, 2005, p. 176). Transcriptions were read repeatedly, and codes were developed to generate themes for analysis. In this article, data from a particular school is reported alongside theoretical themes supported by relevant data from the other schools in order to provide a nuanced description of the manner head teachers are utilising the new teacher evaluation system. All the teachers appearing in this article bear pseudonyms.

As the Japanese government is determined to respond effectively to globalisation, it increasingly regards the role of teachers and head teachers as a guarantee of national goals that are set in the form of the Course of Study and the Basic Plan for Educational Promotion. What Bottery (2002) described as an apparent contradiction in education policies in the UK can also be seen in the Japanese context. On one hand, greater responsibility and implementation have been devolved to the schools to encourage further effective use of practitioner knowledge and skills. On the other hand, in order to achieve the goal of developing economic and human capital, the government has strived for a tightly controlled and directed education system. For the purposes of implementing both the decentralisation and accountability policies, head teachers, in particular, are expected to play a crucial role at the school site: developing, motivating, directing, and regulating teachers as well as themselves.

To help head teachers perform these leadership responsibilities, the government has recently been providing them with various measures. In 2008, new managerial posts, such as vice-head teacher and chief teacher, were introduced with the responsibility of serving the head teacher. Prior to the creation of these posts, in 2000, for the first time, the role of staff meetings was also officially defined as that of an advisory board for head teachers rather than that of a decision-making body (School Education Laws, Enforcement Regulations, Article 23–3). The government explained that this legislation was needed because teachers' views could contradict those of the head teacher and, thus, staff meetings could hinder a head teacher from managing the school (Chuo Kyoiku Shingikai, 1998). Thus, head teachers' leadership and the hierarchical integration of organisation have been strengthened within schools (Sako, 2005).

However, this hierarchical leadership can have demoralising effects on teachers, particularly in the context where the increasing volume of demanding directives are being imposed on schools as the revision of the Course of Study implies. According to the results from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (OECD, 2014), Japanese teachers already work 53.9 hours per week: the longest average work week of the nations and regions participating in the international survey. They have also reported low levels of self-efficacy and job satisfaction (OECD, 2014).

Arguably, the complex task of managing and leading teachers by Japan's head teachers has been fulfilled owing to a paternalistic culture of Japanese society. In 1980s, some commentators regarded Japan's societal and cultural characteristics as the secret of its economic success. For example, Ouchi (1981) argued that a unique management style contributed to the improvement of employees' loyalty to the company and thereby to high productivity. It has also been argued that this management style is undergirded by the paternalistic culture of the Japanese society or 'vertical society', which allows organisational leaders to forcefully direct subordinate members, without impairing their commitment (Nakane, 1967). This particular culture is assumed to underlie 'a hierarchical organisation of a group, with a paternalistic leader at the apex, who is the source of satisfying both affective and instrumental needs of subordinate members' (Befu, 1980, p. 170).

The central argument in this article is that the new teacher evaluation system, one of the measures recently introduced as part of Japan's education reform, is affecting school leadership. Through the new sys-

A missing link

This article is concerned with the process in which head teachers manage and lead their teachers, with a particular focus on the role that the new teacher evaluation system plays in this process. In this regard, it shares a common focus with Flores (2012), Hallinger, Heck, and Murphy (2014), Tuytens and Devos (2014) and Tuytens and Devos (2016) among others. Flores (2012), reporting on Portuguese teachers' perceived scepticism and lack of confidence in the new teacher evaluation system, reconfirmed a crucial link of teacher evaluation towards professional development of teachers and school improvement. Hallinger, Heck, and Murphy (2014) referred to this relationship as a 'missing link'. Tuytens and Devos (2014), who subsequently explored this link, claimed that 'teacher evaluation should not be ignored as a means to stimulate teachers to undertake professional learning activities when they perceive feedback as useful' (p. 522). Tuytens and Devos (2016) further investigated the ways school leaders influence teachers' practices by means of teacher evaluation and found that organisational characteristics (i.e. teacher participation, shared vision, teacher collaboration, and professional learning) mediate the influences. At the same time, the authors reconfirmed that school leaders are agents that can also influence teacher practices directly by using formal feedback. Thus, they attach an importance to formal feedback conferences as a constructive platform not only to 'provide appreciation to teachers', but also to 'enhance changes in teachers' practices' (p. 8). This particular focus on formal feedback meetings is prevalent in this article.

A departure of this article from existing literature is its focus on micro-political nature of teacher evaluation practices that is laden with conflict and domination (Ball, 1987). Tuytens and Devos (2016) chose sample schools where teachers found feedback useful. The above-mentioned organisational conditions, which are likely to bridge the gap between feedback and changes in teacher practices, were all present in these schools. Tuytens and Devos (2016) observed that 'the feedback during the teacher evaluation processes does evoke changes for the teachers and stimulate them to take on extra challenges' (p. 9). This is also true with teacher evaluation processes examined in Japanese schools (Katsuno, 2016). However, as illustrated in this article, positive change does not always occur without conflict and domination. Indeed, teacher evaluation can also provide head teachers with the power to defy non-compliant voices of teachers with regard to teaching philosophies and goals. Consequently, teachers are placed in disadvantaged positions compared to head teachers.

The next section briefly describes the recent development of teacher evaluation policies. The section after the next illustrates and analyses the ways teacher evaluation helps head teachers manage and lead teachers, and at the same time, creates conflicts between them. The concluding section summarises the analysis and emphasises the need to improve the teacher evaluation process.

The new teacher evaluation policies

Teacher evaluation has been a continuing issue in Japanese schools. In the late 1950s, a serious national confrontation between the government and Japan Teachers Union, the then-powerful teachers' union, arose over the 'efficiency rating plan of teachers' (Aspinall, 2001; Duke, 1973). Originally, the government

planned to directly link efficiency ratings to teachers' pay. However, the conflict that followed rendered the schemes ineffective; thus, the link between rating and pay was abandoned. Although the previous teacher evaluation schemes were introduced across the nation, they had been implemented mostly as a formality for the following 40 years.

Interest in teacher evaluation resurged around the turn of the millennium. In 2000, the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education introduced a new teacher evaluation system, claiming that it was needed to promote professional development of teachers in the new era of education reform. The new professional development model involves personal evaluation elements, such as goal setting, feedback meetings with head teachers, and self-reviews of competence and performance, in addition to being formally evaluated by the head teacher. At the same time, however, the Board emphasised that selection, placement, promotion, and reward should reflect more rigorously the evaluation results. Thus, the Board adopted a scheme that represented a combined system of professional development and judgmental models.

In the following decade, all of the other prefectural boards of education began to implement their new teacher evaluation systems, which possess commonalities with the system that Tokyo first adopted (Monbukagakusho, 2010). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology spurred this spread of new policies nationwide by committing studies of the new teacher evaluation to all prefectural boards of education from 2003 to 2006. The prefectural board of education has the legal authority to enact evaluation systems for teachers who work in its jurisdiction (Local Public Service Law, Article 40; Local Educational Administration Law, Article 46). Thus, the Ministry could not order the adoption of new systems, but instead, could endorse them.

Meanwhile, the Central Council on Education recommended the introduction of new teacher evaluation systems by prefectural boards of education on many occasions (Chuo Kyoiku Shingikai, 2002, 2003, 2004). Particularly, in its 2004 report, the Council discussed the issue of teacher evaluation, regarding it as an essential part of school organisation and management. The report confirmed the need to reform teacher evaluation systems for the purposes of maintaining public trust in schooling and enhancing teachers' morale through linking evaluation results with remuneration and other conditions. It then continued and stated that there should be two basic viewpoints—development of human resource and improvement of school's work.

> In schools, for the most part, the staff works collectively. Thus, it is needed to evaluate how they perform as a team. Furthermore, because the performance of a school and its teachers are closely interrelated, evaluations of a school and its teachers should go hand in hand. This, if properly done, will lead to better articulation of endeavour by a school and its teachers, and the development of both organisational strengths and individual teachers' abilities. (Chuo Kyoiku Shingikai, 2004, (3))

This citation signalled that the professional development of teachers has increasingly been regarded as within the parameters of a school's organisational development. This focus on better articulation between

efforts of individual teachers and the school's work by means of teacher evaluation can be more fully understood in a wider context of the recent education reform.

The imperative of the new teacher evaluation system was undergirded by the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) into all aspects of public education. In broad terms, NPM serves to introduce management ideas and practices of the private sector into the public sector for the purposes of enhancing efficiency and achieving better performance (Kaboolian, 1998). A rationale for NPM is provided by public choice theory, which argues that behaviours of both bureaucrats and professionals working in the public sector are not driven by public responsibility, altruism, or professional ethics, but by self-interest (Buchanan & Tollison, 1972). Therefore, the theory claims, for public service not to be captured by bureaucrats and professionals, the market principle should be applied into the public sector as well as the private sector. NPM's preferred practices include private ownership, contracting out of publicly funded services, and short-term and tightly specified contracts. The new teacher evaluation system is clearly an application of the 'management by contracts' or 'management by objectives (MBO)' principle.

In the context of the management cycle for school, MBO strongly demands that the head teacher's management policy is linked with the goals of individual staff. Indeed, in recent years, head teachers have been strongly exhorted to formulate their own management policies or the 'mission' of their schools so that teachers can follow the lead (Monbukagakusho, 2005). This process could be viewed as the workings of an 'internal market, where the management "sells" and the teacher "buys into" the vision and mission' (Gleeson & Gunter, 2001, p. 150). However, there is no guarantee that the negotiations and trading are carried out on a level playing field. A subordinate teacher who refuses to accept the head teacher's management policy may be meted with a negative evaluation rating, labelled as an incompetent teacher, and placed in a disadvantaged position in terms of remuneration or redeployment (Katsuno, 2002).

Although national testing that began in 2006 only relates to primary and lower secondary schools, the sample schools in this study, upper secondary and special schools, are not exempted from the pressure of performing better. On the contrary, upper secondary schools' performance, typically represented by results of university entrance examination and dropout rates, is visible and subject to numerical goals. For this reason, as is discussed below, head teachers from upper secondary schools are very likely to demand that teachers set and pursue numerical goals even if such goals contradict the teachers' pedagogical beliefs. The new teacher evaluation system is playing a crucial role in this process.

Analysis and discussion of findings

In this section, survey results are introduced first, followed by the analysis results of interview data from a particular school alongside theoretical themes with relevant data from other schools. The validity of the qualitative analysis is strengthened when it is set in the context provided by the survey results.

Table 1 describes how teachers and head teachers reflected on goal setting, and lesson observation and feedback, the most crucial elements of the new teacher evaluation system in this article (for their reflections on the other elements, see Katsuno, 2016). The table also reports their views on the effectiveness of

the new teacher evaluation practices.

Table 1. **Views on goal setting, lesson observation and feedback, and the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system by teachers and head teachers.**

	Teacher		Head teacher	
	n = 504		n = 131	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Goal setting				
Head teachers instructed teachers to set goals in line with her/his school management policies	49.8%	45.8%	85.6%	12.9%
Head teachers instructed teachers to set 'concrete and objective' goals, such as numerical goals	64.7%	32.3%	76.5%	21.2%
Head teacher repeatedly required teachers to rewrite goals.	13.2%	85.0%	34.8%	63.6%
Teachers expressed opinions regarding head teacher's management policies	34.1%	62.2%	N.A.	N.A.
Lesson observation and feedback				
Teachers had enough pre-observation discussion with the observer-evaluator	15.6%	78.9%	N.A.	N.A.
Teachers received enough feedback from the observer-evaluator after lesson observations	34.3%	60.2%	N.A.	N.A.
Effectiveness of new teacher evaluation				
Improved communication and mutual understanding between head teacher and teachers	31.7%	60.1%	76.5%	21.9%
Improved teachers' understanding of head teacher's school management policies.	30.0%	62.1%	74.2%	23.5%
Teachers began considering work priorities more effectively	27.8%	66.1%	67.4%	28.8%
Identified teachers' needs better for professional development	23.2%	70.8%	62.1%	34.9%
Improved teachers' overall morale	22.0%	73.0%	50.4%	45.0%
Improved quality and standards of teaching and learning	18.9%	72.5%	51.5%	44.0%

Note: In this table, figures for 'do not know' are omitted. Consequently, the sum of the percentages for 'agree' and 'disagree' does not always equal 100%.

With regard to goal setting, a majority of head teachers gave instructions to teachers. Specifically, 85.6% of head teachers reported that they had instructed teachers to set goals in line with their school management policies. In addition, 76.5% of head teachers reported that they had repeatedly required teachers to set 'concrete and objective' goals, such as numerical goals. On the other hand, a majority of teachers confirmed these head teachers' responses, but there was still a significant minority of teachers (45.8%) who denied that they were given these instructions. This gap was also observed in relation to the experiences of rewriting goals. Specifically, while 34.8% of head teachers reported that they had repeatedly required teachers to rewrite their goals, only 13.2% of teachers responded that they had been asked to do so. Given that the head teachers and teachers were from the same schools, these discrepancies suggest that the head teachers behaved differently with different teachers. Additionally, it was found that a proportion of teachers (34.1%) used the goal setting meetings as opportunities to express their opinions regarding the head teacher's school management policies.

Second, concerning lesson observations, it was found that despite the importance of lesson observations in the professional development model of teacher evaluation, the practice had not been taken seriously. Indeed, only 15.6% of teachers reported that they had received sufficient pre-observation consultation, and

no more than 34.3% reported receiving adequate feedback from their observer-evaluator after lesson observations.

Pertaining to the views on the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system, the differences between head teachers and teachers were significant. With regard to almost all the possible effects, the percentage of head teachers who affirmed the evaluation's effectiveness were almost twice as high as that of the teachers. For example, 76.5% of all head teachers agreed that the evaluation would have an effect on the improvement of communication and mutual understanding between teachers and themselves, whereas only 31.7% of teachers agreed. Indeed, a majority (60.1%) of teachers disagreed with this expected advantage.

Compared with the effectiveness of improving communication, understanding school management policies and goals, and increased priority in work-related duties, head teachers were less confident of the effects of the new teacher evaluation system on teachers' morale, and pedagogical instruction, although a majority of them retained favourable perspectives. This suggests that head teachers regard the new practices as management tools—more specifically, a measure to convey their policies more effectively to teachers. On the other hand, nearly 70% of all teachers did not believe that the evaluation would have favourable impact on their morale and quality of teaching.

On the whole, the survey results suggest that many teachers believe that the provision of opportunities for professional development, or their overall morale, quality, and standards of teaching and learning were not improved with the new teacher evaluation practices. However, it should be noted that through the new teacher evaluation processes, a majority of teachers are required to attend closely to their head teachers' management policies. How do the processes actually affect school leadership? This question will be explored by qualitative analysis in the following sub-section.

East Senior High School

The head teacher

The head teacher of East Senior High School regarded the new teacher evaluation practices as an opportunity to motivate the teachers to work towards higher academic achievement of students. His following statement illustrates this:

> We must gain higher attainments, yet not all the teachers are fully motivated for this aim. I have been thinking a lot about doing something to break the impasse. I believe this [new teacher evaluation system] is it [...] Some teachers came to me saying, 'It [new teacher evaluation system] is a good challenge for me'. They highly regard setting annual goals, saying that the practice inspires them to be forward-looking.

Recently, the head teacher had been articulating school management policies that have a clear focus on raising student achievement. He appreciated the newly introduced processes of teacher evaluation, particu-

larly meetings with individual teachers, believing that in these meetings, he could communicate his own policies to the teachers more effectively, in addition to promoting and recognising their efforts toward the school management goals. The head teacher responded to my question as follows:

> [Interviewer: Do you often talk about your management policies at the meetings with individual teachers?] Yes, I do. I believe this is the most beneficial part of the new system. I talk about my policies at the all-staff meetings, but I often find it difficult to get the teachers to understand what I mean. This is frustrating. This year, we have started to move for higher achievement. So, I have asked all the teachers what they can do for this goal of improving students' performance, and also what, if anything, they are already doing for the goal.

At the same time, however, the head teacher noted some teachers' 'rather fierce resistance' to the new scheme. The resistance, as he perceived it, was of two broad types: resistance to being assessed for the purpose of ranking, and principled and practical objections to setting 'concrete and objective' goals. The first type of resistance was concerned with teachers being annually assessed in terms of competence, dispositions, and performance with the results linked to pay.

At East Senior High School, teachers' union members, joined by a number of non-union members, raised a public objection to this performance-related pay aspect of the new system and called its validity into question at staff meetings. The objecting teachers pointed out the impracticality, unfairness, and divisiveness of assessing teachers in this way, and the head teacher himself admitted the impracticality of 'ranking all the teachers', as follows:

> The board tells me to differentiate all the teachers. This is for the board to treat them differently for remuneration. Yet, it is a very difficult task, you know. I can easily name incompetent teachers. But the idea of ranking all the teachers, about fifty teachers in this school, is impractical.

However, to the objecting teachers, he reiterated that 'Although I personally understand your points, we must go through the official procedures, anyway. Then, we should make good use of it'. In this way, he apparently succeeded in suppressing their objections.

For the head teacher of East Senior High School, it was most important for teachers to have specific goals and criterion for judging the degree to which the goals had been attained. However, this was where he encountered other difficulties. He explicated the difficulties as follows:

> The first goal-setting meeting matters very much. Without specific goals, we cannot evaluate properly. Therefore, I ask the teachers to make their goals as specific as possible. You need also a proper criterion for judging the degree to which your goals have been attained, so that you can say you have achieved 90%, 70%, or 30% of the goals. However, this is the most difficult part of the processes. Nu-

merical goals and quantitative criterion are most apposite. In my school, almost half of the teachers have agreed to set such goals and criteria. Yet, there are some teachers who cannot set such goals and still a few others who refuse to do so.

Raising the academic profile of the school was the most important part of his management policies. He demanded that individual teachers' goals be set in accordance with his policies. However, some teachers did not like 'seeing things only from a rational point of view'.

In the event, our work is wide-ranging, concerned with the holistic development of students. Thus, it is understandable that they find it difficult to pick up and define only a few aspects of their work as goals. Yet, we should work hard to produce results. Sometimes, we must see things from a rational point of view and this [new teacher evaluation system] should serve the purpose. I have been reiterating this at the meetings with teachers.

As the survey results shows, the majority of head teachers (85.6%) across the nation instructed teachers to set goals in line with their school management policies. Fewer head teachers, but still a majority (76.5%), also instructed teachers to set 'concrete and objective' goals such as measurable goals. Thus, it seems that the demands of the head teacher of East Senior High School represented what was happening nationally.

The teachers

The story told above by the head teacher of East Senior High School corresponded with those of the teachers there. Some teachers were happy with the introduction of a new teacher evaluation system, particularly with numerical goals. Ms Yamamoto, a mathematics teacher in her 30s, stated the following:

A numerical goal such as the students' completion of assignments makes things clearer. For me, working mindful of the goals makes a difference. Actually, I got better results this year.

Ms Yamamoto accepted the goal that was suggested by her head teacher at the goal-setting meeting, instead of what Ms Yamamoto described as an 'obscure goal' that she herself had been pondering over before the meeting. She was not concerned so much about the 'more concrete and assessable' goal, but felt uneasy about the assessment of her achievements. She stated this as follows:

One of my goals was that 90% of my students should complete and hand in their math assignments. This year I accomplished it. But if I was not successful and at the review meeting my head teacher had told me, 'You achieved "only" 70%', I certainly should have felt that I achieved 'no less than' 70%.

However, for other teachers, to the extent the task of setting 'concrete and assessable' goals involves seeing

things from a limited viewpoint, this requirement of teacher evaluation conflicted with the more holistic educational values that they held. For example, Mr Shimura, an English teacher in his 50s, thought of numerical goals as contradictory to his original aims of teaching, although he eventually accepted them because of his head teacher's strong persuasion. He reflected on his embarrassing experiences of setting goals as follows:

> Under this system, we are required to set specific, measurable goals. For instance, you have to set goals such as, 'I shall have more than 80 students pass the third level of the Test in Practical English Proficiency [*Eiken*]'. I personally feel I have to write down objectives that may be a little distanced from the nature of education. Here I see some contradictions.

At first, he intended to set 'I shall have many students interested in English' as one of his annual goals, but he rewrote the original goals in the end because 'Our head teacher pointed out specifically how they should be reworked'. According to the results of national survey, 76.5% of head teachers had repeatedly required teachers to rewrite goals. This phenomenon occurred predominantly not only at East Senior High School but also in the other sample schools because the head teachers believed that original goals were too ambiguous and should be replaced by numerical goals.

Mr Kitano, a chemistry teacher in his 30s, also felt distressed with the school management policies that had a strong emphasis on higher examination results of students. Like Mr Shimura, he was unhappy with the numerical goals that he was required to set. However, he made another point in his interview. For him, it was not so much numerical work *per se* as the strained relationships with his colleagues that caused his suffering. He stated this as follows:

> Examination results of my chemistry classes were worse than those of any other subjects. No one explicitly blamed me for the results, but I felt as if everyone looked at me reproachfully.

At East Senior High School, individual teachers were required to attain their own goals that were derived from the all-school targets. Thus, if a teacher failed to achieve her/his goals, the whole school would fail to achieve its objectives too. This caused the teachers to be more aware of each other's attainment rather than teaching practices.

How do teacher evaluation practices affect school leadership?

As has been illustrated so far, the new teacher evaluation procedures provided head teachers with opportunities for individualised face-to-face communication with teachers. Head teachers can now use this opportunity to listen, recognise, persuade, and direct their teachers. As the national survey suggests, the head teachers in the sample schools unanimously highly regarded the new teacher evaluation system, particularly for the reason that the practices have improved communication and mutual understanding between them

and their teachers. This is partially endorsed by teachers. For example, Ms Yamamoto felt reassured when the head teacher recognised her accomplishment of the annual goals with regard to students' work. Likewise, Mr Kagawa, a teacher at South Special School, appreciated the opportunity to voice his opinion on the future direction of school to the head teacher, although he was doubtful about the effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system as a whole. However, a majority (60.1%) of the teachers in the national sample disaffirmed the supposed effectiveness of the new teacher evaluation system. This can be partly explained by the head teachers' practice of unilateral communication and understanding. Similar to the head teacher of East Senior High School who appreciated the meetings because he could communicate his own policies to the teachers more effectively, the head teacher of West Senior High School commented as follows.

> I like this new system [of teacher evaluation] because now, I have more opportunities to communicate to my teachers about what I am thinking, [and] what I want them to do.

Indeed, a majority (62.1%) of the teachers in the national survey and almost all of those in the case schools did not believe that they had derived a better understanding of the head teacher's management policies. Unless head teachers rethink and practise mutual communication and understanding, the creation of opportunities for the teachers in the new teacher evaluation process will fail to be realised.

Possible marginalisation of teachers

Besides the opportunity to improve communication and understanding, head teachers now have a new means of control over what teachers think and do. Not only the head teacher of East Senior High School, but also those of the other schools in my study had often asked their teachers to replace their original, 'ambiguous' objectives with 'specific and measurable' goals, which typically direct towards the academic performance of students. In addition, the head teachers proposed to teachers *individually* that new teaching- and management-related initiatives should be undertaken; earlier, such proposals had been made *collectively* at staff meetings. As a result, teachers would be unaware of the professional undertakings of their colleagues in school. Thus, the new teacher evaluation system promoted individualised modes of decision-making and working in schools, while endangering collective modes. This change facilitated a top-down style of management and leadership within schools; even when individual teachers felt uncomfortable with head teachers' policies and specific initiatives, they had fewer opportunities to form a collective voice. In other words, teachers were deprived of the power to collaborate and participate with the head teacher and colleagues in directing and managing the school.

Thus, it is possible that unless head teachers reconsider the individualised methods of decision-making and working that the new teacher evaluation policies can induce, teachers will feel increasingly disadvantaged and dominated. In the case schools, this has been observed with regard to teachers being exhorted to set numerical goals, typically on students' test results, against their values. For example, Ms Kawabata, a

teacher of West Senior High School, stated as follows:

> I feel increasingly powerless in the face of this new teacher evaluation system. I am tolerating it. However, sometimes I feel as if my professional beliefs are completely out-dated […] I did not set numerical goals, but goals that I set instead are still about academic standards. Recently, I have become more conscious of test results, although I refused to set goals about them.

Ms Kawabata did not approve of additional emphasis on the measurable aspects of student achievement and successfully declined to set numerical goals against the head teacher's strong exhortations. However, such resistance had scarcely left her professional values and identities intact.

Furthermore, particular attention needs to be devoted to social justice issues arising in the teacher evaluation processes wherein the head teacher can increasingly dominate the teachers. The statement made by Mr Kagawa, a teacher of South Special School, illustrated this need as follows:

> At my school, teachers with less experience, for example, novice teachers, are persistently instructed to rewrite their goals. I have heard that the head teacher assumed an overbearing attitude towards young teachers. However, he never does this towards experienced teachers like me.

Mr Kagawa was an experienced, male teacher in his 50s who felt 'free to talk to, sometimes even criticise' the head teacher. However, he was concerned that less experienced teachers and female teachers were being suppressed by the head teacher at the meetings.

Conclusion

First, arguably, the Japanese culture has facilitated head teachers to manage and lead teachers through relationships, rather than by mandates (Nakane, 1967). The new teacher evaluation practices can reinforce such school leadership culture. Head teachers can use the opportunity created by the new teacher evaluation practices to sincerely listen to, and reward teachers for their efforts. This empowerment of head teachers can be observed, regardless of their particular values and beliefs.

Second, the new teacher evaluation practices can strengthen a top-down style of management and leadership and consequently deprive teachers of the opportunity to participate collaboratively in directing and managing the school. Furthermore, the practices can have detrimental effect on teachers by threatening professional beliefs and identities. As an example illustrates, the power relationship with a head teacher, who insisted a teacher set numerical goals with regard to students' academic achievements, contributed to her dilemma and her self-blaming mentality, which eventually led to a mental breakdown (see Katsuno, 2010).

Thus, the new teacher evaluation system and its practices need to be thoroughly examined and improved so that not only head teachers but teachers will be empowered, but this cannot be accomplished without

changing a wider policy context. For example, a range of accountability and managerial policies that emphasizes numerical aspects of educational achievement and top-down mandates should be reconsidered. As it stands, the new teacher evaluation system seems to be functioning as part of the policies intended to more effectively control what and how teachers perform and produce. Head teachers and teachers, as well as policy-makers, should be more critically engaged in the concept of professional development by means of teacher evaluation.

Lastly, it should be added that the paternalistic culture itself can be problematic. From a critical viewpoint, it can be an expedient that 'makes individuals "want" what the system needs in order to perform well' (Lyotard, 1984, p. 62, cited in Ball, 2008, p. 46). In the context of school organisation, 'the system' in this quote can be replaced by 'the head teacher'. Thus, it is difficult to regard leadership based on this culture as authentically democratic leadership. The notion of democratic leadership, as well as that of democracy itself, is hard to grasp. However, here I draw on the distinction made by Woods (2004) between an *instrumental and de-politicised* concept and a much richer concept of democratic leadership. The former 'functions as a means of engendering compliance with dominant goals and values and harnessing staff commitment, idea, expertise and experience to realizing these' (p. 4). On the other hand, the latter version of democratic leadership entails authentic respect for and promotion of every teacher's values, as well as head teacher's. I argue that the paternalistic leadership being strengthened through the practices of teacher evaluation represents characteristics of the *instrumental and de-politicised* version of democratic leadership. If we can understand in-depth and face the challenges raised by the new teacher evaluation system, we will take a step forward beyond the paternalistic culture to a truly democratic culture in relation to school leadership.

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