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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP ON TEACHERS' EFFICACY AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of principals' distributed leadership practices on teacher efficacy and professional development within secondary schools. Using a quantitative descriptive design, data were collected via a five-point Likert scale questionnaire from 571 participants (354 teachers and 217 principals) across six districts. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses revealed highly positive perceptions of distributed leadership among all stakeholders, with no statistically significant differences observed across gender or sector groups. Findings consistently indicated that collaborative leadership practices such as shared decision-making and empowerment are strongly associated with enhanced teacher confidence, motivation, and professional growth. The study concludes that distributed leadership is instrumental in fostering a positive school culture that promotes teacher efficacy and development. It is recommended that principals actively cultivate teacher leadership, encourage participatory decision-making, and support continuous professional learning to sustain empowerment and improve overall school performance.

Key Words: Decision-making, Efficacy, Professional development, Leadership, Distributed

Introduction

Teacher empowerment plays a major role in ensuring that teachers are effective and growing. Leadership styles that empower teachers by enabling teacher autonomy, contributing to decision-making processes, and being given opportunities through professional learning empower teachers to exercise their own control of professional practices (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Transformational and distributed leadership transforms encourage teachers to reflect, engage in collegial work, and provide developmental opportunities. This gives their sense of efficacy a boost, which is directly



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related to instructional effectiveness, job satisfaction, and retention (Bandura, 1997; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). In her autocratic leadership, teachers tend to feel undervalued, over-isolated, and inhibited in their professional capacities. Such a lack of power might create low morale, resistance to change, and a lack of efficacy, which would ultimately affect student output (Fullan, 2001). Thus, an authoritative form of leadership that puts collaboration, trust, and empowerment on the front burner is necessary in bringing about teacher development and subsequent school performance.

Teacher efficacy describes the teacher's confidence in his/her ability to facilitate and promote student learning and performance in a great way. This assumption is paramount as it influences the way the teacher will go about his/her work, and communicate with their learners and deploy instructional practices. Teachers with high efficacy are more apt to use new teaching methods, endure obstacles, and provide a good learning environment, thus resulting in a better outcome for students. This confidence in their professional capacities and influence on the academic performance of the students not only benefits the students but also leads to job satisfaction and personal development of the teacher, which forms the crucial factor of teaching effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The Transformational leadership behaviours that can be exhibited by the principals include engaging in such activities as providing intellectual stimulation and being personally attentive. The shared vision should be supported and fostered, which will lead to the improvement of teacher efficacy (Leithwood, 2004).

Although the potential effects of leadership styles on organisational outcomes, such as teacher efficacy and professional development, are the subject of research, more studies are required that would clarify the processes between leadership styles and the outcomes in question. School context, teacher attributes, and how the leadership styles interact with instruction practices are some of the issues that should receive greater attention as a way of informing the development of leadership and improving schools. This research was conducted to investigate how the distributed leadership style of principals was related to teacher efficacy and professional growth in a particular educational environment.

Statement of Problem

Effective school leadership is no longer considered the prerogative of principals but a shared practice that lends further collaboration, trust, and empowerment among the teachers. Distributed leadership has the potential to foster teachers' efficacy- confidence in having an impact on student learning- and to foster their professional growth through mutual decision-making and capacity building. Nonetheless, most of the secondary schools continue to use the traditional hierarchical models of leadership, which inhibit teacher participation in leadership roles as well as professional development. This discrepancy creates the necessity to examine the role of distributed leadership styles of principals in affecting the sense of efficacy and professional development of teachers, and how stakeholders perceive the given connection, both in the framework of secondary school education.

Objectives of the Study

The Study Objectives were as follows:

To find out the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the distributed leadership style of Principals in the Secondary Level.

To determine the opinions of stakeholders regarding the efficacy of the teachers at the Secondary Level.

Research Questions



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The study's research questions were as follows:

What do stakeholders say about the distributed leadership style of the principals of the secondary school? What do stakeholders think of the efficacy of teachers at the secondary stage?

Significance of the Study

For principals: Provides insights on how distributed leadership can empower teachers, encourage collaboration, and foster professional growth, ultimately improving school performance.

For teachers: Highlights how different leadership styles influence their ability, motivation, and continuous improvement, leading to enhanced teaching practices and better learner outcomes.

For policymakers and education administrators: Offers evidence-based recommendations for adopting distributed leadership models to strengthen secondary school systems.

For researchers: Addresses gaps in the literature on the relationship between distributed leadership, teacher efficacy, and professional development, particularly in developing countries.

For school culture: Contributes to creating a more collaborative and growth-oriented environment that benefits both teachers and students.

Research methodology

The research design used in the study is a descriptive survey, one of the quantitative research designs being used, so that it can investigate the relationship between the distributed leadership styles of principals and teacher efficacy and professional growth in the secondary school level (Creswell, 2014). The descriptive survey design would be appropriate since it would help the researcher get data on a large number of stakeholders and analyse their perceptions in a systematic way. The main instrument for collecting the data is a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, which ensures good reliability and consistency of answers. The study will have the population of secondary school teachers and principals, whereas the sample is chosen after the purposive method of selecting various stakeholders (perspectives), (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Statistical data will be analysed to find trends, associations, and variations in the opinion of the stakeholders by using descriptive and inferential methods. This design will give breadth and depth in the knowledge of how distributed leadership is affecting teacher efficacy and their growth (Rahi, 2017).

Population of the Study

The subjects of this study were the principals and teachers of the secondary schools in six districts of Pakistan: Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Bannu, Karak, Kohat, and Lakki Marwat. There were 519 secondary schools in total, with 331 male schools and 188 female schools. Among these institutions, there are a total of 4,330 teachers; there are 2,727 male teachers and 1,603 female teachers. Equally, there are 519 school heads (principals), one is a male principal and 188 are female principals. This distribution points to a varied and large population that indicates representation of both men and women in the teaching and principalship positions. This type of composition makes sure that the research reflects a more or less equal view of how the distributed leadership styles of principals impact the efficacy and professional development of teachers in the secondary schools in these districts (Kothari, 2004).

Sample of the Study

The population of the study was composed of several secondary schools (faculty and



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students) in the six districts of Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Bannu, Karak, Kohat, and Lakki Marwat. There were 571 respondents in the entire sample, of which 354 were teachers and 217 were principals (heads). Out of the teachers, 225 were male and 129 were female, and among the principals, 139 were male and 78 were female. This sample was picked through purposive sampling in order to pick both male and female schools in the respective districts selected. The sampling of the respondents was balanced because it reflected the views of the stakeholders in terms of the distributed leadership styles of principals, the efficacy of teachers, and professional developments in terms of the school level on the school level. As teachers and principals were represented in large numbers, the study offered soundness, variety, and depth in comprehending the research issue. Most of these new techniques were used in the past (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Data Analysis

The data was collected in the form of a questionnaire made by teachers and principals was analysed on the scheme of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to provide frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the demographic information and showed general trends in the distribution of the stakeholders' responses to the questions concerning the type of distributed leadership among principals, teachers' efficacy, and professional development. In testing the significance of variances in perceptions between genders and between the three districts, t-tests were used. This inferential statistics was able to assist in establishing whether significant differences in answers were statistically significant. The statistical package used to analyse the data was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was reliable and accurate in calculating large sets of responses. The data was obtained in the form of tables and graphs, so that it is easy to understand and interpret. Using this data analysis method gave a clear picture of how the styles of distributed leadership used by principals affect the efficacy and professional development of the teachers at the denominator level.

Table# 1: View of stakeholders' views of stakeholders about on Teachers' Efficacy

Principal/Teacher Stakeholders	Gender	Teachers' Efficacy										Sub-Total	Grand Total
		SA		A		N		DA		SDA			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Teacher	Male	91	40.44	125	55.55	03	1.33	05	2.22	01	0.44	225	354
	Female	59	45.74	64	49.61	01	0.77	03	2.33	02	1.55	129	
Principal	Male	44	31.66	90	64.75	02	1.43	01	0.72	02	1.43	139	217
	Female	34	43.59	38	48.72	01	1.28	03	3.85	02	2.56	78	

Table #1 showed that the majority of both teachers and principals, across gender, hold positive views regarding teachers' efficacy. Among male teachers, 95.99% either strongly agreed (40.44%) or agreed (55.55%) with statements reflecting teacher efficacy. Female teachers also indicated high agreement, with 95.35% responding with either strongly agree (45.74%) or agree (49.61%). Among principals, 96.41% of male respondents (SA = 31.66%, A = 64.75%) and 92.31% of female respondents (SA =

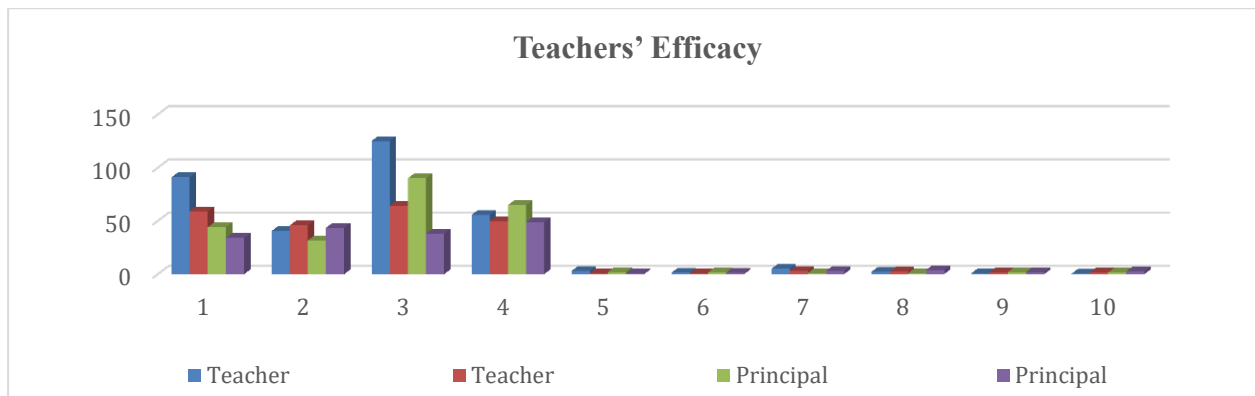
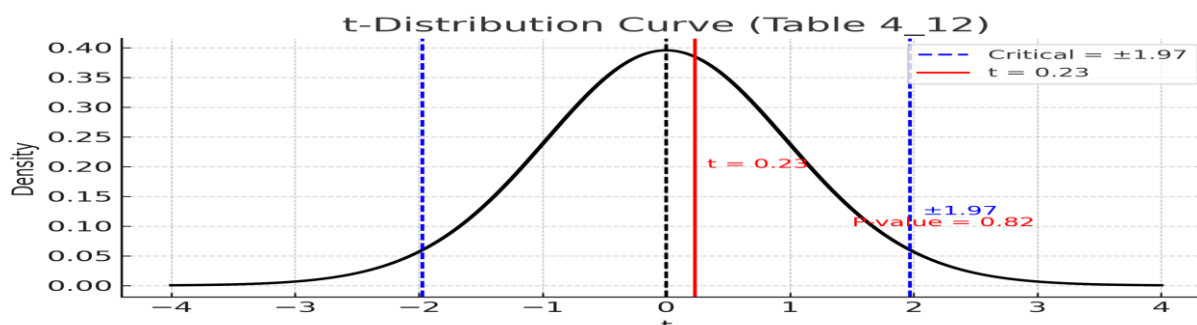


Fig # 1: Teachers' Efficacy

Table#2: Comparisons Regarding Teachers' Efficacy

Sector	Stakeholders	Teachers' Efficacy			Stakeholders Comparison			Sector Comparison			Level of Significance
		N	Mean	S.D	t. calculated	t. tabulated	P-value	t. calculated	t. tabulated	P-value	
Principal Teacher	Male	225	4.33	0.77	0.23	±1.97	0.82	0.52	±1.97	0.60	0.05
	Female	129	4.35	0.82							
Principal	Male	139	4.25	0.74	0.27	±1.97	0.79				
	Female	78	4.28	0.91							

Table #2 showed that there was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of teachers' efficacy among stakeholders based on gender or sector. Among teachers, male (M = 4.33, SD = 0.77) and female (M = 4.35, SD = 0.82) respondents reported very similar mean scores, with a t-calculated value of 0.23 and a p-value of 0.82, indicating no significant gender difference. Similarly, male principals (M = 4.25, SD = 0.74) and female principals (M = 4.28, SD = 0.91) also showed no significant difference (t = 0.27, p = 0.79). The comparison between teachers and principals also showed no significant difference (t = 0.52, p = 0.60), as the p-value is well above the 0.05 level of significance.



Fig# 2: Comparisons Regarding Teachers' Efficacy

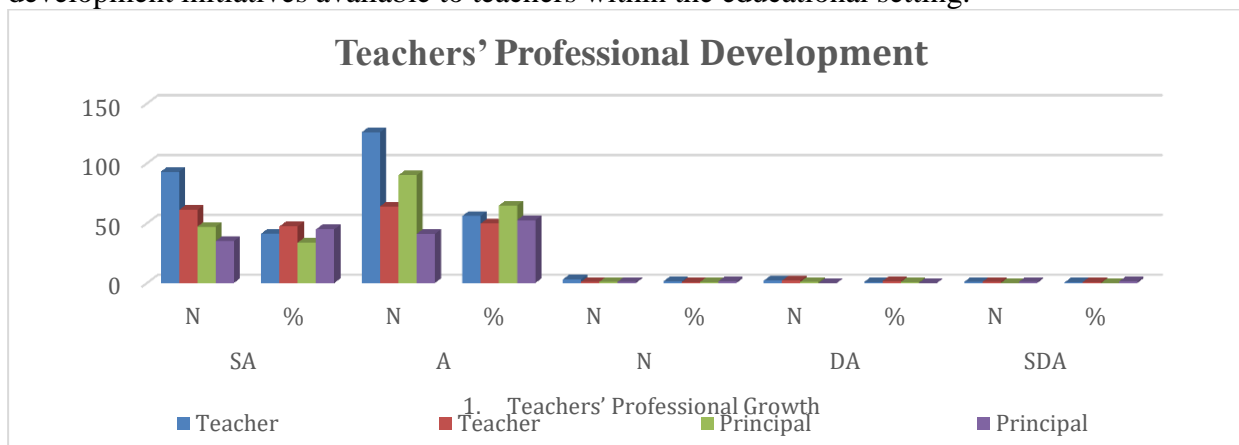


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Table#3: View of stakeholders based on Teachers' Professional Development

Stakeholders	Gender	1. Teachers' Professional Development										Sub-Total	Grand Total
		SA		A		N		DA		SDA			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Teacher	Male	93	41.33	126	56.00	03	1.33	02	0.88	01	0.44	225	354
	Female	61	47.29	64	49.61	01	0.77	02	1.55	01	0.77	129	
Principal	Male	47	33.81	90	64.75	01	0.72	01	0.72	00	0.00	139	217
	Female	35	44.87	41	52.56	01	1.28	00	0.00	01	1.28	78	

Table #3 revealed that both teachers and principals, regardless of gender, hold a highly positive perception of teachers' professional growth. Among male teachers, 97.33% either agreed or strongly agreed that professional growth opportunities exist, while 96.90% of female teachers shared this view. Similarly, 98.56% of male principals and 97.43% of female principals agreed. The minimal percentages of disagreement across all groups indicated a strong consensus and satisfaction regarding the professional development initiatives available to teachers within the educational setting.



Fig#3: Teachers' Professional Development

Table#4: Comparisons Regarding Teachers' Professional Development

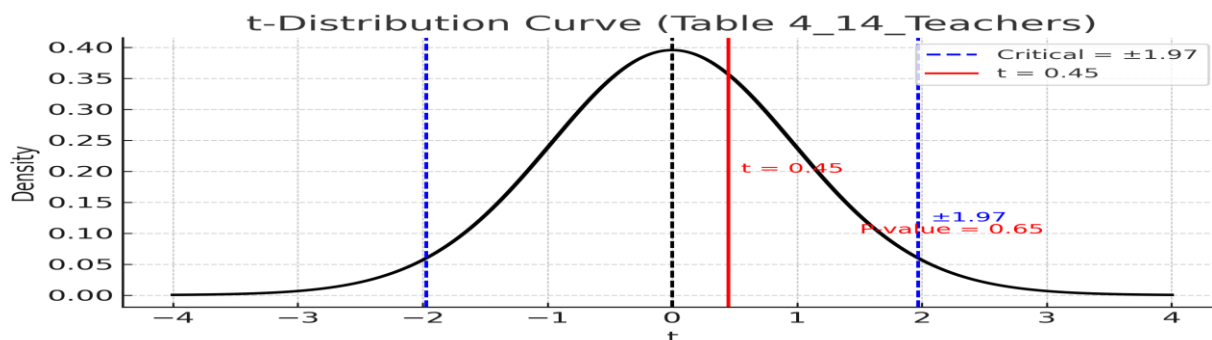
Sector	Stakeholders	Teachers' Professional Development			Stakeholders Comparison			Sector Comparison			Level of Significance
		N	Mean	S.D	t-calculated	t-tabulated	P-value	t-calculated	t-tabulated	P-value	
Teacher	Male	225	4.44	0.61	0.45	±1.97	0.65	0.45	±1.97	1.40	0.05
	Female	129	4.41	0.61							
Principal	Male	139	4.32	0.53	1.40	±1.97	0.16	0.45	±1.97	1.40	0.05
	Female	78	4.40	0.11							

Table #4 presented the comparison of stakeholders' views regarding teachers'



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professional growth. The results showed that male and female teachers had very similar perceptions, with mean scores of 4.44 and 4.41, respectively, and a non-significant t-value (0.45) with a p-value of 0.65. Similarly, male and female principals also showed no significant difference in their responses, with mean scores of 4.32 and 4.40 and a t-value of 1.40 ($p = 0.16$). The sector comparison also yielded a t-value of 1.40, which is less than the critical value (± 1.97), indicating no statistically significant difference.



Fig#4: Comparisons Regarding Teachers' Professional Development

Research Conclusions

Both teachers and principals reported strongly positive perceptions of teacher efficacy, with a significant majority agreeing that secondary-level teachers are highly efficacious, self-confident, and successful in their roles. This consensus was consistent across gender and sector, as statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in these perceptions, indicating a unified view among all stakeholders.

The study also found a high regard for teachers' professional development. Stakeholders unanimously acknowledged the availability of opportunities for continuous learning, skill enhancement, and growth. The alignment in responses across different groups, without significant disparities, underscores a strong agreement that principals' distributed leadership practices are instrumental in fostering and promoting this ongoing professional development.

Recommendation

Principals should actively involve teachers in school decisions to strengthen ownership, collaboration, and teacher efficacy.

Assigning leadership responsibilities, such as leading committees or projects, can enhance teachers' confidence and professional growth.

Principals should arrange regular workshops, mentoring sessions, and training opportunities tailored to teachers' needs.

Regular monitoring and timely feedback should be given to help teachers identify strengths, improve practices, and boost self-efficacy.

Acknowledging teachers' contributions through appreciation and incentives can enhance morale, efficacy, and long-term commitment.

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