Investigating Distributed Leadership Practices in Pakistani Universities

* Syeda Rabia Mushtaq, PhD Scholar

** Dr. Fakhra Aziz, Associate Professor (Corresponding Author)

Abstract

The research study aimed to probe distributed leadership practices, the most and the least prevailed practices in public universities of Lahore. The study also aimed to find gender-based differences in prevalence of distributed. The study was conducted in a quantitative paradigm and a survey technique was used to collect data. The population was consisted of all general public universities located in Lahore (6). Three universities were selected through random strata sampling. Among them one was women and two were mixed general universities. Randomly 300 faculty members were selected to get the questionnaire filled. Distributed leadership questionnaire (Özkan and Çakır,2017) was adopted. SPSS version 20 was used to analyse the data through descriptive and Inferential statistics. It was found that distributed leadership was prevailed in public universities. In women university it was more prevailed than mixed universities. Further there was difference in prevalence of different dimensions of distributed leadership. In women university, practices related to sharing responsibilities and unity of purpose were comparatively more prevailed as compared to mixed universities where rest of three dimensions of distributed leadership were more prevailed. It was suggested that factors behind these differences should be explored through conducting researches in broader context including private sector universities also.

Keywords: Distributed Leadership, Public Universities, Sharing Responsibilities, Unity of Purpose

Introduction

Distributed leadership is an abstract and logical approach to understanding how the work of leadership takes place among the people and in environment of a complex association. Distributed governance is frequently thought of as delegating. Actually, Delegation is a type of facilitation, where leaders just grease their followers to complete their assignments, yet not grant them autonomy to take enterprise. In other words, delegating leadership prepares a happy, satisfied and collaborative pool while distributive leadership develops the leadership capacity within an institute so that the institute can ameliorate and grow in the real world. It leads an institute to a working place that is more effective as its leaders all work in the same direction, guided by the same values and vision, to achieve a common set of goals. At the end of the day, under distributed leadership, leaders in universities get powe rough commission of leading their brigades and driving forward their strategies that contribute towards the institutional priority. There are three inter-dependent inversely important principles to distributed leadership in universities as autonomy, capacity and responsibility. Leaders in a university or department need to be given the freedom to make important decisions about their areas of responsibility in a distributed leadership model. Giving leaders power over their work and empowering them is fundamentally dependent on their autonomy. The autonomy position grounded on trust, correctly said as earned trust as it's problematic and parlous to grant complete autonomy to leaders who fail. This acquired autonomy develops responsibility. These two generalities are tightly connected. Development strategies across the university and departments aren't actually being delivered by the dean, directors and heads themselves. It's their job to ensure they're being led well by others and they're having impact. According to Harris (2005), "A dynamic leadership model known as distributed leadership arises from a variety of business practices that occur both in formal and informal settings" .

Harris further editorialized that; "Distributed leadership explicitly emphasizes collaborative leadership responsibility over ascending authority. It's not about delegating responsibilities to others; rather, it's about acknowledging that participation in action and commerce are the building blocks of leadership practice." p. 9. The quality of relations taking place between the leaders and followers is

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*   Department of STEM Education Lahore College for Women University, Lahore Pakistan
**   Faculty of Education, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

grounded on distributed leadership. The practice of leadership rather than specific leadership positions or responsibilities is the primary focus of distributed leadership. It is equivalent to extended, participative, and collaborative leadership practice that builds the capacity for improvement and change. The practice of management rather than specific leadership places or liabilities is the primary focus of distributed leadership. It's original to extended, participated, and collaborative practice in leadership that improves one's capacity for improvement and change. Distributed leadership entails marshalling leadership moxie at all university situations to increase the number of change openings and enhance enhancement capacity. Instead of the independent behavior of individuals with formal leadership positions or liabilities, the focus is on interdependent commerce and practice. Simply put, distributed leadership must be precisely planned and purposefully orchestrated in order to be the most effective. It'll not simply do, and indeed if it does, there's no assurance that it'll have any salutary goods. Distributed leadership isn't letting a thousand flowers bloom. Those in formal leadership positions are held accountable for being crucial in establishing the conditions for distributed leadership. There responsible aimed at furnishing openings for others to lead. The significance of leadership in securing and maintaining enhancement has been constantly emphasized by transnational exploration substantiation (e.g., Hopkins, 2001, Van Velzen; West, 2000). According to Leithwood and Jantzi(2000), it's apparent that effective leaders have a significant, albeit circular, impact on the effectiveness of the academy and the position of achievement achieved by scholars. From this perspective, leadership is set up in the mortal eventuality that an association can unleash. According to Gronn(2000), a crucial characteristic of a group or network of individuals in which members pool their toughness. According to Muijs and Harris (2003), the practices of preceptors in leadership places similar as department head, subject fellow, or schoolteacher tutor are implicit in this leadership model. According to Leithwood and Riehl(2003), there's still a lack of knowledge regarding effective educational leadership. From this point of view, leadership is set up in the mortal eventuality that an association can unleash. It's" an imperative property of a group or network of individualities in which group members pool their moxie," according to Gronn (2000) (Bennett etal., 2003 3). In its place, sapience distributed leadership give liabilities and liability to common have expanded exchange (Uslu and Beycioğlu, 2013). Followers view the forefront ca n't flourish the product in goods with institutes for the multipart assemblies,(Jacobs, 2010) have declared the distributed leadership for institute involves collaboration, emphasizing so, essential the backing with helps with leaders, preceptors, workers. Distributed perception of university leadership or managing consideration representatives, advisers, or scholars across the sphere of current centuries (Harris, 2013; Spillane and Healey, 2010). Distributed leadership, defined scheme shaped for proportion ingredients approaching planned for association (Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond 2001), clear rotation the leadership of education administrations in its place a character's alluring responsibility for leadership. So, liabilities and tasks in an association are collaborative, and conclusion product develops collaborative. Though, everybody clusters don't has of supereminent form circulated perception(Spillane and Healey, 2010). In Pakistan," distributed leadership" entered the field of leadership exploration and has been used by a number of academics, directors, policymakers, and interpreters to establish, define, and support their efforts. Some people use it to teach schools, colleges, and universities about effective leadership, while others use it to suggest ideal leadership or legislative structure. Associating concepts like collective, independent, or concerted leadership with more than one designated leader—a practice known as distributed leadership—is the alternative that is most widely accepted. The distribution of leadership roles is frequently examined in studies along these appearances. The term "distributed leadership" is used to describe the increased challenges faced by school leaders and the shifts in the challenges faced by educational institutions in these alternative organizational structures. There is some concern that this convergence of traditions will result in the sprinkling of new ideas or the rebranding of old ones in new terms.

Statement of the problem

The need of the time has significantly changed the way in which interaction between the leader and team members occur. Distributed Leadership in educational institutions are required to conduct many work process (unity of purpose, formal structure collaboration and trust, sharing responsibilities, initiative and incentive.). In the current scenario where the Distributed Leadership and management is being worked in educational institutions across World, there is a dire need of promoting new concepts of leadership in Pakistan to cope up with rest of the World. In this context, the present study is

planned to develop a theoretical model of distributed leadership practices for academia focusing on challenges and opportunities in Pakistani universities.

Theoretical Background

Since onset of 2000s, Distributed leadership has been debated under premises of sociological, cognitive, psychological, and anthropological theories. It's considered as proposed and systematic structure for examining educational institute's authority, one that would unambiguously focus on the way administration was arranged in schools as a movement that affected "social and situational settings." The depictions only described what was being done, not how, making it difficult to adapt to different settings. It was unclear from this examination how pioneers responded to the perplexing situation in schools. Even though some research on initiative has focused on the job or ability of the assigned pioneer, such as instructional administration or ground-breaking authority, there has been a significant shift toward understanding authority as a collective effort by multiple people. The final developments take a more in-depth look at various positions that provide various forms of administration throughout the school, such as instructor initiative, fair authority, shared authority, or collective authority. Dispersed initiative depicts how entertainers work to create the conditions for improving education and learning in schools by drawing on these multi-specialist perspectives. Appropriate initiative is a system, not an action.

Distributed Leadership is mainly based on two theories.

Distributed Cognition exists in overlapped domain of consciousness, sociology, and reasoning science. It's basically a hypothesis that intuition with information that are extended over the instruments, circumstance, others, and setting. It started with crafted by anthropologist Edwin Hutchins during the 1990's with his investigations of route on a maritime airplane carter. His effort on seeing normally arranged perception prompted the end that discernment is socially disseminated. As opposed to searching for information structures inside an individual, his work indicated that psychological action, or recognizing what to do, was an arranged procedure, impacted by others devices then the circumstance. Leadership is frequently concentrated as something that a person does or continues. Social initiative methodologies frequently quiet consider authority to be activities done by people, simply done in participation with others. Taking a conveyed point of view, interestingly, draws on the hypothesis of circulated comprehension to comprehend administration is an outstanding property of the framework. Thus, it sits in the middle of the individuals who see initiative is a consequence of individual organization and the individuals who consider it to be a result of the circumstances.

Activity Theory is an expansive sociological approach to deal with understanding human conduct as contextualized in a circumstance. This arranged point of view extends the unit of investigation to the aggregate as opposed to individual and studies the connection between activities. In spite of the fact that this methodology is planned for comprehending the person, the element of investigation is more extensive framework where that individual takes an interest. Engestrom recognizes three ages of action hypothesis and related analyst: Lev Vygotsky's (1978) subject-object-interceding relic is a model that focuses on the individual; second era, Alexei Leont'ev's (1981) expansion of the model to include aggregate activity; and the third era, Engestrom's own proposal for an organized comprehension of intuitive action frameworks (1987). Barbara Rogoff, an additional researcher in Activity Theory, adds two new dimensions to this work: First, the management of the individual's foregrounding must not disregard the framework's relationship. And second, there are three distinct degrees of goal (relational, social/network and official/social plans) expected to comprehend the various stages activity. The circulated point of view on authority takes this arranged and staggered way to deal with give "setting of activity" and "keep up... the strain among organization and distribution.

In addition, Spillane and Gronn(2005) mutually inducement on use of movement hypothesis in the arena of administration research that emerged from Mintzberg's studies of work-action, in which he observed chiefs reporting what they actually did through organized perceptions. Even though it was creative and motivating at the time, the concept of this documentation was eventually deemed shallow because it failed to distinguish between administrative and non-administrative work. There were still unanswered questions about how the board was sanctioned and it didn't clarify authority viability. Understanding authority from a conveyed point of view implies searching for

administration movement as arranged and social procedure, drawing on both circulated discernment and action hypothesis.

According to Hallinger & Heck (2009), the evidence is increasingly pointing to a positive correlation between student achievement, organizational improvement, and distributed leadership. The significance of distributed leadership as a potential contributor to improvement and positive change in public universities has been identified in many of these studies.

Contemporary research continues to demonstrate a positive correlation between improved organizational performance and shared leadership styles, despite the fact of distributed leadership has its critics. It demonstrates, for instance, that different degrees of leadership distribution account for the distinctions between public universities with high and low performance. Leadership is distributed wisely and widely at high-performing universities (Leithwood et al., 2009).

Improved outcomes in an organization can be attributed in large part to distributed leadership. Even though distributed leadership's magnitude, worth, and nature vary between schools, it is still one of the many factors that contribute to high performance. According to the findings of the research (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008:546), certain styles of distributed leadership also has small however significant influence on student achievement indirectly.

Individuals are held accountable when distributed leadership is working, for the actions they take as leaders; the way things are done now is collaborative teamwork and the creation of new leadership roles, and working with others is the way things are done. As previously mentioned, University success and higher performance are influenced by distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is more than just an accidental byproduct of high-performing organizations; it is about collective influence

The challenge for principals who want to improve universities' performance and outcomes is to create environment where professional knowledge and skills are enhanced, effective leadership exists at all levels, and the entire school collaborates to improve student outcomes.

Distributed leadership focuses on the interactions between individuals (leaders and those they lead) to improve instruction and student outcomes by creating a culture where all students can thrive and high-quality instruction rather than dividing tasks and responsibilities among individuals.

Objective
- To explore the distributed leadership practices in HEC-recognized public universities of Lahore
- To investigate gender differences of distributed leadership practices in HEC-recognized public universities of Lahore

Hypothesis
- There is no prevalence of distributed leadership practices in public universities of Lahore?
- There is no difference of distributed leadership practices in women and mixed public universities of Lahore?

Research Method
The descriptive study was designed under quantitative approach. All teachers employed in HEC recognized public universities of Lahore comprised the population of the study. There were total 6 general public universities in Lahore. Among them 2 were women and 4 were mixed universities. Stratified sampling technique was used. 1 woman and 2 mixed universities were targeted. 100 Faculty members from each university were accessed to collect data. Total sample was 300 faculty members , among them 100 were female and 200 were male. The Distributed Leadership Scale was adopted to investigate prevalence of distributed leadership within universities. It was developed by Özkan and Çakır (2017). DLS comprised of five factors, i.e., unity of purpose, formal structure collaboration and trust, sharing responsibilities, initiative and incentive.

Delimitation
This research study was delimited to HEC recognized public universities of Lahore, Punjab.

Data Analysis
SPSS version -21 was used to analyze the data. Simple descriptive statistics and t-test was used to measure difference between two cohorts of study.

Mean and standard deviation values that showed opinions of faculty members about prevailing practice of distributed leadership in their universities are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of distributed leadership and its sub dimensions

Distributed leadership dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unity of Purpose	3.57	1.06
Formal Structure	3.54	1.07
Collaboration and Trust	3.61	1.02
Sharing Responsibilities	3.72	1.01
Initiative and Incentive	3.59	1.05
Overall Distributed Leadership	3.55	1.05

Although the overall mean of 3.55 indicates that there are distributed leadership practices prevail in the universities, the standard deviation range from 1.01 to 1.07 suggests that faculty members had different thinking regarding the different dimensions of distributed leadership. Their perception about the dimension "formal structure" of distributed leadership had the lowest mean while the dimension "sharing responsibilities" had highest mean. It can be concluded that in universities distributed leadership prevail as a whole and specially in terms of sharing responsibilities.

Table 2: Comparison of Mix and Woman university's distributed leadership Mean scores (N=300)

Distributed leadership dimensions	University	M	SD	t- value
Unity of Purpose	Mix	3.89	1.37	1.11
	Women	4.09	0.88	
Formal Structure	Mix	3.43	1.22	0.60
	Women	3.54	1.20	
Collaboration and Trust	Mix	3.88	1.28	0.86
	Women	3.72	1.30	
Sharing Responsibilities	Mix	3.65	1.53	1.08
	Women	3.39	1.74	
Initiative and Incentive	Mix	3.65	1.53	1.09
	Women	3.41	1.69	

An independent sample t test was conduct to compare the "Unity of Purpose" score of mix and women university. Mean score of women university was higher than mix although there was no significant difference in scores for mix (m=3.89, SD=1.37) and women (m=4.09, SD= 1.18) t (298) =1.11 was found. It can be concluded that in women university, more prevailed distributed leadership practices were related to unity of purpose than mix universities.

Mean score of mix university for "Formal Structure" dimension of distributed leadership (m=3.43, SD= 1.22) is slightly less than of women university (m=3.54, SD=1.20) which indicates no significant difference , t(298)=0.60.It can be concluded that both mix and women universities had same level of distributed leadership practice for formal structure dimension.

On the other side, mean score of mix university for "Collaboration and Trust" dimension of distributed leadership (m=3.88, SD= 1.28) is slightly higher than of women university (m=3.72, SD=1.30) which indicates no significant difference , t(298)=0.86.It can be concluded that both mix and women universities had same level of distributed leadership practices for "Collaboration and Trust" dimension.

For "Sharing Responsibilities" mix university mean score was (m=3.65, SD=1.53) and women university (m=3.39, SD= 1.74) t (298) =1.08. It also reported no significant difference. It can be concluded that according in both types of universities sharing responsibilities dimension of distributed leadership was well practiced.

For "Initiative and Incentive" mix mean score was (m=3.65, SD=1.53) and women university (m=3.41, SD= 1.69) t (298) =1.09. It also reported no significant difference. It can be concluded that in both types of universities "Initiative and Incentive" dimension of distributed leadership were prevailed equally.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that distributed leadership is prevailed in public universities of Lahore. Both mix and women universities practiced same level of distributed leadership. However, there were variation in prevalence of distributed leadership practices related to its different dimensions. Most prevailed practices were related to sharing responsibilities dimension and least were reported for formal structure dimension of distributed leadership. Further, two dimensions of distributed leadership, unity of purpose and sharing responsibilities were in more practice in women university as compared to mix universities.

Discussion

Spillane and Orlina (2005) described Distributed Leadership as a structure for leadership analysis while some other like Klar (2012) and Law et al. (2010) thought of it as a culture of professional collaboration. Unity of purpose was the first dimensions of DL, this was found prevailed in both types of universities. Although this study is reported its more prevalence in women university. Smith (2007) said vision, mission and goals meant to be the underpinning chunk of people for their practiced learning. Neuman and Simmons (2000) opinioned that the learning of students is emphasized by creation of a shared vision mission and their significant goals. Its develops specific mindsets in an organization which sets behavioral standards for it. Heads and faculty members within universities are the main stakeholders, they should have unity of purpose for their contribution in meeting the desired goals. The present research found more prevalence of the unity of purpose dimension of DL in women university as compare to mix universities contrary to the result of Maqsood (2019) who studied the DL by gender and locale and reported no difference in awareness and practices the urban and rural men and women related to dispersed leadership within institutions. Vlachdi and Ferla (2013) studied that men and women both were equally committed to the aspect of Distributed Leadership. Smith (2007)'s observation was aligned with the findings of the present study as he noticed that the women teachers were more interested in distributed leadership practices than the male teachers.

Biggest challenges for university leadership is to ensure that all students, regardless of their demographic differences get a high quality education and achieve which they are in university to the best of their potential. This can be possible by giving quality learning opportunities, university need to have conditions\strategies through which instructional practices are continually improved. It would be possible through Distributed Leadership.

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