Appraising the effectiveness of distributed leadership on school improvement initiatives: Insights from Tuburan, Philippines district administrators

ABSTRACT

The study appraised the district-level administrators regarding the effectiveness of the distributed leadership approach in facilitating school improvement initiatives. It utilized a descriptive-correlational method conducted in all public elementary and secondary schools of Tuburan 1 and 2 districts with the school heads as respondents. The researcher used adapted questionnaires to gather the data. Data were collected and treated using the percentage formula, ranking, weighted mean, and Pearson correlation coefficient. Results revealed that most school heads were in the age range of 31-40, females, had attained BEED/BSED with master's units, had 1-9 years served as school administrators, and most respondents were situated on low lands. Respondents showed familiarity with the distributed leadership approach in terms of awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the approach. The effectiveness of the distributed leadership approach in the implementation of school improvement initiatives, such as curriculum development and alignment, teacher professional development programs, student assessment strategies, parent and community involvement, technology integration in classrooms, and school facilities improvement, was found to be highly effective, with 2.46 mean rating. The study figured out the extent of the distributed leadership approach implementation as to the frequency of collaborative decision-making among school administrators and staff and the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives regarding technology integration in classrooms, which showed a significant relationship with a p-value of .324 at <0.05. Therefore, a distributed leadership approach in implementing school improvement initiatives is highly effective. Thus, the researcher generated a leadership development plan to improve schools continuously and enhance the overall quality of education.

Keywords: Distributed Leadership Approach, Leadership Development Plan, Implementation of School Improvement Initiatives, Tuburan District.

1. INTRODUCTION

Influential school leaders are essential for implementing educational reforms, supporting teachers through professional development, and fostering community partnerships (Şenol[1], Acton[2], Day et al.[3]). Jambo & Hongde[4] school leaders utilize various leadership styles, with distributed leadership being notably effective. Evidence indicates that successful principals create the structural and cultural conditions conducive to distributed leadership (Liu et al.[5], Printy & Liu[6], Tay et al.[7]). They are vital in distributing leadership roles and are pivotal in developing school leadership capacity (Mifsud[8]; Buyukgoze et al.[9]; Hilal et al.[10]). Principals are central to the teacher leadership dynamic, and work redesign is necessary for implementing distributed leadership (Liu & Werblow[11]). Ganon-Shilon & Schechter[12], Wallin et al.[13] necessitate a shift in the principal's role, requiring a fundamental change in their understanding and enactment of leadership. It involves relinquishing some authority and power, which can be challenging, and transitioning from exclusive leadership to a model focused on brokering, facilitating, and supporting others in leading innovation and change (Lewis et al.[14], Dames[15], Mowry[16]).

Previous studies have shown that leadership styles affect the degree of organizational commitment of subordinates, which needs to be considered (Silva et al.[17], Dappa et al.[18]; Hassi[19]). Rintoul & Bishop[20] found that there has been an emphasis on recognizing that educational leadership is no longer the exclusive agenda among school and education leaders designated to formal administrative positions in Canada. In Turkey, Bektaş et al.[21], Özdemir et al.[22] highlighted that the implementation of distributed leadership intensifies the emergence of organizational commitment, making the teachers feel sincere attachment and commitment to their schools. Moreover, Hamzah & Jamil[23] in Malaysia found that the value and distribution of leadership function, cooperation within the leadership team, and teacher participation in decision-making were significantly linked to teacher affective commitment but not the quality and distribution of supervision.

Meanwhile, Navarro[24], Paraiso[25] illustrated

numerous challenges in educational leadership in the Philippines. It is evident that the Philippines currently needs more funding and resources, and many academic institutions in the Philippines need more budgets and adequate funds (Robosa et al.[26], Casingal & Ancho[27], Saguin & Ramesh[28]). This lack of financial support hampers efforts to provide quality education and necessitates leaders who can strategize innovative solutions to bridge the funding gap (Arkorful et al.[29]). As schools in the Philippines face challenges like overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and high teacher-student ratios, competent leaders become the driving force behind successful educational initiatives (Albert et al.[30]). On the other hand, Rint & Astillero[31], Bueno & Salapa (n.d)[32], Violanda et al. (n.d)[33] emphasized that insufficient funding and the lack of resources in the Philippine Educational System emerged as significant roadblocks in impeding school improvement initiatives of school heads. More funding is needed to ensure the construction and maintenance of educational infrastructure (Thacker et al.[34]).

Cognizant of this situation, adopting a distributed leadership approach in the Philippine educational setting holds significant promise for fostering collaboration, empowering teachers, and improving student outcomes (Uy et al.[35], Daing & Mustapha[36], Alanya Beltran et al.[37]). Rather than relying solely on the principal or school administrators, Bush[38] and Daniëls et al.[39] recognize that effective leadership can emerge from various levels of the educational system. Educators can create a more inclusive and participatory school environment by sharing responsibilities and decision-making (Mangubat[40]). School heads or administrators are at the forefront of implementing distributed leadership in real-world contexts, so they must be genuinely engaged in implementing academic leadership.

Tuburan 1 and 2 Districts in the Philippines strive to implement school improvement initiatives in the context of distributed leadership methods wherein the goals are to enhance student achievement and academic success, enhance teacher effectiveness through targeted professional development programs, prioritize curriculum development to align with modern educational needs and objectives, and give emphasis on inclusivity and equity in education ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education. Numerous investigations are made to explicitly examine the practices of district administrators, who function at a level where their experiences and perspectives could offer unique insights into the systemic and strategic implementation of distributed leadership. These existing findings may reflect something other than the trends in a rural setting, such as in the districts of Tuburan, Philippines. Similarly, there are various leadership approaches that Filipino administrators may use to facilitate teachers' competence in the classroom. Therefore, further investigations and inquiries are imperative, particularly those related perceptions, misconceptions, issues, and concerns encountered in the distributed leadership style in the present leadership approach. The districts of Tuburan, Philippines, present an interesting case due to their distinctive socio-cultural context and educational administrative structure, which still need to be researched.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Distributed Leadership Concepts

Distributed leadership strategy is underpinned by the idea that leadership is not confined to a single person but is a shared and collective practice (Lumby[41]). Kolenda[42] extended this theory by introducing the concept of "concretive action," where leadership is likened to a musical ensemble, with every member contributing to a harmonious outcome. This model has been applied in various educational settings, emphasizing collaboration and shared responsibilities.

The effectiveness of distributed leadership in educational settings has been a subject of rigorous investigation. Ertürk & Nartgün[43] found that distributed leadership contributes positively to student achievement by fostering collaboration and continuous improvement. While the evidence generally supports the effectiveness of distributed leadership, some studies have highlighted challenges. Some researchers argue that without clear structures and boundaries, distributed leadership can lead to confusion and a lack of accountability (Youngs[44]). Although no specific studies focused on Tuburan 1 and 2, the global literature offers insights that may be relevant to these districts. Cultural context, leadership styles, and local policies could influence the application and effectiveness of distributed leadership within these unique environments.

Awareness of the Concept of Distributed Leadership

School leadership has increased demand nonstop and has engaged the awareness of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is stretched over school heads and teachers, which is valuable in different school settings (Nicholas[45]). The call for teachers as leaders in school to help implement the K-12 educational system had involved them to take on joint roles. The findings of a study by Tabaculde[46] exposed that elementary school teachers in the Division of Himamaylan had a very high level of awareness and a very high extent of practices in all three types of distributed leadership: collaborative, collective, and

coordinated. Moreover, a study by O'Shea[47] suggests that school leaders recognize the benefits of distributed leadership in promoting teacher empowerment, fostering innovation, and improving student outcomes.

The core concepts of distributed leadership, in which leadership originate from interactions and connections among numerous stakeholders rather than being vested entirely in elected leaders (Mitra[48]). Schools can hold collaborative talks to develop a compelling vision that resonates with everyone and leads decision-making. Factors such as accurate alignment of purpose and vision, effective stakeholder engagement, responsive organizational culture, and stakeholder receptivity are critical predictors of schools' preparation for such a transformation (Clarke[50]). Distributed leadership stresses the decentralization of leadership duties, spread among numerous stakeholders within an educational institution (Alkrdem[51]).

Some research shows that distributed leadership can improve teaching quality and children's growth and learning (Jambo & Hongde[52]). According to Xie[53], distributed leadership may increase quality by creating a favorable organizational environment and fostering a culture of continuous learning and development. Distributed leadership can also impact quality through teacher leadership. School principals and teachers collaborate to fulfill leadership tasks and play an essential role in implementing distributed leadership (Bektaş et al.[54]). This illustrates that distributed leadership involves the school principal, administrative staff, and teachers fulfilling multiple leadership roles, therefore, distributed leadership involves delegating leadership, sharing duties, and collaborating on decisions in schools for improvements. The literature on distributed leadership provides a comprehensive framework to analyze the district-level administrators of Tuburan 1 and 2. The prevailing evidence supports the notion that distributed leadership is a significant factor for school improvement initiatives, but its success may be contingent on clear structures and cultural context.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This type of design enabled the researcher to collect data across the sampled population using the same instruments simultaneously. Respondents were the 50 district-level administrators in Tuburan 1 and 2. Questionnaires were provided for all overseeing distributed leadership approaches in their respective districts.

3.1. Participants and research setting

The respondents were selected based on their population characteristics and the study's objective. This undertaking was conducted for the Academic Year 2023-2024. The study was conducted in the elementary schools of Tuburan I & II Districts in the Province of Cebu, Region VII. It encompasses 50 schools throughout the district. Pertinent information was obtained, such as the demographic profile of the administrators as well as their perceptions of the different aspects of the distributed leadership approach and specific variables that significantly contribute to the effectiveness of such approach in implementing school improvement initiatives.

3.2. Data collection instruments

The research instrument was a two-section questionnaire. The first section included a checklist collecting the respondents' demographic profiles. This profile includes age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of experience as a school administrator, student population, and school administration location. The subsequent section of the instrument consisted of a checklist of the respondents' perceptions of the distributed leadership approach, school improvement initiatives, challenges, and opportunities. Surveys that encompassed structured questions measured the perception of the effectiveness of distributed leadership on different school improvement initiatives. The Likert scale gauged respondents' agreement or disagreement with various statements. Statistical analyses, correlation, and descriptive statistics identify trends and relationships between construed variables.

3.3. Data analysis

To achieve the research objectives, quantitative analysis was carried out on the data for this study, including the sociodemographic profile of the respondents. The profile includes age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of experience as a school administrator, student population, school administration location, and the respondents' perceptions of the distributed leadership approach, school improvement initiatives, challenges, and opportunities. SPSS was utilized to analyze correlation and identify trends and relationships between construed variables.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. School head's profile in terms of age, gender, highest education, years of experience, population of teachers, population of the students, and location of the school (n=50).

The analysis of the profile of the school heads is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of the school heads (n=50).

Age	f	%
61 to 65 years old	1	2.00
51 to 60 years old	14	28.00
41 to 50 years old	10	20.00
31 to 40 years old	20	40.00
21 to 30 years old	5	10.00
Gender	f	%
Male	19	38.00
Female	31	62.00
Highest Educational Attainment	f	%
Doctor's Degree Graduate	1	2.00
M.A. with units in Doctor's Degree	15	30.00
BEED / BSED with MA Units	28	56.00
BEED / BSED Graduate	6	12.00
Years of Experience	f	%
30 - 40 years	0	0.00
20 – 29 years	11	22.00
10 – 19 years	13	26.00
1 – 9 years	26	52.00
Population of Teachers	f	%
31 and above	3	6.00
21 – 30	6	12.00
11 – 20	13	26.00
1 – 10	28	56.00
Population of Students	f	%
301 and above	10	20.00
201 – 300	23	46.00
101 – 200	6	12.00
50 – 100	11	22.00
Location of the School	f	%
High land	22	44.00
Low land	28	56.00

Table 1 shows the school head's profile in the Districts of Tuburan, Philippines; the majority of the age bracket is between 31 and 40, with 20 or 40% among the sampled population. The data implies a noticeable trend towards younger school district leaders in their mid-career (31-40 age range) gaining a significant portion of the school heads. This could indicate that younger leaders may be more receptive to distributed leadership, which emphasizes shared decision-making and collaboration. While there is a focus on younger leadership, there is still a presence of more experienced leaders (51-60 years old). This experience can be valuable for mentoring and supporting newer leaders as they implement distributed leadership practices. The result of the study is similar to the study of Iqbal et al.[55,] which

revealed that age had an apparent impact on the use of leadership styles by school heads. Dellomas & Deri[56] asserted that experience, seen as a benefit of age, grants them wisdom that followers perceive as more powerful and persuasive. As a result, people tend to favor older school heads as better leaders, placing value on their age.

However, more experienced leaders might need training on adapting their leadership style to a more collaborative approach. A study by Lapuz & Pecajas[57] suggests that younger school heads may lack experience but make up for it with idealism and strong social and digital skills. These qualities can be beneficial in the evolving landscape of educational leadership. Younger leaders might need support in developing the skills and confidence necessary for

shared decision-making. This highlights the potential for a changing dynamic in school administration within these districts, which could influence the effectiveness of implementing a distributed leadership approach. The result suggests a shift towards younger leadership in Tuburan Districts 1 and 2, potentially reflecting a growing openness to distributed leadership styles. While both younger and more experienced leaders have strengths to contribute, each group may require support to thrive in this collaborative environment.

Regarding gender, females are noticeably dominant, comprising 31 or 62 % compared to males of 19 or 36 % among the total population. The data implies a more significant percentage of female school heads among the respondents, indicating that they are more actively pursuing leadership positions in the district administration than their male counterparts. This means there is a gender disparity in the leadership and decision-making of Tuburan 1 and 2 district-level administrations. This implies that their gender influences school heads' leadership and educational path.

The result of the present study is congruent with Sebastian[58] as it emphasizes that female school heads spend a higher proportion of their time working than males in planning and goal-setting. However, though male school heads got a low percentage, it simply means female counterparts can do effective leadership. It negates the study of Mulawarman et al.[59], as the latter noted that female school heads demonstrated a democratic leadership style, prioritizing teamwork in decision-making. This is because female school heads are more capable and goal-driven. According to Gill & Arnold[60], male school heads may experience stress and emotional challenges that hinder their leadership success. Female school heads are more adept at offering direction and demonstrating strong leadership, both of which can support the advancement and growth of the school.

With the highest educational attainment, BEED/BSED with MA Units has the highest of 28 or 56 %, while only one school head has a Doctor's Degree, having 2%. This implies that the school heads' commitment to attaining MA units is to continuous learning and professional development. School heads gain expertise in particular fields, including educational leadership and management, through these additional studies. These district-level administrators may consider professional development in education to enhance school administrators' professional knowledge, capability, skill, and effectiveness (Davis et al.[61]). Deborah[62] expounded that epiphanic personal events and professional learning shape professional practices and identities among school administrators.

Years of experience results show that 26 or 52% of the respondents have 1-6 years of experience as an administrator, 11 or 22 % have 20-29 years of experience, and none of them had been in 30-40 years of experience as a school administrator. This implies that school administrators may vary their years of experience, yet they have the same goals and qualities every administrator should have.

It is widely acknowledged that school administrators are the most critical individuals in establishing a learning environment. A school administrator should have professional qualities such as leadership abilities, experience, and field knowledge. Schools are professional learning communities, and their leaders should have administrative experience, professional qualifications, knowledge, and personal attributes appropriate for the role (Prenger et al.[63]). They need to be more suitable places for new individuals to learn administrative tasks. Some principals believe that any teacher in the system may hold administrative positions without regard for leadership skills or experience, supporting the existing structure. According to Schaap et al.[64] assessment, improved understanding between administrators and instructors can lead to more positive relationships.

Furthermore, Table 1 reveals significant insights into the distribution of teachers in their schools. Of the 50 respondents, 28 or 56 % of school heads led a population of 1-10 teachers. On the other hand, three school heads have a population of teachers who are 31 and above with 6%. The result of the study highlights that a considerable number of school heads oversee a population with fewer teachers. This suggests that many schools are relatively small or have a modest number of teaching staff. Understanding these distributions can be crucial for educational policymakers and administrators to tailor support and resources effectively, ensuring that schools of all sizes receive adequate attention and assistance to meet the needs of their students and staff. Most students comprise 201-300 of 23 or 46%. On the other hand, the population is composed of 101-200, with 6 or 12%. Interestingly, the students writing the 50-100 population and the 301 and above respondents can obtain equal chances to have nearly the same result. While the student population increases in number and does not reach the 301 population, the frequency also increases its chances of surpassing a higher percentage value.

Ackerman[65] stated that class size matters regarding instruction and learning. This is especially true when teaching minority and low-income kids, who typically have more needs. Despite financial limitations, school districts nationwide, particularly those in urban areas, continue to overcrowd classrooms, arguing that this is necessary. Larger class sizes prevent teachers from having the same advantage or privilege of spending more time with each student to guarantee academic achievement.

Every student has a right to and desires an educational system that fulfills their needs. The responsibility does not end with teachers, even though they are the initial responders. Municipal, state, and federal budgets impact larger class sizes. According to Burroughs et al.[66], teacher effectiveness is significant in education and is typically assessed by evaluating students' academic performance. The main emphasis of teacher effectiveness has been on teachers' quality and instruction methods. The number of students per teacher is one external aspect that affects a teacher's performance. Furthermore, the result emphasizes that the number of students per teacher impacts the student's learning.

The location of the schools administered by the heads shows that 28 or 56% of the respondents are administering for low land while 22 or 44% are administering for high land. This implies that this is due to the country's unique physical features, which include multiple islands and a significant metropolitan population. Examining academic supervision procedures in different geographical locations can help answer whether school heads in the lowlands need more supervision than those in the highlands. According to Wpadmin[67], in the Philippines, school heads frequently manage schools where most of the teaching occurs on low land instead of high land. This is due to the country's geographical peculiarities, including numerous islands and a sizable metropolitan population. In urban regions, public schools are frequently overcrowded, with some classrooms including more than 100 pupils, making it difficult for children to concentrate on their lectures and limiting the time teachers can devote to new teaching methods.

To summarize, due to the country's geographical features and overcrowded public schools, school leaders in the Philippines frequently supervise schools where most of the teaching occurs on low terrain. Despite efforts to address these obstacles, instructional supervision remains challenging, and school administrators must traverse a complicated environment to maintain adequate supervision and increase educational quality.

4.2. Distributed leadership approach in terms of familiarity and implementation

Table 2 shows the following questionnaire entry about the familiarization and implementation of distributed leadership.

Table 2. Distributed leadership approach in terms of familiarity and implementation (n=50)

Awareness of the Concept of Distributed Leadership	f	%
Yes	39	78.00
No	11	22.00
Knowledge of the Key Principles	*f*	*%*
Yes, I can identify some principles	36	72.00
No, I'm not sure	14	28.00
Understanding of How Distributed Leadership Differs from Other Types of Leadership	*f*	*Rank*
Distributed leadership empowers individuals at all levels, while traditional leadership tends to centralize power.	32	1
Distributed leadership involves shared decision-making responsibilities while traditional leadership is more hierarchical	23	2
I'm not sure about the differences between distributed leadership and other leadership styles.	5	3
Frequency of Collaborative Decision-making	f	%
Always	29	58.00
Occasionally	15	30.00
Sometimes	3	6.00
Often	2	4.00
Rarely/never	1	2.00

Delegation of Responsibilities and Authority	*f*	*%*
Strongly agree	22	44.00
Agree	17	34.00
Neither agree nor disagree	5	10.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Strongly disagree	6	12.00
Empowerment of Teachers	*f*	*%*
Completely	18	36.00
To a large extent	19	38.00
To a moderate extent	10	20.00
To a small extent	3	6.00
Not at all	0	0.00
Evidence of Shared Accountability and Collective Responsibility	*f*	*%*
Strongly agree	11	22.00
Agree	31	62.00
Neither agree nor disagree	2	4.00
Disagree	1	2.00
Strongly disagree	5	10.00
Adaptation of Organizational Structures and Processes	*f*	*%*
Completely	23	46.00
To a large extent	20	40.00
To a moderate extent	6	12.00
To a small extent	1	2.00
Not at all	0	0.00
Diverse Perspectives and Expertise Incorporated	*f*	*%*
Completely	12	24.00
To a large extent	28	56.00
To a moderate extent	8	16.00
To a small extent	1	2.00
Not at all	1	2.00
Communication Channels Utilized by the School Heads	*f*	*%*
Completely	20	40.00
To a large extent	23	46.00
To a moderate extent	7	14.00
To a small extent	0	0.00
Not at all	0	0.00

Table 2 displays the distributed leadership approach in terms of familiarity and implementation by the administrators in the districts of Tuburan. Results revealed that administrators have heard about the concept of a distributed leadership approach with 39 or 78%. This result can be explained by Canterino et al.[68], who state that managing change is a constant task for managers involving individual and group efforts inside a company. Activating leaders to activate the processes and resources required for change to happen genuinely is regarded as one of the most critical uses of mobilizing activities as a tool for managers to promote change. The association between known leadership orientations and mobilizing activities favorably correlates with task- and person-centered leadership styles. This relationship may be explained by distributed leadership. That is why it is said that most people have experience with distributed leadership. Furthermore, Education policies impact distributed leadership, which differs depending on the leadership function. When given the chance to lead, teachers say that their school's atmosphere supports distributed leadership. Results contribute to evidence showing how crucial the national setting is for distributed leadership.

On the knowledge of the critical principles of distributed leadership, the result indicates 36, or 72%, had a positive response of "yes," which further illustrates that administrators can identify some principles. Samanciogluet et al.[69] define distributed leadership as the characteristics and behaviors of a collection of teams rather than the skills or behaviors of an individual. This implies that identifying critical principles of distributed leadership is essential for creating a framework that supports effective delegation, collaboration, and empowerment throughout the organization, ultimately leading to improved performance and organizational success. When it comes to school environments, dispersed leadership describes the smooth and productive communication between teachers and administrators while considering the collaborative involvement of several parties in a way that is neutral to the hierarchy (Lumby[70]). Therefore, leadership is essential for coordinating cutting-edge practices with academic objectives and ensuring they are included in the school's broader instructional plan.

In terms of understanding how distributed leadership differs from other types of leadership, the respondents' belief that distributed leadership empowers individuals at all levels is first in rank; traditional leadership tends to centralize power is the second, and lastly, respondents' uncertainty about the differences between distributed leadership and other leadership styles. The result implies that most respondents believe that distributed leadership empowers individuals at all levels, while traditional leadership tends to centralize power. This decentralized leadership approach allows authority, decision-making, and responsibility to be distributed across various individuals or teams rather than being concentrated at the top levels of the hierarchy, as often observed in traditional leadership structures. The result indicates a preference among respondents for distributed leadership, recognizing its potential to empower individuals throughout the organization and promote a more collaborative and inclusive leadership approach. According to a study by Bush & Ng[71], the advocates of distributed leadership elaborate that shared leadership is obligatory since academic institutions are too multifaceted to be managed by only one individual.

The study by Kallio et al.[72] revealed that the majority of the headteachers, assistant principals, and teachers are presently employing distributed leadership since the success of distributed leadership rests on whether the leadership is eager to renounce power and the scope to which staff embraces the prospect to lead. Moreover, Al Hassanieh[73] asserts that despite academic misunderstanding and organizational uncertainty, distributed leadership has been praised as valuable for teacher performance and student achievement. Such importance on decentralized leadership notifies the collective effort on the part of teacher leadership and the growth of the contribution of teachers in making choices about the methods of educating students.

The range or extent of collaborative decision-making between staff members and school administrators provided data of 29 or 58% that most administrators always worked with staff to make decisions regarding school improvement initiatives. Nevertheless, just 1 or 2% of the respondents stated that they rarely or never work with their staff to make decisions regarding initiatives for school improvement. The outcome suggests administrators always work with their staff when deciding on school improvement initiatives. They anticipate that doing so will help them make decisions meaningfully impacting student outcomes, improving the learning environment, and meeting organizational objectives. According to a related study by Crews[74], relationship-based leadership, which emphasizes dyadic or two-way relationships between school administrators and staff, strongly emphasizes attaining organizational goals, creating a positive school learning environment, and maintaining high morale. Collaboration techniques include staff autonomy, shared responsibility, and shared decision-making. Teachers can develop their leadership skills with administrative assistance by serving as mentors or coaches in or out of the

classroom and contributing to center-wide initiatives and a culture of continuous learning (Douglass et al.[75]). Distributed leadership may promote diversity and inclusion by recognizing staff knowledge and potential rather than concentrating leadership among people in traditional or formal leadership roles. Thus, Berkovich & Bogler[76] discovered that distributed school leadership, including efficiency, adaptability, and flexibility, strongly predicts school effectiveness.

Regarding the delegation of responsibilities and authority, the respondents answered, "Do you feel that responsibilities and authority are delegated across different levels of leadership within your school?" Based on the data presented, the majority of them strongly agree with 22 or 44%, while none of the respondents disagree with the question. The respondents highly agree that responsibilities and authority are assigned at various levels of leadership in their schools. It further signifies that delegation is integral to efficient school management and leadership since it distributes workload, encourages collaboration, and supports leadership growth among team members. According to Naidoo[77], the administrators firmly agree that tasks and authority are assigned at various levels of leadership in their schools. This implies that delegation empowers staff, boosts productivity, fosters leadership development, and improves school performance. Therefore, delegation, when done appropriately, can favorably enhance a school's operational efficiency and the professional development of its staff.

In empowering teachers and staff to take leadership roles in school improvement initiatives. It shows that the respondents feel empowered to a large extent, having the highest responses of 19 of 38%. There were no respondents who felt empowered to take on leadership roles. When school heads feel empowered, it indicates they have been entrusted with the authority, resources, and support necessary to drive positive change within their schools. Consequently, school heads are more likely to experience a sense of responsibility and ownership for the accomplishments of their institutions, which inspires them to take an active role in leadership roles and improvement-focused projects. The procedure of leading to accomplish the goals is called leadership. Influential school leaders advance the school's vision under their proficient ideologies. Teacher leaders are viewed as associates who circulate operative teaching approaches throughout the school (Nguyen & Ng[78]). School principals and teachers collaborate to fulfill leadership tasks and play an essential role in implementing distributed leadership (Campbell et al.[79]). Distributed leadership involves the school principal, administrative staff, and teachers fulfilling multiple leadership roles

(Çoban et al.[80]). According to Leithwood[81], distributed leadership involves delegating leadership, sharing duties, and collaborating on school decisions for improvements. A study by Óskarsdóttir et al.[82] expounded that when teachers are given authority to make decisions, they are significantly more likely to apply approaches that can make students for their futures; they practice space to allow students gain more chances to be exposed to advanced instruction practices.

Regarding the extent of evidence of shared accountability and collective responsibility for achieving goals, the result shows that the majority, 31 or 62%, agreed on the sense of shared accountability among your teachers and staff for achieving school improvement goals. This implies that in every goal a school should have, the teacher and the school administrator have a big part in achieving those goals. A goal would not be achieved if only the teacher or the administrator were the only ones who took accountability. According to Tucker[83], accountability systems rely on school development reforms, whereas robust school development systems are based on well-prepared plans. Therefore, accountability and school development serve the same purpose: to improve school and student performance. Access to education alone is insufficient; every person has the right to a high-quality education. School administrators influence teacher views, actions, and practices, shaping learning and teaching processes (Bellibaş et al.[84]). School administrators' efforts positively impact school achievement, teacher job satisfaction, student learning, being present, and parent satisfaction (Dicke[85]). Educational leaders must create a clear vision, establish goals, and implement methods to enhance teaching and learning results. With diverse decision-making, educational leaders give support and direction, encourage and inspire others, and make wise judgments that benefit the school community. Distributed leadership compliments the innumerable systems faculty and staff members use in scheming, realizing, evaluating, and refining learning occasions for students; this discards a one-size-fits-all mindset and grips the multiplicity of our students and learning atmospheres, counting the intricacies of student learning and the many circumstances causative to learning.

In terms of adaptation of organization structures and processes to support distributed leadership practices, table 2 shows five indicators that state "completely; to a large extent; to a moderate extent; to a small extent; not at all." The indicator got the highest frequency of 23 or 46%. is "completely". This means that every school that the school heads are assigned has ultimately adopted organizational structures and

processes to support distributed leadership practices for school improvement initiatives. The information from the table suggests that organizations have adjusted their structures and methods to back up distributed leadership. Theoharis[86] states that school leadership is nowadays an instruction strategy priority worldwide. Amplified school independence and more effort on schooling and school outcomes have made it indispensable to reevaluate the role of school leaders. There is considerable room for upgrading in professionalizing school leadership, supporting contemporary school leaders, and making school leadership a striking career for future candidates. The aging of principals and the prevalent dearth of competent aspirants to replace them after retirement make it imperative to act. Involving stakeholders in decision-making strengthens organizational resilience by fostering trust, empowerment, motivation, and commitment (Gichuhi[87]).

The diverse perspectives and expertise incorporated in the decision-making process show that it is utilized "to a large extent" with 28 or 56%. This implies that the diverse perspectives and expertise incorporated in the decision-making process by the school heads in a school to which they are assigned possess different and diverse decision-making. Education leadership is essential to help students realize their full potential and shape their destiny. Not all school administrators are the same since there is no ideal style for educational leadership. Different styles are appropriate for different contexts and various types of people. Additionally, a wide variety of roles in education provide leadership opportunities. Regardless of a school leader's ideal leadership style, supporting teachers and students in attaining and beyond their fullest potential is the definitive goal. That is the wanted consequence for anyone in a leadership role in education, and there are undoubtedly many methods for achieving it. Furthermore, the diverse perspectives and expertise incorporated with decision-making among school heads show that the diverse perspectives and expertise incorporated with the decision-making of the school heads have to do with their different

strategies and methods in handling the school as a school leader in a specific institution.

The communication channels utilized to facilitate information sharing and transparency in decision-making signify 23 or 46% being "to a large extent. This implies that schools must maintain informational and easily navigable websites that can be visited from any device. The result suggests encouraging feedback and input from all stakeholders via surveys, suggestion boxes, and open forums to foster a culture of two-way communication. According to Norton[89], feedback and input from all stakeholders should be encouraged via surveys, suggestion boxes, and open forums to foster a culture of two-way communication. Listening to problems and ideas promotes participation and investment in the school community. In summary, school leaders use a variety of communication channels, including websites, mobile applications, social media, newsletters, in-person meetings, and two-way communication tactics, to promote information sharing and transparency in decision-making processes within schools. These channels are critical for engaging stakeholders, encouraging collaboration, and building a pleasant school environment. This allows for variations in educational practices across the country, with some provinces emphasizing teacher collaboration and distributed leadership more than others.

4.3. Implementation of school improvement initiatives of the school heads in the district of Tuburan

The following section represents the Implementation of school improvement initiatives by the school heads in the district of Tuburan regarding curriculum development and alignment, teacher professional development programs, student assessment strategies, parent and community involvement, technology integration in classrooms, and school facility improvements. Table 3 presents this information.

Table 3. Implementation of school improvement initiatives of the school heads (n=50)

Statements	Mean	VD
Curriculum Development and Alignment		
Comprehensive curriculum review and update	2.46	HE
Integration of critical thinking and problem-solving skills	2.42	HE
Cross-disciplinary learning opportunities	2.42	HE
Teacher Professional Development Programs		
On-going training on innovative teaching methods	2.52	HE

Support for advanced studies	2.44	HE
Peer collaboration and mentoring	2.58	HE
Student Assessment Strategies		
Formative assessments	2.42	HE
Performance-based assessments	2.48	HE
Parent and Community Involvement		
Parent engagement programs	2.46	HE
Community partnership	2.46	HE
Transparent communication channels	2.56	HE
Technology Integration in Classrooms		
Access to modern educational technology	2.42	HE
Professional development on technology use	2.36	HE
School Facilities Improvement		
Safety and healthy learning environment	2.46	HE
Modernization and learning spaces	2.46	HE
Accessibility enhancement	2.46	HE
Average Weighted Mean	**2.46**	**HE**

Legend: 2.34-3.00 – Highly Effective (E); 1.67-2.33 – Effective (E); 1.00-1.66 – Not Effective (NE)

Table 3 highlights the implementation of school improvement initiatives; it shows that in curriculum development and alignment, comprehensive curriculum review and update have the highest mean of 2.46, which means *highly effective*. In the teacher professional development program, peer collaboration and mentoring have the highest mean of 2.58, verbally described as highly effective. In contrast, support for advanced studies has the lowest mean among the three statements, with a mean of 2.44, and is also verbally described as *highly effective*. It also reveals that performance-based assessment has the highest mean of 2.48 among the two assessment strategies considered. Moreover, the ineffectiveness of distributed leadership regarding parent and community involvement, as observed by the respondents, resulted from transparent communication channels, which got the highest mean of 2.56. Regarding technology integration in classrooms, it revealed that access to modern educational technology has the highest weighted mean of 2.42. Regarding school facilities improvement, it shows that all indicators have the same percentage of 2.46, being *highly effective*. Overall, the school heads' implementation of school improvement initiatives in the districts of Tuburan has an average weighted mean of 2.46, which means it is *highly effective*.

The implications of the research findings are significant. Placing a strong emphasis on peer collaboration and mentoring in programs for teacher professional development can have various beneficial effects on educators, learners, schools, and the educational system. This is supported by Kolleck et al.[90], who discovered that practically every educator believes working with others is essential. Furthermore, according to Geven et al.[91], for schools to function as learning organizations, there must be a shared vision for the education of all students, learning opportunities for staff, systems for exchanging knowledge, encouragement of team learning, a culture of inquiry and innovation, and leadership for learning. Positive change can only occur in the improvement cycle if all educational organization members engage in professional education. When developing a fresh perspective on school development, it is critical to consider how their own experiences and expertise impact the process. Thus, establishing a framework for constant renewal, communication, and introspection is crucial to fostering an atmosphere conducive to deep learning (Atlay[92]).

4.4. Challenges and opportunities encountered by the school heads in the implementation of school improvement initiatives

This section represents the ranking of the challenges and opportunities school heads face when implementing improvement initiatives. The data for this parameter are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Challenges and opportunities encountered by the school heads in the implementation of school improvement initiatives (n=50).

Challenges	f	Rank
Lack of support from teachers	37	1
Resistance to change	29	2
Communication barriers	26	3
Time constraints	15	4
Resource limitations	4	5
Other	3	6
Opportunities	f	Rank
Improved collaboration and teamwork	46	1
Enhanced creativity and innovation	43	2
Better problem-solving capabilities	35	3
Increased teacher ownership and commitment	31	4
Other	4	5

Table 4 illustrates the challenges and opportunities met by the school heads in implementing school improvement initiatives; results show that the first rank is the challenges of "time constraints." Second in rank is the challenge of "resource limitations." Third in rank is the challenge of "resistance to change." Fourth in rank is the challenges of "communication barriers," and the fifth is the challenges of "lack of support from teachers." Moreover, last in rank are the other challenges encountered in implementing school improvement initiatives. The result of the study demonstrates that the biggest challenge encountered in implementing school improvement initiatives is time constraints. The inability of schools to commit the time and resources required for the long-term planning, execution, and sustainability of improvement initiatives makes time limitations a significant barrier to their successful implementation. According to theories of organizational change in the setting of schools, administrators and instructors play a key role as change agents, bringing new ideas to the organization, expanding the body of knowledge about change, and fostering an environment conducive to innovation. Because of this, we assume that teacher collaboration is a crucial component of organizational change. Educators working together to improve their schools may see the institution's needs, create focused, valuable ideas, and implement those innovations. Second, we believe that principal leadership plays a significant role in fostering teacher cooperation because principals can guarantee that educators have enough time and resources, assist in the formation of teacher teams, provide process-level guidance to these groups, and inspire educators to carry out the intended organizational modifications (Klassen & Kim[93]). There is no single leadership style; leaders use a variety of leadership styles to encourage those they lead (Ibrahim & Daniel[94]). As a result, it is critical to establish leadership roles to help grow aware organizations, individuals, and communities. Distributed leadership is a concept in which several people share leadership duties and decision-making. Shared leadership, on the other hand, refers to a collaborative decision-making process in which all team members have equal input and influence (Lorinkova & Bartol[95]).

Regarding opportunities, improved collaboration and teamwork ranked in descending order as enhanced creativity and innovation, better problem-solving capabilities, and increased teacher ownership and commitment. The presence of improved collaboration and teamwork within schools implies a fundamental shift in organizational culture towards a more cohesive and unified approach to achieving common goals. When cooperation and teamwork are strong, managers, teachers, and support personnel actively participate in mutual respect, open communication, and joint decision-making. According to Hargreaves[96], teachers who collaborate may have more time to consider their methods of instruction, determine whether they are effective, and then modify or reinforce their actions and behaviors in the classroom. According to Cook-Sather & Wilson[97], teachers could also embrace a new teaching style through collaboration activities, giving them the courage to think critically and reflect on their methods. According to Worline & Dutton[98], effective communication must be established in a

distributed leadership approach. Hence, Denee & Thornton[99] reveal that the distributed leadership approach effectively promotes accessible communication within educational institutions, including with parents. The study proves that the distributed leadership approach has proven to be instrumental in fostering parent and community involvement within educational institutions. This approach facilitates open and accessible communication, creating an effective learning environment. On the other hand, Navaridas-Nalda et al.[100], with professional development, asserted that principals are required to acquire essential skills in digital literacy to foster effective leadership tailored to the needs of both students and teachers.

4.5. Correlation between the extent of the distributed leadership approach implementation and the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives in the Districts of Tuburan.

Table 5. Correlation between the extent of the distributed leadership approach implementation and the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives (n=50).

	DLA1	DLA2	DLA3	DLA4	DLA5	DLA6	DLA7	SII1	SII2	SII3	SII4	SII5	SII6
DLA1	1												
DLA2	-.011	1											
DLA3	-.124	.793**	1										
DLA4	-.068	.880**	.800**	1									
DLA5	.001	.910**	.823**	.799**	1								
DLA6	-.049	.922**	.793**	.872**	.827**	1							
DLA7	-.030	.898**	.762**	.895**	.821**	.929**	1						
SII1	.090	.114	.025	.094	-.023	.031	.025	1					
SII2	.229	-.101	-.233	-.206	-.189	-.204	-.178	.698**	1				
SII3	.143	-.037	-.194	-.144	-.177	-.132	-.217	.839**	.756**	1			
SII4	.189	-.097	-.242	-.195	-.200	-.177	-.196	.734**	.875**	.863**	1		
SII5	.324*	-.034	-.221	-.121	-.173	-.044	-.117	.673**	.667**	.713**	.671**	1	
SII6	.234	.027	-.118	-.077	-.117	-.052	-.083	.645**	.723**	.705**	.650**	.778**	1

Legend:
DLA1-frequency of collaborative decision-making among school administrators and staff
DLA2-delegation of responsibilities and authority across different levels of leadership
DLA3-empowerment of teachers and staff to take leadership roles in school improvement initiatives
DLA4-evidence of shared accountability and collective responsibility for achieving goals
DLA5-adaptation of organizational structures and processes to support distributed leadership practices
DLA6-diverse perspectives and expertise incorporated in decision-making processes
DLA7-communication channels are utilized to facilitate information sharing and transparency in decision-making
SII1-curriculum development and alignment
SII2-teacher professional development programs
SII3-student assessment strategies
SII4-parent and community involvement
SII5-technology integration in classrooms
SII6-school facilities improvement
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 shows the correlation between the extent to which the distributed leadership approach is implemented and the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives in the Districts of Tuburan. Results illustrate that on the zero-ordered correlation via Pearson r coefficient, the aim is to test whether the extent of the distributed leadership approach implementation significantly correlates with the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives. Based on the pairwise correlation of indicators, when the extent of the distributed leadership approach implementation was correlated with the effectiveness of six school improvement initiatives, only the frequency of collaborative decision-making among school administrators and staff and technology integration in classrooms (r=0.324, p<0.05) pose significant relationships. The rest of the pairwise correlations show non-significant correlation values. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected in the significant correlation between the extent of the distributed leadership approach implementation, the frequency of collaborative decision-making among school administrators and staff, and the effectiveness of school improvement initiatives regarding technology integration in classrooms. However, we failed to reject the null hypothesis for the rest of the indicators.

The result above implies that administrators consistently collaborate with their staff when making decisions regarding school improvement initiatives. This collaborative approach is anticipated to yield

decisions that significantly influence student outcomes, enhance the learning environment, and align with organizational objectives. Notably, this collaboration mainly benefits the integration of technology in classrooms. The presence of distributed leadership, specifically collaboration, within the schools has proven effective in facilitating access to modern technology and ensuring that district-level administrators in Tuburan Districts 1 and 2 receive adequate professional development to utilize it proficiently. By fostering collaboration and using the expertise of various educators, distributed leadership creates a strong foundation for effective technology use that contributes to school improvement initiatives. The result of the study affirms that Tondeur et al. [101] states that contemporary teachers and school administrators are more attracted to teacher teamwork than preceding generations. Additionally, Reimers & Chung[102] write that from an educational viewpoint; teamwork is vital to sustaining a quality learning structure. A quality learning structure can be guaranteed when instructional leaders are proactive in working with teachers directly on the curriculum and there is a collective effort to understand the ideals, content, engagement, assessment, and other factors. Further, Billett[103] asserts that it is essential to make creative use of another's expertise so everyone can learn and be willing to change. Through constant practice, teachers will benefit from working with administrators to build commitment to an innovative, collaborative culture. These collaborations will be "a continuous process with evidence of new quality thinking and intentional changes in practice is embedded.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding findings and results of the study, it is concluded that a distributed leadership approach in implementing school improvement initiatives is highly effective. While distributed leadership is crucial in driving school improvement initiatives, a formal school development plan is a complementary tool for organizing, coordinating, and sustaining efforts toward continuous improvement. Together, these approaches can enhance the effectiveness and impact of improvement initiatives, ultimately leading to better outcomes for students and the entire school community. It is recommended that a leadership program be implemented so that school heads can intensify the teaching and learning process in the District of Tuburan. This program can help the school heads establish and mold their leadership approach into something that improves the school. Also, consistency in the implementation and fair processes for the leadership approach must be established. School heads should attend training sessions on practical leadership approaches to ensure they understand the purpose of the developmental plan and are equipped with the skills to provide constructive and supportive feedback.

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