

H. M. Lalitha Kumari, 2021

Volume 5 Issue 1, pp. 55-72

Date of Publication: 03rd April 2021

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2021.51.5572>

This paper can be cited as: Kumari, H. M. L. (2021). A Study on Distributed Leadership Practices and its Impact on Teaching and Learning. PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning, 5 (1), 55-72.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

A STUDY ON DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

H. M. Lalitha Kumari

Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
lalitha@sse.cmb.c.lk

Abstract

School leadership has become very popular in the current educational discourse. Distributed leadership has been identified as one of the most important leadership practices in terms of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning since it involves many members of the school. Also, it has been found that the main purpose of distributed leadership is to create secondary level leaders within the school and thus give more opportunities for teachers to improve their leadership skills. This study focused on investigating the distributed leadership practices and their impact on teaching and learning in type 1C and type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. The objectives of this study were to identify how principals and teachers understand the concept of distributed leadership; how distributed leadership practices enhance teaching and learning; and what challenges principals and teachers face when devolving and practicing leadership responsibilities in their schools. Altogether 8 schools, 8 principals, 10 sectional heads, and 200 teachers were selected for the study. Both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to gather the data necessary. The findings revealed that all the principals and a significant number of teachers in the type 1C and type two schools fully understood the concept of distributed leadership and have linked it with teaching and learning. The study further revealed that the distributed leadership practices contributed to

enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in both types' schools to some level. However, it was revealed from this study that a significant number of teachers and principals in both types' schools face a number of challenges when practicing distributed leadership roles in their schools due to the major challenge of not having a collaborative working environment.

Keywords

Distributed Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Type 1C Schools, Type Two Schools, Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

School leadership has become very popular in the current educational dialogue. Distributed leadership has been identified as one of the most important leadership practices in terms of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning since it involves many members of the school. Also, it has been found that the main purpose of distributed leadership is to create secondary level leaders within the school and thus give more opportunities for teachers to improve their leadership skills. The distributed form of leadership has been identified as the most important leadership practice and also a key factor in terms of the development of teacher leaders within the school. The term distributed leadership was used by Gibb (1954) for the first time. According to him, leadership should be regarded as shared functions among individuals in organizations but not as the authority of the individual. However, the idea of distributed leadership was widely theorized by Gronn (2000). Two common explanations have been found in the literature on distributed leadership by Spillane and Gronn. Distributed leadership has a range of interpretations in the modern education leadership dialogue. Spillane and Duignan (2007), recognized as two prominent researchers who worked much on distributed leadership. They observed distributed leadership as being central to the teaching and learning process in the school. Also, they agree that leadership involves all members of the school community, not just the principal and deputy principal. Spillane et al., (2004) argue that leadership occurs in a variety of ways all over the school. Also, leadership is centered on the interaction between people. According to Spillane, leadership roles are played by various individuals. The leadership roles played by various individuals can be formal or informal. Hence, all individuals take responsibility for leading and managing the school. Therefore, his perspective of distributed leadership is neither a top-down nor a bottom-up approach. However, Spillane identifies that leadership roles are played by different people at different times. Also, leadership is not limited to those who are at the top of the organizational

hierarchy or to those who have been assigned formal leadership tasks. According to Spillane et al., (2007) in this context leadership practice is a collective activity

According to Gronn (2008) leadership is no longer regarded as an individual task. He believes that the notion of distributed leadership presents a dynamic understanding of leadership. Also, he identified the distribution of organizational activities and tasks as a new form of the division of labor in organizations. Similar to this view Sergiovanni (1999) recognized distributed leadership as a kind of social capital. He mentioned that distributed leadership encourages the notion of multiple leadership and that it supports organizations to identify and address their shortcomings effectively. Duignan et. al, (1997) highlighted the importance of authenticity in leadership in organizations. According to them lack of honesty and integrity in leadership can be recognized in many contemporary organizations. Hence, distributed leadership has been recognized as one of the most important leadership practices that can be used in developing teacher leaders within the school. They have further emphasized that there is a positive relationship between distributed leadership practices and the quality of the instructional process. A similar view is presented by Harris et al., (2008) on the concept of distributed leadership. She highlighted the importance of teamwork, collaborative work practices, and trust. Improving schools through teacher leadership, Harris & Muijs (2002) emphasized the importance of delegation of various responsibilities among teachers in the schools. Leithwood et al (2008) see distributed leadership as one of the seven-strong claims of successful school leadership.

Accordingly, the researchers identify distributed leadership as one of the most important leadership styles which can be used to improve the quality of teaching, learning, and student educational outcome through the motivation of teamwork and collaborative work culture in schools. Principals as effective leaders of the twenty-first-century schools need to develop teacher leaders within the school as school leadership has become a complex concept. In this connection school, principals can use distributed leadership practices as an effective leadership style in terms of enhancing the leadership skills of teachers and thereby the quality of teaching-learning and student outcome. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the distributed leadership practices and their impact on teaching and learning in Type 1C and Type 2 Schools in Sri Lanka. This study looks at the distributed leadership practices by school principals on the pedagogical practices and leadership development of teachers in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka.

2. Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of distributed leadership is to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their leadership skills, teamwork, and collaborative work practices which directly benefit students' high level of educational performance. Also, it has been found that there is a positive relationship between distributed leadership practices and the quality of instructional processes in schools. According to Harris et al., (2008), there is a high possibility to achieve school improvement if teachers and their colleagues are confident about their capacity and the schools' capacity to encourage professional development. Rutherford (2002) investigated the impact of collaborative work environments on student educational achievement. Based on the study findings Rutherford concluded that a collaborative working environment enhances the quality of teaching-learning and students' educational achievements. The study findings further revealed that the successful head-teachers practice positive dynamic and flexible leadership styles and encourage a friendly working environment. Accordingly, it is clear from the evidence that teamwork and collaborative work practices are at the center of school improvement and development. The Report of the National Education Commission (NEC 2003) in Sri Lanka also states the importance of teamwork and collaborative work practices among teachers in the school sector highlighting that collaborative work practices help improve teaching-learning and also professional development of teachers. It has further emphasized that "collaborative work practices are essential to ensure effective performance in the school organization as well as a multifaceted quality of life".

The above findings about collaborative work practices and teamwork of school teachers provide a relevant and valuable indication for the current study as it focuses on how principals working in Type 1C and Type 2 schools distribute leadership responsibility among staff and its impact on teaching-learning and student educational achievement. Hence, principals as school leaders should have a desire to delegate leadership responsibilities among the staff members and enhance the leadership skills of teachers which in turn benefit for quality of instruction and enhance student educational achievement. However, there is a growing concern about the little attention to distributed leadership practices by principals working in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. From the recent past, the continuous poor academic performance of students in Type 1C and Type 2 schools has been a subject of concern to stakeholders of education in Sri Lanka. The decline in quality of education in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka could be a result of

not implementation of distributed leadership practices to a satisfactory level. To date, research into this field in the country has focused more on the process of other types of school leadership practices rather than on how the principals engage in distributed leadership practices as school leaders in the school. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the distributed leadership practices of principals working in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. There are different categories of schools in Sri Lanka namely 1AB, 1C, Type 2, Type 3 -1, and Type 3- 11. A classification about different categories of schools is given below;

Type 1-AB = Schools with classes up to grade 13 including GCE (A/L) science, mathematics, and commerce

Type 1-C = Schools with classes up to grade 13 including GCE (A/L) arts and commerce

Type 2 = Schools with classes up to grade 11 including GCE (O/L)

Type 3-1 = Elementary schools with classes up to grade 8 and

Type 3-11 = Primary schools with classes up to grade 5

3. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine how principals engage in distributed leadership practices in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine how do principals and teachers of Type 1C and Type 2 schools understand the concept of distributed leadership
2. Find out how do distribute leadership practices enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and student educational achievement
3. Explore what challenges principals and teachers of Type 1C and Type 2 schools face when devolving and practicing leadership responsibilities in their schools

4. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to direct this study.

1. How do principals and teachers of Type 1C and Type 2 schools understand the concept of distributed leadership?

2. How do distributed leadership practices enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and student educational achievement?
3. What challenges principals and teachers of Type 1C and Type 2 schools face when devolving and practicing leadership responsibilities in their schools?

5. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey in which both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were applied. Accordingly, the mixed methodology was employed in this study. As explained by Newby (2010) mixed methods research is becoming an increasingly popular approach in the fields of sociology, psychology, education, and health sciences. Supporting this Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone can provide. As explained by Tashakkori & Teddlie, (1998) combining quantitative and qualitative approaches within different stages of the research process is possible. Accordingly, two phases of the study, a quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase was included in the research design. The following diagram shows the research design of the current study.

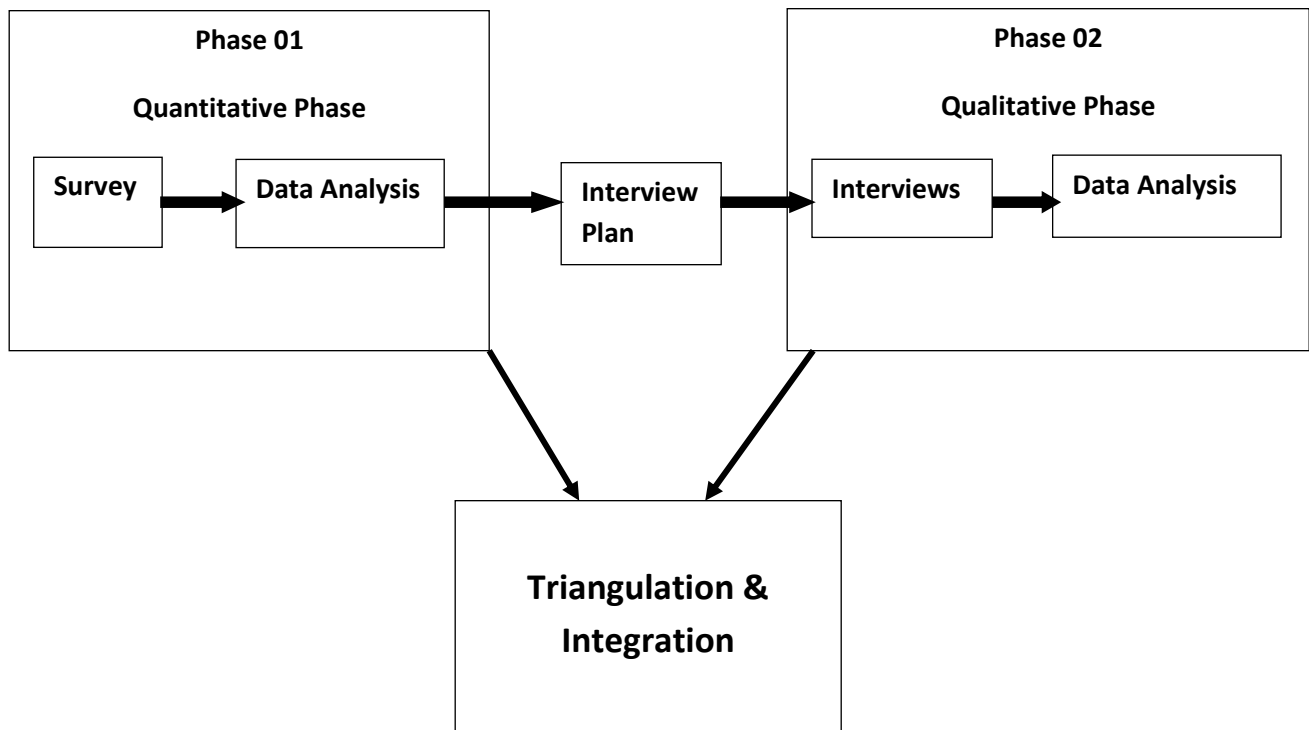


Figure: 1: *Mixed Method Research Design Approach – Adopted from Creswell 2012*

5.1 Study Sample

The following table shows the total number of the study sample of the current study

Table 1: Study Sample

School Type	School Sample	Principal Sample	Teacher Sample	Sample of Sectional Heads
Type 1C	04	04	110	06
Type 2	04	04	90	04
Total	08	08	200	10

Accordingly, the study sample included 200 teachers randomly selected from 08 governments Type 1C and Type 2 schools, 08 school principals, and 10 sectional heads as this study is limited only to Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka.

5.2 Data Collection Instruments

To achieve the objectives of this study, both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the necessary data and information. Accordingly, the instruments used for the data collection were researcher-developed questionnaires for teachers and semi-structured interview schedules for principals, selected teachers, and sectional heads. The items selected for the questionnaire and interview in the current study were focused on the main elements related to distributed leadership practices. The teacher questionnaire had two sections. Section A contained items regarding the respondent's profile while section B had two sub-sections designed to identify principals distributed leadership practices. The teacher questionnaire consisted of 15 items that cover the areas of principals' distributed leadership practices as perceived by the teachers. A four-point scale with a response mode of V = very satisfied (4 points), S = satisfied (3 points), N= neutral (2 points) and NS = not satisfied (1 point) was used to measure the item responses. The respondents to the teacher questionnaire were requested to indicate by ticking (✓) the appropriate boxes, the response applicable to the items. In addition to the questionnaire survey with teachers' interview is also used to collect qualitative data. A semi-structured interview was selected as a data collection technique to obtain data and information from individual principals, sectional heads, and teachers

about principals distributed leadership practices and their impact on teaching and learning in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. Hence semi-structured interview was held with principals, teachers, and sectional heads. Altogether 10 questions were included in each interview schedule of principals, sectional heads, and teachers.

The instruments were pilot tested to make sure about validity and reliability. Two research assistants were trained in administering the questionnaire. The consent of the principals of selected 08 schools of Type 1C and Type 2 was given and the questionnaire was administered to the teachers in the schools. The principals, teachers, and sectional heads were interviewed by the researcher herself. Respondents were properly guided to avoid misunderstanding the purpose of the study. The exercise was completed within three weeks.

5.3 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the main data. In the current study frequency distributions were shown as tables. Distributions are displayed using percentages of teachers' responses in Type 1C and Type 2 of 08 schools. Besides, chi-square (X^2) statistics have also been calculated where appropriate to investigate whether there is a significant difference among the responses of different categories of the schools. In particular, a significant difference was considered between the actual value and expected value (expected value is the value obtained based on contingency table according to the sample of 200 teachers) given by teachers for 6 distributed leadership practices. Therefore, six Chi-Square tests have been conducted to find out whether there is a significant difference in the response rates. The results are evaluated based on "P" values. For example, if the P-value is less than 5% it indicates that there is a significant difference between the actual value and expected value. The Chi value was calculated using the following equation.

$$\text{Chi square} = \frac{\sum (\text{Number of Observed frequencies recorded} - \text{Expected frequencies})^2}{\text{Expected frequencies}}$$

Accordingly, the quantitative aspects of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Kvale et, al. (1996) identified thematic analysis as a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the data that have been collected. Accordingly, qualitative data particularly the interview data were analyzed thematically.

6. Findings

The findings of the study are presented in Tables 1-3. In this section, data presentation, analysis interpretations, and discussion of findings are presented.

6.1 Background Information of the Principals

In Sri Lanka, currently there are 10, 012 government schools with a principal population of 20,024 including deputy principals. (Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka 2014). In this survey, there are 8 principals in total in the eight secondary schools in Sri Lanka. All principals were of Sinhala Buddhist background.

6.1.1. Gender and Age

In this study there are eight principals in different school categories (1-C and Type 2) of secondary schools in the sample. Five principals are male and three of them are female. Most of the respondents are between 45 to 55 years of age.

6.1.2. Teaching Experience – Principals’ Responses and Analysis

School Principals spend a lot of time supporting teachers in the traditional classrooms by observing instructional process. Engagement in classroom observation always provides a strong platform to support teachers to improve the quality of instruction. Therefore, it is believed that in order to facilitate professional development of teachers school principals should have teaching experiences. In terms of teaching experience, the four principals had between five to ten years of teaching experience. All of them were from the 1-C schools and they belong to the Sri Lanka Principal Service (SLPS). Four principals had more than ten years of teaching experience and all of them were from Type 2 schools and they also belong to the Sri Lanka Principals Service.

6.1.3. Experience as a Principal

Education and professional experience of school principals’ shape their approach to school leadership. In terms of experience as a principal, six principals from the sample had more than ten years experience. Three principals had seven years’ experience. All the principals in the sample had had experience as acting principals.

6.1.4. Educational Qualifications of the Principals

Table 2: *Educational Qualifications of the Principals*

Principal No.	Name of the Exam				
	Diploma (Collages of Education)	Degree	PGDE	Med	MPhil

1 (1C)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 (1C)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3 (1C)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4 (1C)	Yes	No	No	No	No
5 (Type 2)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
6 (Type 2)	No	Yes	Yes	Yess	No
7 (Type 2)	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
8(Type 2)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

According to Table 2 above, the educational qualifications of principals were dissimilar in different categories of schools. Seven principals out of eight had degree qualifications. One principal did not have a degree but had a Diploma from a Collages of Education. Seven principals from the entire sample had Postgraduate Diplomas in Education (PGDE). Three principals had both Masters (MEd) and the Master of Philosophy (MPhil) qualification. Accordingly, almost all the principals are educationally qualified.

6.1.5. Professional Qualifications of the Principal and Training Received

According to the literature (Leithwood et al., 2008) school leadership plays a significant role in achieving a higher level of educational performance and thus school development. Therefore, it is believed that there should be a successful mechanism to train school principals. The principals in Sri Lanka are expected to belong either to the Sri Lanka Educational Administrative Service (SLEAS) or the Sri Lanka Principal Service (SLPS)).

According to the current study sample, all the principals had the Sri Lanka Principal Service (SLPS) qualification. This is shown in the following table. Five principals from the sample had participated in a wide range of short courses and diploma level training programs with regard to leadership development offered by the National Institute of Education’s Centre for Education Leadership Development (NIE/CELD) in Sri Lanka. In addition to this, three principals from the entire sample had not obtained the opportunity to participate in such training programs related to the development of leadership skills.

6.2. Analysis of Questionnaire and Interview Data

This study was undertaken in two different categories of schools namely 1-C and Type 2 with particular focus on secondary schools in Sri Lanka. Essentially the focus of this study is on

distributed leadership practices and its impact on teaching and learning in secondary schools in Sri Lanka. This section presents the results of key findings associated with distributed leadership practices of the principals of different categories of secondary schools in Sri Lanka. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the main data.

In terms of responses obtained to the question “What do you mean by distributed leadership practices?” all the principals of both types of schools responded that distributed leadership is sharing leadership responsibilities among the staff members to improving the educational achievement of students. In terms of the responses obtained to the question “To what extent are you satisfied with principals distributed leadership practices” irrespective of school type more than 80% of teachers from the entire sample responded ‘Satisfied’. Compared to this, the percentages of teachers who had responded ‘Not Satisfied’ were less amounting to 5%. Further, a chi-square calculation is also indicated that there was no significant difference between school type and principals’ distributed leadership practices as the P-value is more than 5%. This situation has been shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: *Teacher Response to the Statement of to What Extent are you Satisfied with Principals Distributed Leadership Practices*

School Type	Teacher Responses								Total	
	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Not Satisfied		No	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Type 1C	4	3.63	87	79.09	13	11.81	06	5.45	110	100.00
Type 2	4	4.44	75	83.33	8	8.88	03	3.33	90	100.00
Total	8	4.00	162	81.00	21	10.5	09	4.5	200	100.00

This position has been further depicted in figure 2 below

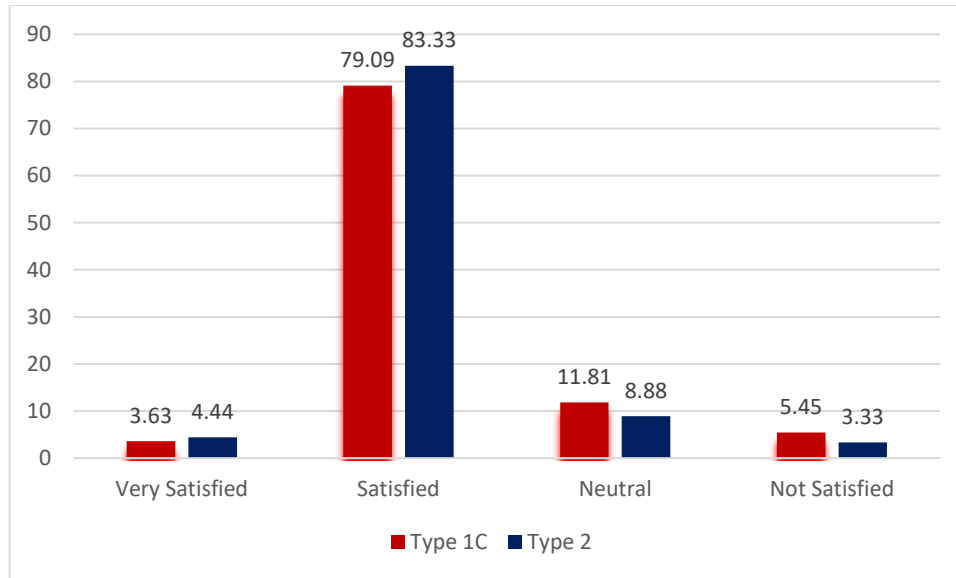


Figure 2: Teacher Response to the Statement of to What Extent are you Satisfied with Principals Distributed Leadership Practices

This was supported by interviews with sectional heads of 1C and Type 2 schools. Sectional heads' interviews in 7 schools of Type 1C and Type 2 also gave strong evidence that principals in their schools try to implement distributed leadership practices in their schools. Sectional head 3 from Type 1C School highlighted that distributed leadership practices have been linked with the teaching-learning process and hence it facilitates to enhancement of educational achievements of students. However, he further mentioned about the existing unsatisfactory collaborative working environment hinders the successful implementation of distributed leadership practices in their school. According to him,

Distributed leadership practices are one of the most important leadership practices which facilitate enhancing the quality of the teaching-learning process. When principals devolve leadership responsibilities particularly concerning teaching and learning students get more benefits. Therefore, what I believe is that principals in my school have devolved various leadership roles among staff members. However, the prevailing unsatisfactory collaborative working environment is a big challenge in implementing distributed leadership practices in.....”

(Sectional head 3 from Type 1C School)

Expressing a similar view to the above response, principal 2 from Type 3 School said,

“I agree that the distributed leadership has been recognized as an effective leadership style which supports in enhancing the quality of teaching-learning and thus the educational outcome of the students. Therefore, I have devolved various leadership responsibilities among our staff members. However, I should say that the negative attitude of some teachers in terms of holding leadership responsibilities has become a big challenge and ...”

(Principal 2 from Type 3 school)

Concerning the responses obtained to the question “What type of distributed leadership practices enhance the quality of teaching-learning and student achievement?” irrespective of school type a significant number of teachers (88%) from the entire teacher sample responded “coordination of instructional programs, classroom observation, regular instructional supervision, planning and implementation of series of seminars relevant to instructions and maintain of parent-teacher interactions were highlighted. This was further supported by the interviews held with the principals of both types of schools. According to principal 2 from the Type 1C School mentioned that,

“I strongly believe that distributed leadership practices enhance the quality of teaching-learning and student educational outcome as these practices are directly linked with the instructional process. Therefore, leadership responsibilities have been devolved in my school focusing on different aspects such as coordination of instructional programs, planning and implementation of series of seminars, classroom observation, instructional supervision and coordination of parent-teacher interaction (PTI) so that teachers get more opportunities to improve leadership skills ...”

(Principal 2 from Type 1C schools)

Expressing a similar view to the above response, principal 1 from Type 2 School stated that,

I believe that the concept of “teacher leaders” needs to be motivated through the delegation of leadership responsibilities. In this connection, it is essential to consider various aspects when delegating leadership responsibilities among teachers as it provides more opportunities for them to improve leadership skills from different perspectives.

(Principal 1 from Type 2 School)

Concerning the responses obtained to the statement ‘I am satisfied with the teamwork and collaborative work culture in my school’ more than 79% of teachers from the entire sample replied ‘Disagree’ while another considerable percentage (13.5 %) of teachers from the entire sample

replied ‘Strongly Disagree’. The highest percentage responded to ‘Disagree’ by type of school at 58% was from Type 2 schools A chi-square calculation also indicated that there was no significant difference between school type and teamwork and collaborative work culture as the P-value is more than 5%. The results of this analysis are given in Table 4 below.

Table 4: *Teachers Response to the Statement of “I am satisfied with the Teamwork and Collaborative Work Practices in my School”*

School Type and Statement No. 5	Responses												Total Number of Respondent	%
	Fully Agree		Somewhat Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Reply			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1C	00	00	2	1.81	2	1.81	90	81.8	12	10.9	4	3.6	110	100
Type 2	00	00	1	1.11	4	4.44	68	75.5	15	16.6	2	2.2	90	100
Total	00	00	3	1.5	6	3.0	158	79.0	27	13.5	6	3.0	200	100

This position has been further depicted in figure 2 below

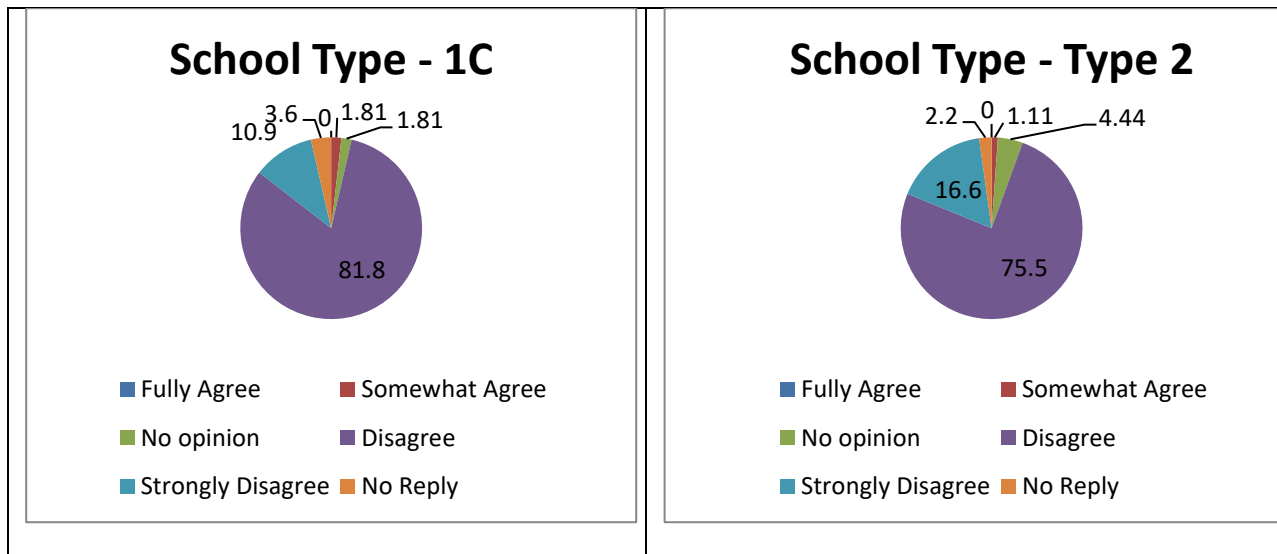


Figure 3: *Teachers Response to the Statement of “I am Satisfied with the Teamwork and Collaborative Work Practices in my School”*

It was further revealed from this study that a significant number of teachers (87%) and principals (100%) in both types of schools face a number of challenges when practicing distributed leadership roles in their schools due to the major challenge of not having a collaborative working environment, lack of trust and structural and cultural barriers operate within schools.

Teachers' interview in Type 1C and Type 2 schools also gave strong evidence that implementation of distributed leadership practices has become a challenge since unsatisfied teamwork and collaborative work milieu in their schools and this situation de-motivate teachers to undertake leadership responsibilities Teacher 4 from Type 2 School stated that,

“I am not happy at all about the teamwork and collaborative work environment in my school. Even though principals and sectional heads motivate teacher leadership concepts through the delegation of a variety of leadership responsibilities some teachers have negative attitudes regarding teacher leadership concepts and hence don't support fulfilling assigned leadership roles and ...”

(Teacher 4 from Type 2 school)

Expressing a similar view to the above response, Sectional head 2 from Type 2 School said,

“It cannot be happy about the teamwork and collaborative work practices in our schools. Most of the teachers try to engage only in the instructional process as they have negative attitudes towards leadership responsibilities. Further lack of trust and cultural barriers too hinder the successful implementation of distributed leadership practices in our schools. ”

(Sectional head 2 from Type 2 school)

According to the above extracts of the responses of principals, teachers, and sectional heads of Type 1C and Type 2 schools, it is clear that the principals and teachers working in both categories of schools have understood the importance of distributed leadership practices, teacher leaders in enhancing the quality of teaching-learning and student educational achievements. However, they find it very difficult to practice distributed leadership roles due to prevailing unsatisfactory teamwork and collaborative work environment in their schools.

7. Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that all the principals, sectional heads, and a significant number of teachers in the Type 1C and Type 2 schools have understood the distributed leadership

practices and teacher leadership concept and its importance to a satisfactory level. They believe that the distributed leadership practices is one of the most important leadership styles which can be used to improve the quality of teaching-learning and student outcome and hence leadership responsibilities were devolved among the staff members in both types of school. However, it was found from this study that the fulfillment of assigned leadership tasks becomes a big challenge for teachers as there is no satisfactory teamwork and collaborative work environment in both types of schools. The results could be recognized to the fact that when there is no properly functioning teamwork culture, it could negatively affect the quality of the instructional process and the decline of educational achievements of students. This finding is not different from that of Harris et.al: (2007), who found in their investigation that teamwork and collaborative work practices are the key elements of successful teaching-learning in schools and students higher levels of outcome. As mentioned by Spillane et al., (2004, 2007) and the National Collages of School Leadership (NCSL 2003) the distributed leadership practices and teacher leadership are very important about the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning and student educational achievement. Also, they highlighted how teacher leaders support for smooth function of the central administration of the school and quality improvement of teaching and learning through teamwork and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). As stated by Hopkins et al., (1996) successful schools promote a collaborative work milieu that encourages mutual support, assistance, and professional development. Hargreaves et al., (2003) identified collaboration among teachers as an important contributory factor of school improvement and change. Hargreaves et al., (2003) further emphasized the importance of supporting teachers to develop leadership skills within the school setup.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, all the principals, sectional heads, and a significant number of teachers in the Type 1C and Type 2 schools have understood the distributed leadership practices and teacher leadership concept and its importance to a satisfactory level. They identified distributed leadership practices as one of the most important leadership styles in improving the quality of teaching, learning, and student outcome. Also, it found that various types of leadership responsibilities were devolved among the staff members in both types of school. However, it was found from this study that the fulfillment of assigned leadership tasks becomes a big challenge for

teachers as there is no satisfactory teamwork and collaborative work environment in both types of schools.

Therefore, it is recommended to implement leadership development programs for teachers working in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka for them to improve skills on school leadership. Further, it is recommended that principals working in different categories of schools should plan and implement professional development programs within the school to change the negative attitudes of teachers in terms of distributed leadership and the concept of teacher leadership. Also, it is recommended that the teachers should be given more opportunities to participate in the seminars, workshops, and all the other programs related to professional development organized by the Ministry of Education and Faculties of Education of the Universities.

Finally, it is recommended for future researchers to consider the distributed leadership practices by principals working in other types of government schools, private schools, and international schools covering other educational zones as this study is limited only to the Type 1C and Type 2 government Schools in Colombo and Jayawardenapura Educational Zone.

REFERENCES

- Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L. (2007) *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Duignan, P. & Bhindi, N. (1997) 'Authentic leadership: An Emerging Perspective', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(3): 195-209. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578239710170119>
- Duignan, P. (2007) *Educational Leadership: Key Challenges and Educational Issues*. Melbourne: Cambridge University of Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139168564>
- Duignan, P. & Bhindi, N. (1997) 'Authentic leadership: An Emerging Perspective', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(3): 195-209. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578239710170119>
- Gibb, C. A. (1954). *Leadership*. In G. Lindzey (ed.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (pp.877-917). Cambridge, ma: Addison-Wesley.
- Gronn, P. (2000). *Distributed Properties: A New Architecture for Leadership*, *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 28, 317-338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X000283006>
- Gronn, P. (2008). *The future of distributed leadership*. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46, 141-158. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230810863235>

- Hargreaves, A. & Fink, D. (2003). Sustaining Leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(9):693 –700.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170308400910>
- Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., & Hopkins, D. (2007). Distributed leadership and organizational change: Reviewing the evidence. *Journal of Educational Change*, 8(4), 337-347. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-007-9048-4>
- Harris, A. & Muijs, D. (2002) *Improving Schools through Teacher Leadership*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, A., & Muijs, D. (2008). *Improving schools through teacher leadership*. London: Open University Press.
- Hopkins D, West, M. & Ainscow, M. (1996) *Improving the Quality of Education for All*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (1996). *Interviews – Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Second Edition. London Sage Publication, London: Sage Publications.
- Leithwood K, Harris A, Hopkins D (2008) Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1): 27-42.
- National College of School Leadership (NCSL) (2003) *Distributed Leadership*.
www.ncsl.org.uk/distributedleadership
- National College of School Leadership (NCSL) (2003) *The Role and Purpose of Middle Leaders in Schools*. www.ncsl.org.uk/literaturereviews
- Newby, P. (2010) *Research Methods for Education*, London: Pearson.
- Rutherford, D. (2002). Changing Times and Changing Roles. *Educational Management and Administration*, 30 (4), 447-459. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X020304006>
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1999). Refocusing Leadership to Build Community. *The High School Magazine*, September 1999, 12-15.
- Spillane, J.P., Halverson, R., and Diamond, J.B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: Implications of a distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(1): 3-34.
- Spillane, J. and Diamond, J. (2007) (Eds) *Distributed Leadership in Practice* Columbia University: Teachers' College Press, New York.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.