Original Paper

Improving Leadership Skills to Meet the Standards of The Bhutan Baccalaureate Philosophy through Distributed Leadership Practices

Wangmo[1]

[1] Principal I, Gelephu Middle Secondary School, Gelephu Thromde, Bhutan

E-mail: wangdorji@education.gov.bt

Abstract

The Distributed Leadership is one of the leadership practices adopted across the world to empower teachers in the educational reforms. It focuses on building leadership competencies for the organizational success. This study, in the comparative contexts of a conventional school leadership practices and the distributed leadership practices examines how the later practice meets the leadership standard of the Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy in the transitioning process of the school administration and management.

The study uses the qualitative approach such as interview (semi-structured), survey and observation to collect data. The research participants are the faculty members shouldering key leadership roles and also the faculty members without the leadership roles. The findings from the study reveals that the distributed leadership practices can lead to enhancement of the leadership skills such as effective communication, collaboration, self-regulation and confidence developing mutual trust and respect.

Therefore, the distributed leadership practice needs to be intensified by empowering teachers in contextualization of the curriculum and school programs. Furthermore, the emerging distributed leadership responsibilities are recognized where dominance of top-down decisions are ultimately not applicable. It is this which the distributed leadership practice is better than the conventional school leadership practices. The role of the principal in distributed leadership practice outlines to address external development and overcome micro-political barriers for overall functioning of the school. The outcome of the study fixes a need for the perspective shift in the mindset of the school leaders which is a challenge today.

Keywords: The Bhutan Baccalaureate, Distributed leadership, Leadership skills, Leadership mindset, Decision making

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education, Bhutan initiated the education reform process in 2021 with the adoption of the best practice of The Royal Academy, Druk Gyalpo's Institute, Pangbisa, Paro. The reform was based on the philosophy and principles of The Bhutan Baccalaureate that derived its vision from the aspiration of His Majesty the King of Bhutan which is to create "a just and harmonious society." One of the unique philosophies The Bhutan Baccalaureate emphasized is the system of empowering teachers in various leadership roles. The teachers are appointed as Coordinators in the Five Areas of Development, Domain Heads, mentors, and Dorm Parent. The teachers are to collaborate with their students, management staff, students' families, and community to "facilitate Learning Experiences and enrich the learning environment of the school." Gelephu Middle Secondary school is one of the 21 pilot schools, undergoing transition, and experienced the paradigm shift of school administration and management system from transactional leadership to distributed leadership.

The purpose of the study is to determine how to improve the distributed leadership skills to meet the leadership standards of The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy. There is an urgency felt to develop and

possess leadership competency in the field of distributed leadership to lead the school in the transitioning process in the administration and management aspect of the school. Smallwood, Ulrich and Zenger (1999) recommended that, "Leaders who achieve results must be selfless about their role. Organizations entrust people with leadership roles. Leaders gain stature as they promote trust and confidence in how they operate. People must believe that their organization is fair." The study would create scopes for the researcher to assess leadership competencies required to narrow the gap between the role of the school leader as an instructional leader and the evolving system of distributed leadership seen in informal leadership roles of teachers under the philosophy of The Bhutan Baccalaureate. It would also provide avenues to carry out research in the fields of professional standard of principals, its challenges to meet the needs of the 21st century learners.

This would ultimately raise the quality of Learning Experiences in the school and thereby indicating the success of education reform as envisioned by His Majesty the King.

1.1 Problem Statement

Gelephu Middle Secondary school as one of the pilot schools of The Bhutan Baccalaureate has faced several challenges in the transitioning process. The training programs are scheduled across the year and the school has to evolve into a new administration and management structure whereby the school administration has to appoint five coordinators for the Five Areas of Development and seven domain heads lead the domains, and mentor-mentee system. This manner, we witnessed the emergence of many teachers in the leadership roles though they were not formally trained to take up the leadership roles. That was quite a challenge though.

The teachers demonstrated reservations, hesitations and confusion. Many had reservations to shoulder the leadership roles. It was yet challenging to get many teachers for the leadership roles. We had to appoint some of the teachers in the leadership roles based on their years of experiences in lead roles and competencies. And like wise, we had to extend the invitation and encourage many more to take up the leadership roles. Some of them were appointed to leadership roles based on the nominations and unanimous decisions of the faculty. We could finally appoint teachers in the leadership roles of coordinators, domain heads and all the faculty became the mentors. Such experiences made us realize the urgency to learn how to design and invest in human capital to develop the leadership amongst the teachers in the management of instructional responsibility of the school as per the philosophy of The Bhutan Baccalaureate. Smallwood, Ulrich and Zenger (1999) justified, "Knowing how to increase human capital will become even more valuable to firms as human capital continues to increase in importance as an element of organizational success. Leaders who want increase employee results can do so by increasing both the capability and the commitment of their employees" (p. 55). It creates an opportunity for the school leaders to reflect on some research-based strategies to enhance performance collaboration in the school to provide the best learning experiences to actualize the full potential of the learners.

Therefore, the study finding will provide a comprehensive finding on the role of school leadership in addressing challenges in implementing distributed leadership effectively and efficiently enabling the school to transit smoothly based on the philosophy of The Bhutan Baccalaureate

1.2 Situational Analysis

Gelephu Middle Secondary school is one of the pilot schools under The Bhutan Baccalaureate program of The Druk Gyalpo's Institute, Pangbisa, Paro. The school is in the transitioning process witnessing the need of a distributed leadership structure in the administration and management of the school with the best outlined in the philosophy and principles of The Bhutan Baccalaureate towards achieving the vision of His Majesty the king of Bhutan, "to create just and harmonious society."

The appraisal for principals, framed by the Ministry of Education, requires the principals to demonstrate the leadership competency as stated,

> "The principal is the leading educational professional in the school. He/she must inspire learners, staff and members of the community to continuously enhance learning of all and continuously strive to understand and improve their impact. He/she networks and collaborates with a wide

range of people to secure the best possible learning outcomes and wellbeing of all learners. He/she is skilled at establishing and maintaining professional relationship and enabling environment."

The role of principal requires to understand the concept of distributed leadership and explore how distributed leadership structure can addresses both external development and overcome micro-political barriers in the school system. There is a need for the perspective shift in the mindset of leaders which is a challenge at the moment. Smallwood and Ulrich (2003) defined as shared mindset as, "A shared mindset produces intangible value when it creates an identity or reputation in the mind of employees, customers, and investors that is tied not to a person or product but to the firm itself. This mindset becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when it affects how each stakeholder behaves towards the firm" (p. 104).

The principal is therefore expected to be skillful to strategize and process leadership that must result in school-community partnership, decision making and generate stakeholder feedback for the holistic development of the faculty and learners. The school system must function on the principles of diversity that leverages diverse perspectives, ideas, and experiences that can help to realize the school's vision.

Therefore, the visibility of professional limitation was felt when I started to strategize and strengthen the collaboration among the coordinators and other stakeholders. I also experienced limitation to manage, leverage and empower the teachers as required by The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy. Thus, to build my leadership competencies I realized the need to study on my distributed leadership skills.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to determine and analyze on distributed leadership skills to lead the school in the transition process to meet the standard of The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy. Therefore, the following research objectives were set:

   i. Study the efficacy of teachers in leadership roles.

   ii. To determine the impact of distributed leadership in the school faculty towards enhancing leadership competency in the faculty.

   iii. The finding of the study can provide effectiveness of The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy on distributed leadership.

2. Literature Review

The review of literature is focused on the need to shift in the leadership competencies required for the principals of the Bhutan Baccalaureate schools. It can be a driving force in creating the enabling conditions by offering teachers the distributed leadership platforms as coordinators, domain heads, mentors and domain teachers to actualize the potential by innovating and curating learning experiences. The need to shift the leadership practices is to bring about organizational performance as put forward by Carroll (2021), as in a rapidly changing environment, distribution leadership helps organizations move faster and smarter. He further added that distributed leadership pushes and accountability down and across an organization. The concept of distributed leadership is centered on the concept of empowering teachers with the instructional leadership which truly is a challenge in the real settings of the schools.

Harries (2014) refers to the positive relationship between distributed leadership, organizational improvement and student achievement and justified the importance of distributed leadership as a potential contributor to positive change and organizational growth. Grenda and Hackmann (2014) elaborated that, "By engaging teachers in a variety of groups, they have multiple opportunities to problem solve and find solutions to the issues at hand. Providing multiple chances to participate in this type of dialogue and problem-solving process increases the opportunities for teachers to become engaged in building-wide issues and planning" (p. 61).

The organizational growth does not occur with delegating the job and sharing the work of school management. The author has interesting views on distributed leadership because there is a pleasant condition involved which creates a positive relationship as organizational does not occur with

delegating the job and sharing of responsibility. Her views make good sense in an educational setting as a lot of positive energy is needed to generate during the occurrence of shift, which will directly create a sound learning environment that will promote and actualize the potentials.

Stoll and Temperley (2010) stated the urgency to evolve the role of principal in the 21st century schools as "There is a growing concern that the role of school principal, designed for industrial age, has not evolved to deal with the complex challenges that the schools are preparing children and young people to face in the 21st century. As expectations of what school leaders should achieve change, so must the definition and distribution of school leadership roles. Succession planning is also a high priority in order to ensure high quality school leadership for the future" (p. 12). The school improvement depends upon the leadership practice. Spillane (2005) pointed out that, "a distributed perspective frames leadership practice in a particular way; leadership practiced is viewed as a product of interaction of school leaders, followers, and their situation" (p. 144). Further, Spillane adds that, "leaders act in situations that are defined by others' action. From a distributed perspective, it is in these interactions that leadership practice is constructed" (p. 145). Unlike the past, the school principals as a formal leader of a school are now expected to share decision making authority, autonomy and lead the school in collaboration with the teachers and staff who are leaders in their field of expertise.

Harris (2014) deliberates that leadership is not about being confined to only those in positions of authority then we are willfully ignoring the leadership talent and capability of many others. She reinstated that if leadership is fundamentally about influence, then within any school there are many sources of influence, both formal and informal. Carroll, R (2021) with the 21st century, school as an organization can claim to function on the principle of distributed leadership if distributed authority leverages collective skill sets and create breeding ground for new leaders. Healey and Spillane (2010) expressed that leading and managing schools can involve teachers because, "a distributed perspective allows for the possibility that individuals without any formal leadership designations can take responsibility for the work of leading and managing in schools. Contrary to some portrayals, distributed perspectives as we understand do not assume that everyone is or ought to have a hand in leading and managing" (p. 256).

It is important for the principal to empower, not delegate, the teachers to work together in team and more effectively through the principles of interdependence, discipline and focus. The leadership practice of recognizing and empowering also involves giving autonomy to make decisions in their area of expertise. Dar, Harries, Hopkins, Leithwood and Sammons (2002) elaborated that, "The school improvement literature similarly highlights a positive relationship between distributed leadership and change in schools. This research base has consistently under-lined the importance of teacher involvement in decision-making processes and the contribution of strong collegial relationships to school improvement and change." Through such processes, the leaders can bestow responsibility and can bring on board the informal leaders, teachers, to mobilize and deliver their services in their expertise to transform a school as a center for holistic development of the learners. Harris (2014) emphasis was upon interdependent interaction and practice rather than individual and independent actions associated with those with formal leadership roles or responsibilities.

The Current concepts of the distributed leadership do not imply that the formal leadership structure or traditional administrative leadership styles within the organizations are removed or redundant. Instead, Day, Sammons and Gorgen (2020) in their review paper on successful school leadership justified that distributed leadership is not about teachers trained as formal leaders to be play the role of the distributed leadership. They stated that, in certain research distributed leadership is seen as an emergent property of a group or a network of interacting individuals. The implication, largely supported by the teacher development and school improvement literature, is that organizational change and development are enhanced when leadership is broad based and where teachers have the opportunities to collaborate and to actively engage in change and innovation." According to Chatwani (2018) there is progressive contemporary shift from hierarchically structured command and control patterns of decision taking, to decentralized patterns that place authority in semi-autonomous local sub-units, to distributed patterns that are either acephalous (with no clearly designated leadership function) or rhizomic (with multi-nodal and inter-linked leadership functions).

Shava and Tlou support by saying that school leadership is changing and it is imperative that school leaders need to reflect on these changes and adapt to enhance the achievements of school goals. Through distributed leadership, the teachers are entrusted with the leadership responsibility to lead the instructional program and contribute towards better decision making through their content and pedagogical expertise as teachers. It develops partnership between the principal and the teachers to collaborate to create an eco-system and thrive towards actualizing their potential and realize the shared vision of the school.

There are studies that suggest that distributed leadership has significant impact on students learning and teacher's self-efficacy. The leadership of principals become most effective when the leadership is distributed among the teachers who possess different skillsets and experiences. The teachers in the leadership teams become a symbolic representative of the larger learning community to voice out the needs of the learners in decision making. It can motivate teachers to participate in intellectual interaction and collaborate to design, curate greater Learning Processes and Learning Experiences and thrive to raise the bar in the profession. Day C and Sammons P, in a survey conducted from over 2500 teachers and principals in Australia resulted in as stated, "student outcomes are more likely to improve when leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and when teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them." They cited Morrisey (2000); Chapman and Allen (2006) to express that research concludes that extended leadership responsibility beyond the principal is an important lever for developing effective professional learning communities in schools and justified how distributed leadership can enhance and equalize the professional learning communities in schools.

Accordingly, Carroll (2021) proposes and agreement and explained why distributed leadership was popular in schools. Some of the reasons stated by him are, decision making responsibilities are shared, encourages all the teachers to collaborate, it focuses on positive outcome on the students learning, drives innovation and satisfaction, reduce corporate exposure, discover and cultivates leaders and improves communication. In our school setting, we have the culture of grooming teachers who aspires to take formal leadership roles in their latter part of their career. The implementation of a school-based distributed leadership can provide teachers on-the-job experience as they work with the administration shouldering various responsibilities in the school.

Harries (2014) elaborated that, "when distributed leadership works well, individuals are accountable and responsible for their leadership actions; new leadership roles created, collaborative team work is the modus operand and inter-dependent working is a cultural norm." The sense of accountability that can be cultivated in the individual leadership can reduce the complex situation the schools' leaders are engaged in. If every teacher is able to develop self-accountability, the organization growth would be rapid and it would enable the school to make better decisions and choose better learning experiences for the well-being of the learners. The school would function on the principles of mutual trust and collaboration that can result in system well-being.

On the contrary, research also points out possible drawbacks associated with distributed leadership. School leadership is elevated to more complex in addressing learning challenges in school. It is crucial to be aware of micro-political barriers that can hinder in the implementation of the distributed leadership in the school. The concern arises in the perspective of autonomy, position threat of those in the formal leadership roles who are used to being in "heroic" position, and it can misguide the delegation. Harries (2013) alerts that, "There is a dark side; of distributed leadership, as with any form of leadership, if power, influence and authority are misused or abused". While such examples are rare, it presents a real challenge for those in formal leadership roles wishing to engage in distributed leadership practice. It signals the need to maintain a balance of control so that no individual or group can undermine, disrupt or derail the efforts of formal leaders to move the organization forward.

Miller identified a list of disadvantages of distributed leadership such as, it can be a struggle to maintain accountability, it can slow down the decision-making process, it can create an expectation of importance and it can generate a certain level of uncertainty. Day, Sammons and Gorgen (2020) stated that "societal culture also influences principals to take a strong, personal stand while teachers and parents tend to be more reluctant to engage in shared decision-making" (Jones, 2014). "While the parameters for distributed leadership include the need for acceptance of change and new, less

conflictual relationships between people, there is no detail of what action is needed to engender this. While some emergent literature is attempting to explore the democratic potential of distributed leadership, there is no consensus to date on whether a distributed leadership approach ushers in more democratic decision making." Further, Bush and Ng through their journal (2019) identified practical and social implication of distributed leadership in Malaysia. There are;

> "The main practical implication is that principals and head teachers are more likely to enact leadership in ways which are congruent with their cultural backgrounds and assumptions than to embrace policy prescriptions, even when unproblematic adoption of policy might be expected, as in this centralized context. The main social implications are that policy change is dependent on socio-cultural considerations and that reform will not be whole-hearted and secure if it is not congruent with the values of institutions such as schools, and the wider society which they serve."

Shava and Tlou (2018) presented their findings indicating that, "effective principals orchestrate the structural, cultural and agential conditions in which distributed is more or less likely". Likewise, The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy introduced to a system of management in which a team of five coordinators leading the Five Areas of Development and domain heads are appointed to work in collaboration with the school administration. Their main responsibilities were to lead the social, emotional, cerebral, physical and spiritual Areas of Development in all domain subjects and school programs. It is also their mandate to support in the weekly management of the school programs.

According to the teacher appraisal of The Bhutan Baccalaureate the role of the coordinators are stated as, "In addition to being a focal person for their Area of Development, the five Coordinators collaborate with each other, as well as other faculty members, to ensure the smooth functioning of the school and are part of the decision- making body of The Bhutan Baccalaureates School" (p. 9).

Similarly, the role of domain heads is crucial. The teacher appraisal further states that, "A Head of Domain with the Coordinators and faculty aims for relevance, meaning and excellence in all activities that support the Learning Experiences they curate with students." Thus, creating a system of formal and informal leaders that aligns with the concept of distributed leadership who are responsible and accountable for various aspect of management of learning processes and designing learning experiences.

The study draws the attention towards finding solution in contextualization to the distributed leadership in true definition by overcoming the challenges. The findings of the study can serve as both a diagnostic and design tool that offers the lens on leadership practices for the schools as there has been no research done in the context of Bhutan.

3. Methodology

The study followed a qualitative method design to collect in depth data. The following data collection methods are used:

i. Semi-structured interviews (Pre and post interviews)

ii. One-to-one interview

iii. Survey questionnaire.

This concept of distributed leadership is studied to learn how empowering the faculty members of the school in leadership roles can contribute to enhance and strengthen distributed leadership skills such as corporation, self-leadership, and collaboration and performance accountability and demonstrate leadership watermarks such as respect, diversity, inclusion, trust, and equity and team performance.

3.1 Participants

The study is carried out with 35 faculty members of Gelephu Middle Secondary School, Gelephu to generate the impact of the leadership roles as expected by the Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy. The participants consist Coordinators of the Areas of Development, the six Domain Heads, and mentors shouldering responsibilities. It is a public urban-school.

3.2 Intervention and Data Collection Procedures

The data was collected from the faculty that consisted of both teaching and non-teaching faculty members over the period of two months through. I conducted semi-structured interviews and survey, one-to-one interview of the faculty members in leadership roles and the ones who are not in leadership roles. Their responses were transcribed for further discussion with the participants.

The formal consent and approval of all participants are sought through formal written consent form. The participants are given enough time to respond to be the part of the study. The participants are provided the detailed purpose and objective of the study. They are clearly informed about the right to withdraw anytime of the research project. The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity is conveyed. I have assured that there would be no legal issues and agenda related to the study and any opinion expressed will be safe and secured.

The procedure of data derivation included surveys, interviews and observation. The researcher studied the school organogram to understand the distribution of defined leadership of the faculty and get the statistics on how many of the faulty members are shouldering leadership roles and how the leadership responsibilities is distributed. indicated that the faculty who are in leadership roles were serving in the capacity as the five coordinators, domain heads, class teachers, program coordinator and mentors. They have plan of actions such as distribution of responsibility amongst themselves to manage their instructional hours and other school programs. Their roadmap has skills, processes and watermarks fit in the leadership roles.

To further understand the shift in leadership perspective of the faculty, a comparative study was carried out to collect the teacher's perspective on teacher leadership in a school system before the introduction of The Bhutan Baccalaureate as the baseline data and the change in their roles after the transitioning process of the Bhutan baccalaureate in the school.

Throughout the study, an effort was made to understand the indicators of how the faculty was managing the leadership roles. Some of the anecdotal records helped to understand and reflect on ways to address leadership challenges, emotional and psychological challenges, in the process of ensuring professionalism in the leadership roles. One of the prominent questions that was prominent was the complimentary rewards system for the roles the participants desired for motivation.

4. Results

The baseline data was initially collected to understand the status of distributed leadership in the school system, its challenges and intervention required. In the school setting before the introduction of The Bhutan Baccalaureate the school organogram indicated the diverse leadership roles the teachers and the support staff lead were based on two categories of activities academic and non-academic activities.
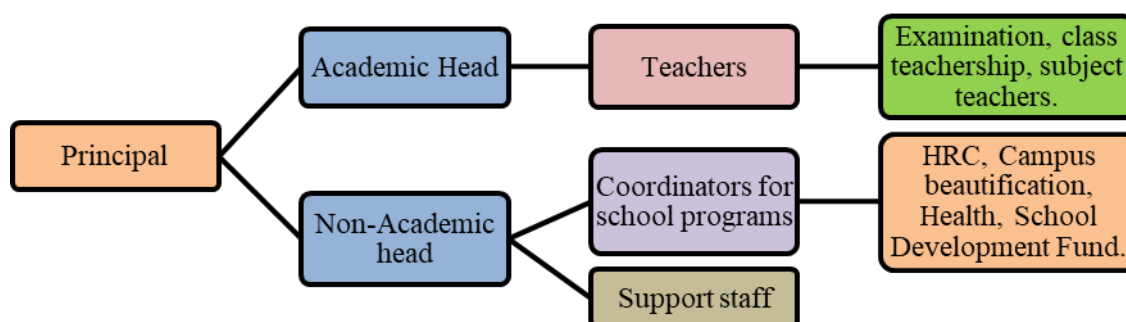

Figure 1. School Organogram

As indicated in Figure 1, the principal delegated the responsibilities to ensure the efficiency of the school system. There existed three tier hierarchy in management and maximum leadership roles are shouldered by teachers than the other staff. They administered diverse programs in the school. They play prominent role in ensuring system efficiency besides the principal. The leadership roles they managed were both instructional lead roles and managerial roles. Some of the instructional leadership roles were the role of class teachers, Head of department, and games and sports programs and some of the managerial leadership roles were human resource committee, coordinator for health programs, spiritual programs, clubs and cultural programs, staff secretary, discipline committee and teacher on duty.
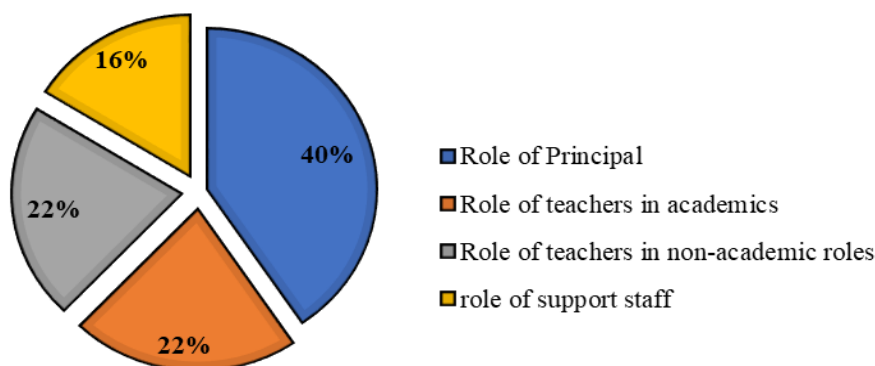

Figure 2. Leadership Roles of Teachers

Figure 2 indicated the role of teachers and support staff in leadership roles. This chart indicated that the teacher's engagement in leadership roles is beyond the Instructional responsibility.

The baseline data projects the challenges experienced by the faculty in leading instructional leadership and managerial leadership. The multiple responsibilities given to the teachers lead to increase in workload, distraction form their instructional responsibilities, time management, lack of time for self-care and equity in leadership roles. Besides the classroom teaching-learning experiences, there were less opportunity for the teachers to dedicate their time for specialization in the instructional responsibilities.

The analysis of the survey indicated some of the skills, process and watermarks that were experienced by the faculty in leadership roles were the basic communication skills, event management skills, report writing skills, time management skills, assessment skills, team work and self-management skills. Most of the participants responded that being in the leadership roles have helped them contribute to school system and they desired to some improvement in empowerment programs, autonomy, financial support, motivation and clear policy in place to help them perform their best.

However, maximum participants in the leadership roles felt the need to improve their leadership skills such a communication skills, technological skills and resilience building to overcome technical and adaptable challenges in the school. They urgently felt the need to access the relevancy of the teachers' role for the diverse programs that are conducted in the school.

4.1 Intervention

Based on the finding and analysis of the baseline data some of the intervention strategies undertaken were as follows. Restructuring of leadership position: To begin with, a system scanning was prioritized. The school deliberated on the concept of "shared mindset" and deliberated to review the need of the co-curricular programs. The responsibilities of the teachers and support staff was re-structured as per the philosophy of The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy as indicated in Figure 3. The study confirms that the concept of distributed leadership is understood as one of the strategies to cultivate leadership

skills in the faculty. One of the participants stated that though distributed leadership practices it had helped in, "Empowering shared leadership, who is responsible and accountable". Another participant justified that through distributed leadership it can promote "effective approach towards a common goal."
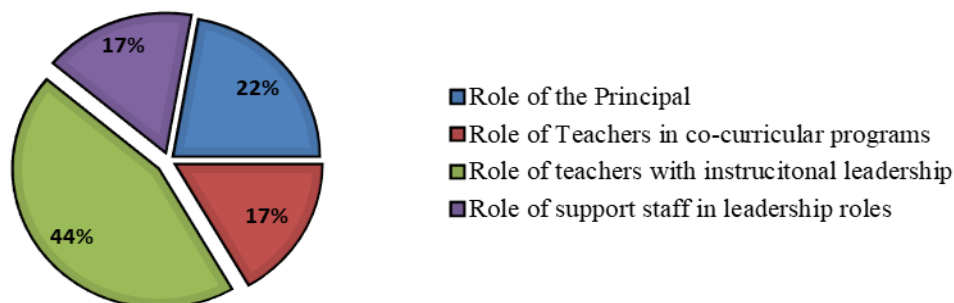

Figure 3. Distributed Leadership Roles

Following the deliberations on the actual roles of faculty in the school, the support staff were empowered to lead some programs that can be managed easily such as health programs, games and sports, examination and mentorship. The teachers and support staff partnered to lead the programs leading to the reduction of some workload. The non-negotiable programs related to examination, finance, Human resource committee are provided to performing faculty that included both teachers and support staff. Through nomination and consensus process, a sense of ownership was felt and the participants in the leadership roles demonstrated more commitment towards improving the school system and work towards achieving the goals of the school. Morrisey (2000); Chapman and Allen (2006) to express that research concludes that extended leadership responsibility beyond the principal is an important lever for developing effective professional learning communities in schools and justified how distributed leadership can enhance and equalize the professional learning communities in schools.

The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy encourages teachers to take leadership roles. They were given the autonomy to manage the school for a week, and a weekly meeting was conducted for decision making, feedback sessions and address the challenges and design the way forward for the system improvement. The instructional responsibility was shared with the domain heads. With the leadership title, the coordinators and domain heads were given the autonomy to design school schedule, create programs, manage budget and manage the programs. They made decisions with their core team to plan, manage and execute programs. Further, they assessed their programs and recommended changes required. Overtime, we noticed more teachers were participating in the leadership roles resulting in creating a community of leaders.

Professional Development programs: Empowering the teachers and support staff was the second intervention plan to address the challenges. A few participants expressed that the distributed leadership increases the workload on an individual that can affect their performance in instructional responsibilities and it can motivate them to perform with some professional development programs. To address the leadership challenges some of the intervention program initiated was the professional development programs on the power of Yet, Difficult Conversation, Performance collaboration: The maestro matrix, Strategic sensing and agile problem-solving tools. These leadership tools provided the strategy for self-empowerment and enhanced collaboration amongst the faculty and empowered teachers to manage programs successfully through effective communication and collaboration skills.

The intervention programs were carried out in two months and in the limited time the participants and the school management worked closely to address the challenges and design the way forward plan of actions.

4.2 Post Intervention Data Analysis

The post intervention study generated a shift of leadership perspective and system in the school. The study finding indicated that the participants felt the sense of self-empowerment when concept of distributed leadership practice was instituted. All the participants agreed that through distributed leadership, decentralization and instructional leadership roles are enhanced and found relevant to the participants.

Enhancement of instructional leadership Programs like mentorship and appointment of domain heads and coordinators for five areas of development created more opportunities for teachers to strengthen the leadership roles in a school system and it is relevant. They expressed those shared responsibilities has empowered many to take leadership roles and contribute to the system. The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy has indeed bestowed more formal leadership authority in the school than the informal leadership roles the school had before the transition. This helps the school to create a community that's is diverse and represent in decision making.

The participants expressed that they experienced collective and shared responsibility in the school. They felt empowered to be part of the decision making and felt their instructional responsibility was bestowed on them than other roles. This has enabled the faculty to decide how to manage the school program management for the week. It has resulted in system efficiency and collaboration amongst the coordinators and teachers on duty for the week.

The study indicated that the professional development programs on the power of Yet, Difficult Conversation, Performance collaboration: The maestro matrix, Strategic sensing and agile problem-solving tools were useful and relevant leadership tools. All the participants strongly felt the sense of achievement and growth in their leadership as they were engaged in distributed leadership practices. They felt empowered, motivated, improvement in self-confidence, strong collaboration, and responsible.

4.3 Comparison between the Baseline Data and Post-intervention Data

By the last week of September, we saw the increase of faculty in the leadership roles. The school was able incorporate relevancy and relativity in empowering the faculty in leadership roles. The management provided more instructional leadership roles to the teaching faculty and empower the support staff to lead the other non-instructional programs. Distributed leadership practice has provided equal opportunity for the faculty to make better decision and lead the school programs based on the context and settings. It has enhanced more collaboration and made people responsible. The roles and responsibilities of the faculty are becoming clear and policies are developed and reviewed in consultation with the stakeholders. The participants now believe that that through the leadership experiences, it enhances certain traits, sense of purpose, accountability and responsibility in them. The involvement in decision making has also helped them to design better roadmaps and achieve their personal and organizational goals.

Finally, it has created a system of mutual trust and confidence in the school management system. There are more areas to improve and the participants expressed their readiness to contribute towards system improvement and commitment to work together to achieve the common goals of the school and collaborate for the wellbeing of the system and provide better services to the learners.

5. Discussion

The study findings indicated that in a school system, the success would be achieved when there is a system of shared leadership, collaboration and competent faculty and a far sighted, goal-oriented principal. Through distributed leadership practices the engagement of the faculty in various leadership roles has both positive and negative impact in the management of the school system.

According to The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy, the teachers must play the role of a mentor, domain head and also a coordinator for five areas of development and support the management of the school program in partnership with the school administration. The expectation is way beyond what happens in a classroom setting and it encourages the teachers to work with their mentees in five areas of development. Such roles of teachers support the concept of distributed leadership while maximum

participants expressed the need to address the workload of the teachers. Distributed leadership strategy encourages participation in decision making and commitment to improve oneself for the "professional development and are willing to be introspective, vulnerable, and proactive in their own learning journey." A school cannot achieve its goals on numerous issues such as gab between the faculty and school administration, low trust level among the team, faculty experiencing heavy workload and delay in decision making.

While many participants accept that in any leadership roles, one cannot make every individual happy and there are challenges they have also expressed that there are opportunities to grow professionally. For professional development, participants raised the urgency to design some leadership programs for teachers, address the teacher-students ratio, autonomy to design individual program. It's empowering when every individual takes the leadership roles and ensure accountability. They feel more trusted when discussions are made through common forums and ideas are generated through individual leadership capacity. However, we feel challenges to design the school program as per the desire of the participants. The policy mandates, admission pressure, budget limitations, mandate to abide by the national curriculum hinders the aspirations of the schools.

The study clearly states the need for the Ministry of Education to revisit school administration structure, employment of additional people in the school system to manage diverse programs and review the policy on the role of the faculty in the schools to redesign the school structure. At the school level, the school organogram needs to be reviewed to study the standard operating procedures, status of feedback culture, decentralize decision making capacity and provide autonomy to the faculty in leadership roles.

6. Conclusion

The study has significantly addressed the need to relook into the skills and procedures required in the school management to address the need of the faculty so as to achieve the goals and standardize the school performance as per the expectations of the stakeholders in context to enhance the leadership skills in the faculty.

The strategy of using distributed leadership provides opportunity for the faculty to take up leadership roles and contribute towards making a school a better learning center. It empowers them to develop self-leadership skills such as communication skills, collaboration skills, decision making skills, self-management skills and contribute towards achieving the common vision of the nation.

7. Recommendation

Distributed leadership practices can be one of the solutions to address the technical challenges in a school system under study, it also defines the limitations of the study to address adjustment challenges. Leadership programs for teachers: The study finding have clearly stated that the success of a school system has direct relation to the performance of the principal and the faculty of the school. The team performance of the school faculty would determine the quality of educational services for the learners. The faculty must be empowered and motivated to take leadership roles so that better decisions are made, teaching-learning experiences are standardized, scope for innovation and creativity, learning output are achieved and finally fulfill the vision of the nation. There must also be leadership courses for the teachers besides the curriculum courses and programs so empower the teachers to contribute in the overall development of the school system and suit the need of learners in the 21st century School. There are opportunities for the schools to become inclusive and congenial working space and learning center for learners.

Professional Development program has become crucial for the school principals. They must be trained to cultivate system reform and manage change regularly. Data-driven instructional leadership, management, development, and recognition of staff, with attention to micro-politics, and technical knowledge and skills to oversee school operations with greater community. To develop transformational school leaders, Ministry of Education can initiate leadership programs for aspiring principals and low performing principals to understand formal and informal aspect of school organization.

Finally, while we learned that there are scope to carry out more action research on improving policy

and practice of school system, school autonomy, teacher-students ratio and academic standards, professional associations and reforms in the context of school reform. The transition of The Bhutan Baccalaureate philosophy has brought in relevant system reforms through partnership program with the Ministry of Education and regional leaders and more can be achieved if schools are given some autonomy to function.

References

Carroll, R. (2021). *Need to move faster and smarter? Level up with distributed leadership*. http://doi.org/10.1080/00131720508984678

Chatwani, N. (Ed.). (2018). *Distributed Leadership: The Dynamics of Balancing Leadership with Followership*. University of Applied Sciences Vienna, Austria. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-59581-8

Dar, C., Harries, A., Hopkins, D., Leithwood, K., & Sammons, P. (2002). *Distributed leadership and organizational change: Reviewing the evidence*. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10833-007-9048-4

Grenda, J. P., & Hackmann, D. G. (2014). *Advantages and Challenges of Distributing Leadership in Middle-Level Schools*. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192636513514108

Harries, A (2013). *Distributed Leadership: Friend or Foe*? Retrieved https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1741143213497635

Healey, K., & Spillane, J. P. (2010). Conceptualizing school leadership and management from a distributed perspective. *An Exploration of Some Study Operations and Measures*. Retrieved from https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/656300

Jones, S. (2014). *Distributed leadership: A critical analysis*. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1742715011433525

Miller, K. (n.d.). 15 advantages and disadvantages of Distributed Leadership styles, Future of Working the Leadership and Career Blog. [web log post] Retrieved from http://futureofworking.com/15-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-distributed-leadershipstyles/

Principal appraisal for The Bhutan Baccalaureate School. (2022). *Draft Handout*. Ministry of Education. Thimphu.

Shava, G. N., & Tlou, F. N. (2018). Distributed leadership in education, contemporary issues in educational leadership. *African Educational Research Journal*, *6*(4). Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1208340

Smallwood, N., & Ulrich, D. (2003). Why the Bottom Line Isn't! *How to build value through people and organization*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. USA.

Smallwood, N., Ulrich, D., & Zenger, J. (1999). *Result- Based Leadership. Harvard Business School Press*. Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Spillane, J. P. (2005). *Distributed leadership: The Education forum* (Vol. 69). Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131720508984678

Stoll, L., & Temperley, J. (2010). *Improving School Leadership: The Toolkit*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from https://www.oecd ilibrary.org/education/improvingschool-leadership_9789264083509-en

Teacher appraisal for The Bhutan Baccalaureate Schools. (2021). *Handout*. Druk Gyalpo's Institute. Pangbisa. Paro.