

# DISTRIBUTED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA: PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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## ABSTRACT

*The term "distributed leadership" refers to a new leadership paradigm that places a smaller emphasis on individual abilities, skills, and talents. Instead, this style of leadership emphasizes shared leadership responsibilities. Therefore, the goal of this study was to analyze the existing perceptions, practices, challenges and opportunities of distributed leadership in the private schools of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As a study area, 50 private schools from five sub cities: Gulele, Arada, Kirkos, Yeka and Bole were selected. From each sub city, equally, 10 private schools were chosen. In order to accomplish the aims of the study, descriptive survey approach with mixed research design was utilized. Using available sampling techniques, 50 principals and 50 vice principals, and by using simple random sampling 50 homeroom teachers, 100 department heads, and 50 subject teachers were chosen. Totally, 300 respondents were participated. In the data collection method, a questionnaire with a Likert scale was used, as well as observations. Frequency, percentages, and the mean were used to examine the data collected through the surveys. The data was tabulated and encoded on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26.00). In addition to the questionnaire, a systematic open-ended ten-items interview was used to obtain data from the key informants. The quantitative data was triangulated using the information gathered from observations. According to the results of the data analysis, the majority of respondents in the private schools selected have a moderate perception of distributed educational leadership. It was also noted that the private schools' leadership structures use distributed educational leadership in a moderate way. The key problems that deterred the practice of distributed educational leadership at the selected private schools were loose ties among staff members, department heads, and homeroom teachers. Encouragement of staff members to discuss the use of teaching materials at the selected fifty private schools for improved teaching and learning service was the opportunity gained from the distributed educational leadership.*

**Keywords:** Challenges, Distributed Educational Leadership, Opportunities, Perceptions, Practices, and Private Schools.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Because the expectations on school administrators are increasing, and because leadership research has changed its attention from the leader to leadership as a property of the

institution, the notion of distributed leadership has entered the area of education (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Important gaps and weaknesses in school leadership conceptual frameworks have been identified by leadership academics, limiting their ability to effectively meet the contemporary demands of US school systems. As a result, dispersed leadership has emerged as a potential solution to these problems (Gronn, 2000; Harris, 2004). A type of collective agency combining the efforts of many persons in a school who work at motivating and directing other teachers in the process of instructional change, according to one definition of distributed leadership (Harris, 2004). As a result, the interaction between leaders, followers, and leadership practice forms the cornerstone of a dispersed conceptual framework. Spillane et al. (2004) developed a Distributed Leadership Framework to better understand leadership behaviors in schools. Leaders, according to this definition, are those inside the school who work together or independently to organize the school community in order to enhance education.

Although good principle leadership has long been recognized as a key factor in school performance Lieberman & Miller (2004) in the present accountability age, school administrators have been tasked with a plethora of new and complicated tasks. Because the burden of learning leadership may be too big for one person, the addition of these several tasks to a principal's already long list of responsibilities may need the assistance of teachers and others to act as extra instructional leaders (Camburn et al., 2003).

The term "distributed leadership" has been defined in a variety of ways by various academics. Elmore (2000) defined distributed leadership as multiple sources of guidance and direction that follow the forms of expertise in an organization and are brought together by a common culture, whereas Andrews & Lewis (2004) defined it as a type of parallel leadership in which teacher leaders collaborate with principal leaders in distinct but complementary ways to achieve common goals. It's crucial to highlight the major aspects of distributed leadership from the two definitions above: Every individual in the school is a leader in one area or another, and there is interdependence between people. There is collaboration to achieve goals, and individuals share practices but work differently (Harris, 2013).

Researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and educational reformers have all taken notice of distributed leadership. Even if its origins may be traced back to the field of organizational theory in the mid 1960s, it is currently the most popular leadership concept (Harris, 2004). Distributed leadership, according to critics, is nothing more than a "new orthodoxy" that reinforces managerialist ideals. Others, on the other hand, say that it provides a strong instrument for altering leadership practice by providing a new way of thinking about leadership in schools (Korkmaz & Günduz, 2011).

The natures of dispersed leadership and democratic concepts are similar in that they both indicate a sharing of authority among principals, vice principals, teachers, unit leaders, department heads, and other stakeholders (Harris & Mujjis, 2005). Unlike conventional leadership definitions, distributed leadership is built on skills, information, and contributions generated as a result of strong-networked interactions among many persons, according to Gronn (2002).

The cornerstone of distributed leadership is incorporating a large number of workers in leadership activities (Harris, 2004), and by doing so, objectively good results of distributed leadership may be shown. Furthermore, traditional school leadership has followed a top-down model for years, where the school leader leads, takes crucial decisions, motivates, and inspires followers. In contrast to conventional school leadership, dispersed school leadership promotes a democratic, collaborative style of shared leadership that represents the idea that anybody may demonstrate school leadership skill provided they are warmly accepted into the

club (Spillane, et al., 2001).

With this in mind, the researcher examined the views, practices, difficulties, and prospects of dispersed educational leadership in Addis Ababa's private schools. As a result, it appears that school distributed educational leadership must be examined from a number of perspectives, including strategy and implementation issues in general, as well as their function as distributed educational leaders in particular.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Because leadership under a distributed leadership method has a more complicated structure than leadership behaviors, it may be considered to completely alter, if not ignore, standard leadership and leader definitions (Leithwood et. al, 2006). The four areas of leadership structure and successful leadership practices are: identifying targets, developing individuals, restructuring the organizational structure, and enhancing teaching and educational programs (Malloy, 2012). Distributed leadership is defined by Spillane & Diamond (2007) as "collaborative, collective, and coordinated distribution." The distribution of leadership between formal and informal leaders is an essential aspect of dispersed leadership. In distributed leadership, shared leadership does not refer to how an individual approaches a task in comparison to others. (Gronn, 2002; Korkmaz & Gunduz, 2011). Sharing leadership is connected to what the members in the leadership group give to the knowledge pool. The distributed leadership method considers leadership as well as the characteristics of teams, groups, and organizations. In practice, these techniques challenge the notion that people must lead others to effect change (Heller & Firestone, 1995; Hoy & Miskel, 2012). Shared leadership, proponents believe, is required because educational organizations are too complicated to be managed by a single individual (Heller & Firestone, 1995). The burden of handling a plethora of complicated duties is shared across a number of people and positions (Hoy & Miskel, 2012).

According to Barnes, et al. 2004, looking at one-man leadership as a best style was deemed a preferred one for some hundred years ago, when heroes of leadership were proclaimed (Barnes, et al., 2004). However, in recent years, school reform has seen a shift in school leadership from a one-man show to a shared school leadership approach that is beneficial to school development. Leadership has been redefined in recent years to include the necessary shared responsibility at specific institutions rather than focusing on an individual's personal attribute that sat at the top of the business (Lambert, 2003). The key idea here is that school leadership should not be reliant on a single principal, but rather on a collaborative approach.

There is a notion that schools are not directed in such a way that they are able to adapt to the present rising demands that educational institutions are facing (Elmore, 2000). This occurred as a result of a number of dynamics that are constantly altering the educational setting in which school leaders function (Murphy, 2002). Educational situations have grown more complicated, dynamic, and fluid than they have ever been, implying a variety of situations that may alter how leaders execute their responsibilities and deal with difficulties that they face. As a result, to meet the difficulties of the changing world, schools must adopt a dispersed leadership style. Furthermore, as the accountability system grows, educators' engagement and collaboration assist schools deliver greater student accomplishment. However, research reveals that school leadership methods have a minimal impact on student accomplishment. This indicates that there is still a lack of understanding about how school leadership can reform schools (Leithwood & Reil, 2003).

While research has shown that dispersed leadership contributes to school performance (Graetz, 2000), it appears that distributed leadership is seldom implemented in practice owing to a lack of understanding of the idea (Bennett, et al., 2003). That is to say, self-leadership, super leadership, and shared leadership were still used to characterize the notion and practices of dispersed leadership (Oduro, 2004). This diversity in conceiving dispersed leadership encompasses a wide spectrum of perspectives, with no obvious connection to what occurs in schools and classrooms (Mayrotez, 2008). As a consequence, the researcher is motivated by the belief that the concept and practices of dispersed leadership in schools are not well understood (Senge 1990).

Despite the Ethiopian government's efforts to enhance school performance, school leadership does not appear to be effective in raising student success due to the rising complexity of issues affecting school administration and performance.

The country's education and training policy has pledged from the start to develop clear rules to enable participative school administration and flourishing professional relationships in their operations by outlining the rights and responsibilities of all those involved in education (TGE, 1994). This demonstrates that school leadership and administration are not only the responsibility of the principal; rather, the policy encourages school constituents to participate in school leadership. Due to the unique character of the school environment, Ethiopian schools are now required to manage their operations using a distributed leadership strategy for maintenance and development.

In Addis Ababa's private schools, scattered leadership techniques appear to go unnoticed. In addition to this, there has been no study to date on the practices and problems of dispersed school leadership. Despite the fact that school leadership is a statewide program created for all Ethiopian schools, this research concentrated on fifty private schools in the five sub cities: Gulele, Arada, Kirkos, Yeka and Bole. This was owing to the methodology utilized as well as time and resource restrictions.

The researcher prepared the following study questions to address the topic under investigation:

1. How do school principals, department heads, home room teachers and subject teachers understand the concept of distributed educational leadership in the private schools of Addis Ababa?
2. How far are distributed educational leadership practices in the private schools of Addis Ababa?
3. What are the major challenges influencing the successful implementation of distributed educational leadership in the private schools of Addis Ababa?
4. What are the opportunities of distributed educational leadership in the private schools of Addis Ababa?

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Distributed Educational Leadership's Theoretical Origins**

While researchers and practitioners have extensively adopted the notion of DL since the turn of the millennium, its origins stretch back much farther. According to Oduro (2004), DL has been around since 1250 BC, making it "one of the most ancient leadership concepts advocated for achieving organizational goals through people." However, Harris (2009) claims that it is an concept that may be traced back as far as the mid-twenties and probably earlier" in terms of theorization. When Gronn (2000) proposes that 'leadership is perhaps best defined as

a group characteristic, as a set of tasks which must be carried out by the group,' he cites Gibb (1954) as the first author to expressly allude to DL (Gibb 1954, cited in Gronn 2000). The difference made by Gibb between "two types of distribution: the total numerical frequency of the actions provided by each group member" and "the multiplicity or pattern of group functions performed" (Gronn 2000) serve as the foundation for Gronn's difference between numerical and concerted action, as well as the foundation for further theoretical growth.

Despite this early interest, according to Gronn (2000), the notion of DL "layed dormant until its resuscitation by Brown and Hosking (1986)." During the 1980s and 1990s, it was only mentioned in a few articles (e.g. Barry 1991; Beck & Peters 1981; Gregory 1996; Leithwood et al. 2009; Senge 1993) most likely due to the appetite for accounts of 'new leadership,' based on 'transformational' and/or 'charismatic' leadership by senior executives, that dominated scholarly and practitioner literature during this time (Parry & Bryman, 2006). While concrete allusions to DL were few and far between prior to and during this time, certain major conceptual breakthroughs were made that, in many respects, set the way for later work.

A number of fundamental notions are frequently referenced when tracing the theoretical beginnings of DL. Spillane et al. (2004), for example, describe the conceptual basis of their specific interpretation of DL as "distributed cognition" and "activity theory." The first of these ideas depicts human cognition and experience as inextricably linked to the physical, social, and cultural setting in which it takes place (Hulpia & Devos, 2009). The second perspective emphasizes how individual, material; cultural, and societal variables simultaneously permit and restrict human action (Hartley, 2007).

Despite this, we continue to be enamored by the 'romance of leadership' (Bennett, et al, 2003) in which organizational actors and spectators tend to over-attribute performance results to the contribution of individual 'leaders,' while overlooking other equally, if not more, significant variables. 'Shared leadership is just paradoxical for most people: leadership is clearly and demonstrably an individual attribute and action,' as Bolden, et al, (2008) put it. They demonstrate this contradiction by using Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., claiming that 'when the facts are properly gathered, even the most famous "solitary" heroes relied on the help of a team of other competent leaders'. It is suggested that such a deeply ingrained propensity to undervalue the contributions of more than a few significant people originates from thousands of years of cultural conditioning and, as a result, is extremely difficult to modify, even if the evidence suggests otherwise (Parry & Bryman, 2006).

### **Is it time for distributed educational leadership?**

Despite initial skepticism, given the changing nature of work and growing dissatisfaction with the way that 'new leadership' approaches (such as transformational and charismatic leadership) glorify 'heroic' accounts about senior executives, it appears that DL is 'an idea whose time has come' (Gronn, 2000) no longer the new kid on the block (Gronn, 2000).

On March 8, 2020, a google.co.uk search for the terms "distributed leadership" and "books" yielded 187,000 results. Google.co.uk found 9,220 books about the subject. While this represents a small portion of the overall literature on 'leadership' (201 million web pages and nearly six million books on google.co.uk), it represents a significant and growing body of material when considered alongside related literatures such as 'shared', 'collective', 'collaborative', 'co', and 'emergent' leadership (Oduro, 2004).

DL, on the other hand, appears to be less popular as a concept than shared, collaborative, or collective leadership, according to website data. To this end, it's fascinating to

look at which domains have adopted DL as a method of defining shared/distributed forms of leadership and which haven't (Hulpia & Devos, 2009). It was chosen to focus on academic publications as an indication of scholarly activity in order to assess the comparative growth of the area of DL. Information from the Scopus database was used.

In comparison to SL (which has had a constant stream of papers since the early 1990s) and 'emergent leadership,' interest in DL is a relatively new phenomenon, which has seen a small but consistent trickle of articles since 1980 (Mayrowetz, 2008). 'Collective' and 'collaborative' leadership are notions that have piqued attention since the mid-1990s (albeit not to the same degree as SL or DL), and 'coleadership' was a term that paralleled these developments until the mid- 2000s, but has since faded. While it is clear that interest in shared/distributed forms of leadership has grown significantly since 2000, not all versions have received the same level of attention (Leithwood, et al., 2009).

### **Distributed Educational Leadership in Schools: Perceptions and Practices**

The notion of distributed learning has progressively gained traction in the academic sector in general, and in the educational environment in particular, particularly in companies with team- based organizational structures (Gronn, 2000).

A framework for analyzing educational leadership is provided by the dispersed viewpoint. Given their insistence on focusing on the organizational than the individual, and on interactions versus acts, authors like Gronn and Spillane emphasized the phrase. Leading schools effectively necessitates the participation of many leaders in formal and informal roles that take duties within the institution. However, the writers are just discussing the issues of power and how members of the institution, not simply dividing work or improving collaboration, use it (Hutchins, 1995).

Given the importance of school administration, the literature has taken special care to represent how principals implement DL in their schools. Different modalities, from authoritarian to democratic, may be used in these dispersed leadership techniques (Oduro, 2004). Delegation and devolution are not to be mistaken with dispersed leadership since they include top-down rather than bottom-up influence, according to the literature (Parry & Bryman, 2006). Nonetheless, formal committee decisions are viewed as formulae for sharing authority and exerting substantial influence over the organization. In studies by Spillane et al., teaching teams, organized in formal groups, are instances of DL, and their interactions are proof of "the constitution of DL." (Korkmaz, & Gündüz, 2011).

Works like recognizing the necessity for both management and other members of the educational community to exert leadership, particularly in secondary schools. In this way, the collaborative leadership initiatives are an attempt to go beyond the official leadership practiced by school administration (Hartley, 2007). As a result, progressing in the research of DL processes led by school administration may be of interest, and it might contribute to the study of more participative and democratic formulas in educational leadership (Harris, 2009).

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Design of the Study**

In this study, a descriptive survey is employed. By describing people's actions, a descriptive survey research aims to collect people's ideas, views, attitudes, and beliefs about a current instructional school leadership issue. The most frequent way for gathering such data or

information from people was to conduct a survey. It would also aim to assess distributed educational leadership practices, as well as their challenges and benefits. To summarize the descriptions, the number of respondents who reported each response, as well as their percentage, mean, and qualitative data, were used. As a result, it clarified the reality and what is actually going on in current perceptions, practices, difficulties, and opportunities of distributed educational leadership issues in the study field.

A mixed approach plan was chosen because it allows us to gain a deeper grasp of a study topic or issue than if we used only one research method. It includes collecting, analyzing, and integrating (or combining) quantitative and qualitative research in a single study (and data). The aspects of dispersed educational leadership in Spillane instructional leadership models were examined in this study, which was modified to the situation of Addis Ababa's private school instance. Because the researcher had spent the preceding seventeen years as an academic director at private schools, private institutions were picked.

### Data Source

Both primary and secondary data were employed to achieve the study's goal. As a result, principals (50), vice principals (50), homeroom teachers (50), department heads (100), and subject teachers (50) were chosen as sample answers from Addis Ababa Private Schools' at 50 in five sub cities: Gulele, Arada, Kirkos, Yeka and Bole, among others. In addition, key informants from the leadership positions of these private schools provided primary data in the form of interviews.

### Sampling Design

**Study Population:** The sample would be selected from the research population, which is made up of a variety of variables. As a result, sample respondents were chosen from Addis Ababa 50 Private Schools' principals (50), vice principals (50), homeroom teachers (50), department heads (100), and subject teachers (50) in five sub cities: Gulele, Arada, Kirkos, Yeka, and Bole (Table 1).

No	Sub cities	No of Selected Private Schools	Woreda Distribution
1	Gulele Sub City	10 Private Schools	1 from each Woreda
2	Arada Sub City	10 Private Schools	1 from each Woreda
3	Kirkos Sub City	10 Private Schools	1 from each Woreda
4	Yeka Sub City	10 Private Schools	1 from each Woreda
5	Bole Sub City	10 Private Schools	1 from each Woreda
<b>Total</b>		50 Private Schools	From 100 Woredas

**Sample size:** A total of 300 (Three Hundred) respondents were chosen from the broad target audience to participate in this study using a simple random sample and accessible sampling.

**Sampling techniques:** Simple random sampling and availability sampling procedures were used to choose sample responders from the total population. Simple random sampling procedures were employed to eliminate bias and generalize data collected from sample

respondents. Furthermore, availability sampling was utilized as a strategy, with administrators and vice-principals from the private schools identified as key informants. The researcher to incorporate such leadership bodies in order to obtain relevant information regarding dispersed educational leadership attitudes, practices, difficulties, and benefits used this technique.

**Method of data collection:** The researcher employed both primary and secondary data to conduct this study. This study employed the descriptive survey approach, including a questionnaire, an interview, and document analysis among the data collection procedures utilized to get primary data from sample respondents.

**Questionnaire:** Spillane's primary instructional leadership rating measure (five-point scale) was adapted and utilized to evaluate dispersed educational leadership views, techniques, difficulties, and benefits. There are closed and open-ended versions of the questionnaire. This makes it simple to collect a big amount of data from a large number of responders in a short amount of time and at a low cost. Furthermore, all of the participants were literate because they all work in educational institutions. As a result, people will be able to read and react to the questionnaire more freely; expressing their views on the subject, and respondents will be able to provide information without fear of reprisal.

**Interview:** In a semi-structured interview, key informants including as principals, vice principals, department heads, and homeroom teachers were asked specific questions regarding the current context of distributed educational leadership perspectives, techniques, problems, and benefits.

**Observations:** Observations were also done at only some selected private schools (at a total of 10 private schools: 2 from each sub cities) to see if the principals, vice principals, home room teachers, department heads, and subject teachers' written and spoken replies corresponded to what was actually happening in the schools. For this reason, the researcher prefers partial involvement to no involvement, regardless of whether the objective of the observations is conveyed to some or none of the participants. The term "focus of observations" refers to a holistic picture of the action or feature being observed, including all of its components (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Observations were performed to examine the perceptions, practices, difficulties, and potential for distributed school leadership at these private schools as part of the triangulation process.

## Method of Data Analysis

To address the major research questions and meet the study's objectives, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used. As a result, the obtained data were recorded, edited, organized, analyzed, presented, and interpreted in connection to research objectives for the study's execution and completion. For data obtained through surveys, descriptive statistical techniques such as tables, figures, means, and percentages were employed. Descriptive statements were used, with average mean scores ranging from 1.00-2.49 for low, 2.50-3.49 for moderate, 3.50-4.49 for high, and 4.50-5.00 for extremely high, respectively. For data acquired through interviews and document analysis, descriptive statistical approaches such as description of finding were employed.

## Pilot Test

Because the researcher customized and applied the survey method, a pre-test of 75 (25%) of the respondents was done at 5 different private schools before the questionnaire was distributed in its final form. The pilot test was crucial in evaluating the instruments' validity



and reliability, with the objective of identifying whether the item included in the instrument can aid the researcher in obtaining the essential data. Furthermore, the goal of pilot testing was to make any necessary changes to address any ambiguous or perplexing issues, and the researcher collaborated closely with him on this. As a result, all questions for sample survey respondents were subjected to a final analysis using the SPSS computer software. As a consequence, the questionnaire was evaluated, and the reliability test result was calculated statistically with SPSS version 26 software (Table 2).

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized item</b>	<b>No. of items</b>
0.842	0.821	26

### **Ethical Consideration**

The researcher's agreement with his or her study participants is referred to as research ethics. Every research project has ethical implications, and all researchers must be aware of and respond to ethical concerns that arise as a result of their work. As a result, participants were invited to complete the survey at their leisure. Responding to interviews and filling out questionnaires took a lot of time and effort. As a consequence, the researcher educated respondents about the study's goals and importance before allowing them to exercise their right to voluntary participation. They were given assurances that the information they provided would be kept private. This was accomplished by eliminating data that required respondents' names to be revealed. In addition, an introductory note was included on the first page of the questionnaire, seeking the respondents' cooperation in providing the required information for the study.

### **PRESENTATIONS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

The data was broken down into two sections: the respondents' backgrounds and their responses to the study questions.

### **Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>No</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Principals</b>		<b>Vice Principals</b>		<b>Home room Teachers</b>		<b>Department Heads</b>		<b>Subject Teachers</b>		
		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	
1	Age	a) Below 20										
		b) 21-30			8	2.7	23	7.7	38	12.7	9	3
		c) 31-40	15	5	14	4.7	16	5.3	29	9.7	23	7.7

		d) 41-50	27	9	21	7	8	2.7	21	7	11	3.7
		e) ≥ 50	8	2.7	7	2.3	3	1	12	4	7	2.3
		Total	50	16.7	50	16.7	50	16.7	100	33.3	50	16.7
2	Sex	Male	38	12.7	34	11.3	29	9.7	64	21.3	24	8
		Female	12	4	16	5.3	21	7	36	12	26	8.7
		Total	50	16.7	50	16.7	50	16.7	100	33.3	50	16.7

A good number of respondents 78(26%) were reasonably adult having an age of 21-30, as shown in Table 3 item 1. And, 97(32.3%) of them are between the ages of 31 and 40. It was also shown that 88 (29.3%) of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50. Furthermore, 37(12.3%) of the school's principals, vice principals, homeroom and department leaders were beyond the age of 51. This meant that the maturity of the school's homeroom and department leaders might aid in the proper and successful management of their particular schools.

In terms of gender distribution, 189(63%) of the responders were male. The female respondents' representation in the selected private schools, which was 111(37%), was regarded poor. As a result, males made up the majority of respondents in the study's sample locations. Furthermore, private school staff were overwhelmingly male.

No	Items	Principals		Vice Principals		Home room Teachers		Department Heads		Subject Teachers		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	Qualification	Certificate										
		Diploma	3	1	4	1.3	8	2.7	12	4	6	2
		BA/ BSC	35	11.7	31	10.3	30	10	67	22.3	33	11
		MA	12	4	15	5	12	4	21	7	11	3.7
		PhD										
		Total	50	16.7	50	16.7	50	16.7	100	33.3	50	16.7

As stated in Table 4, item 1, 33 (11 percent) of the respondents have a diploma, 196 (65.3 percent) have a BA/BSC, and 71 (23.7 percent) have an MA degree, respectively. This means that the majority of responders at the 50 private schools hold a BA/BSC degree.

**Table 5  
WORK EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS**

No	Item	Principals		Vice Principals		Home room Teachers		Department Heads		Subject Teachers		
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	Work Experience	a) Below5	4	1.3	3	1	12	4	16	5.3	5	1.7
		b) 6-10 years	11	3.7	12	4	13	4.3	21	7	10	3.3
		c) 11-15 years	17	5.7	15	5	11	3.7	19	6.3	11	3.7
		d) 16-20 years	12	4	17	5.7	9	3	22	7.3	16	5.3
		e) Above20 years	6	2	3	1	5	1.7	22	7.3	8	2.7
		Total	50	16.7	50	16.7	50	16.7	100	33.3	50	16.7

Table 5 shows that 40(13.3 percent), 67 (22.3 percent), 73 (24.3 percent), 76 (25.3 percent), and 44 (14 .7 percent) of the respondents served for less than five years, six to ten years, eleven to fifteen years, sixteen to twenty years, and more than twenty years, respectively. While one (3%) of the principals served for more than 20 years. This means that the majority of respondents worked for 16-20 years, whereas all principals and vice principals, with the exception of 9(3%), did not work for more than 20 years.

Items	5 SA		4 A	3 U		2 D		1 SD		Mean
	No	%	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
I have a better understanding and perception about distributed leadership.	62	20.7	20.3	56	18.7	64	21.3	57	19	<b>3.02</b>
I perceived myself as a decision maker.	58	19.3	19.7	54	18	64	21.3	65	21.7	<b>2.93</b>
My coworkers have recognized me for taking leadership responsibilities.	55	18.3	20	59	19.7	62	20.7	64	21.3	<b>2.93</b>
The school's leadership allows distributed leadership to be practiced.	52	17.3	18.3	63	21	70	23.3	70	23.3	<b>2.93</b>
My coworkers are willing to take on more decision-making duties.	66	22	20	58	19.3	59	19.7	57	19	<b>3.06</b>

The mean score of respondents in Table 6 item 1 was 3.02, indicating that the majority of respondents had a moderate perception of the characteristics of dispersed leadership. This demonstrates that dispersed leadership as a leadership technique is not well known or used in private schools. Due to its uniqueness, Gronn (2000) identified distributed leadership as a new architecture for leadership, distinct from both traits/behaviors theories that focus on individual leaders. One respondent said the following in the qualitative section of this survey, which was

identical to the quantitative result:

I have more than 12 years of experience working in private school complexes, but to be honest, I have no clue what distributed educational leadership is. Similarly, despite having attended a variety of professional development courses, I never had the opportunity to participate in or learn about the topic of distributed educational leadership. (Interviewee, # 4, December 2020).

As shown in Table 6, the majority of respondents were questioned about decision-making activities in schools, and the results suggest that the majority of them were not involved significantly (2.93) in private school decision-making activities. The mean score of the respondents for item 3 in Table 6 was 2.93, indicating that the majority of the respondents thought their colleagues took modest leadership positions in the school. Concerning coworkers recognized for leadership responsibilities, similar to the quantitative result interviewee 5 said:

Every member of the school will accept the provided power and behave properly as long as it is allocated by the school system. To give an example from my situation, the school's managing director recently assigned a new academic quality check head, whose duty is to oversee the department head's performance. And, despite the fact that he was to be my employer, I completely realize this percentage. (Interviewee, # 5, December 2020).

The average score of the responders for item 4 in Table 6 was 2.93. As a consequence of this finding, it is feasible to conclude that the level of agreement among private school structure leaders on the practice of distribution leadership is low. As can be seen in Table 6, item 5, the respondents' mean score was 3.06, indicating that respondents at private schools are prepared to take on more decision-making duties in a moderate way. Regarding this issue qualitatively, as to the word of one of the interviewee:

As far as I can tell, the staff members of this institution are always delegating decision-making responsibilities to less difficult individuals. In fact, because obtaining decision-making responsibilities involves careful consideration, some employees are hesitant to accept tasks that are outside their scope. For example, removing students from school for a longer period of time. (Interviewee, # 2, December 2020).

Items	5 SA		4 A		3 U		2 D		1 SD		Mean
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1. I am heavily involved in decision-making.	57	19	56	18.7	59	19.7	64	21.3	64	21.3	<b>2.92</b>
2. In addition to my classroom and department tasks, I have decision-making responsibilities.	52	17.3	54	19	61	20.3	68	22.7	65	21.7	<b>2.86</b>
3. In my school, I have the opportunity to participate in decision-making.	53	17.7	56	18.7	60	20	64	21.3	67	22.3	<b>2.88</b>

4. At this school, I share my knowledge and experiences with my colleges.	64	21.3	57	19	61	20.3	64	21.3	54	18	<b>3.04</b>
5. I assist one another in resolving issues at school.	58	19.3	52	17.3	63	21	65	21.7	62	20.7	<b>2.93</b>
6. I allotted enough time in the school to cooperate with colleagues on work-related concerns.	52	17.3	54	19	61	20.3	68	22.7	65	21.7	<b>2.86</b>
7. I work together with myco-workers to attain the school's common goal.	47	15.7	60	20	65	21.7	65	21.7	63	21	<b>2.87</b>
8. It is customary in this school for everyone to be involved in decision-making.	65	21.7	59	19.7	63	21	56	18.7	57	19	<b>3.06</b>
9. Employees share common obligations for achieving their department's objectives.	69	23	64	21.3	58	19.3	54	18	55	18.3	<b>3.12</b>

The mean score of the respondents was 2.92, as shown in Table 7 item 1. This indicates that staff participation in school decision-making was moderate. Respondents gave a mean score of 2.86 for item 2 in the same table. This suggests that respondents were moderately involved in decision-making tasks outside of their own classroom and department. Regarding decision-making issue on the qualitative data part, two responders made the following statements, which are pretty telling:

I am extensively involved in the decision-making process in my job. However, it's possible that it's due to a cultural issue I had as a child. I've lost the energy and confidence to make important decisions. Normally, I spent a lot of time weighing the advantages and disadvantages of whatever decision I made. (Interviewee, # 1, December 2020).

### **The Other Interviewee also Added That**

I don't want to deceive you by claiming that I am a great decision maker. I make decisions on most basic and day-to-day activities since life is all about making decisions. However, I can tell that I continue to struggle with making great decisions. (Interviewee, # 3, December 2020).

The respondents' mean scores for items 3, 4, and 5 in Table 7 were 2.88, 3.04, and 2.93, respectively. These findings suggest that staff members supporting one other to solve difficulties in their particular schools, providing sufficient time for staff members to interact with colleagues on work-related difficulties at the school, and employee collaboration to achieve the schools' collective goals are moderate. As a result, achieving the overall goal of the said private schools will be too difficult without significant and well-built support among principals, vice principals, department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers, great concern for teamwork, and creating a sense of oneness among academic staff. A responder

made the following statement, which is pretty telling:

Although my school's staff members have strong relationships, I notice a lack of mutual collaboration or burden sharing. It's possible that everyone has his or her own specialized tasks to be completed on time, but I sense a lack of mutual cooperation or burden sharing. Since collaborative working culture is an integral component of dispersed educational leadership, all stakeholders involved, in my opinion, should do their part properly. (Interviewee, # 7, December 2020)

**In Addition, another Interviewee Stated:**

Private schools, in comparison to government schools, have a lot more duties to accomplish on a daily basis. In addition to their teaching and learning responsibilities, these schools maintain market share by providing far more extracurricular activities, which are required to be completed by a small number of employees. How can we expect more work from the same people? It will be unjust to expect something from it. (Interviewee, # 2, December 2020). The respondents' mean score for item 6 in the same table was 2.86. This means that everyone is moderately involved in decision-making. Table 7 item 7.8, 9 shows that respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with sharing common responsibility for their schools' objective accomplishment, and the mean scores were 2.87, 3.06, and 3.12, respectively. This suggests that private school administrators, vice principals, department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers shared a moderate amount of joint responsibility for goal achievement. This also suggests that principals and vice principals were more active in school-related decision-making than department heads, homeroom teachers, and subject teachers.

Items	5 SA		4 A		3 U		2 D		1 SD		Mean
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
At this private school, the problem is a lack of understanding about distributed leadership.	47	15.7	48	16	55	18.3	85	28.3	65	21.7	<b>2.75</b>
There is a lack of collaboration at this private school.	69	23	80	26.7	58	19.3	50	16.7	43	14.3	<b>3.27</b>
There is a lack of communication at this private institution.	64	21.3	65	21.7	68	22.7	52	17.3	51	17	<b>3.13</b>
There is lack of shared accountability among the staff members at this private school.	82	27.3	71	23.7	55	18.3	47	15.7	45	15	<b>3.33</b>

The difficulty of distributed leadership is the traditional and inflexible leadership structure of the school.	59	19.7	60	20	61	20.3	62	20.7	58	19.3	<b>3</b>
The challenge for distributed leadership at this private school is the lack of collegial relationships among staff members.	58	19.3	62	20.7	61	20.3	60	20	59	19.7	<b>3</b>
The difficulty of distributed leadership at this private school is a loose tie among department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers.	70	23.3	69	23	60	20	53	17.7	48	16	<b>3.2</b>
In this private school, dispersed leadership is also a difficulty since top leaders are afraid of subordinates participating in decision-making.	47	15.7	49	16.3	50	16.7	80	26.7	74	24.7	<b>2.71</b>
In this private school, distributed leadership is further challenged by staff members' unwillingness to engage in decision-making.	50	16.7	51	17	60	20	70	23.3	69	23	<b>2.81</b>

The mean score of the respondents was 2.75, as shown in Table 8 item 1. This implies that the employees of the stated private schools' negative view of distributed leadership were a moderate barrier to the practice of distributed leadership, since it was ranked moderately by the respondents. The respondents' mean score for item 2 in the same table, on the other hand, was 3.27. The respondents' mean score plainly indicates that a lack of teamwork was the moderate difficulty that hampered dispersed leadership methods at the fifty private schools mentioned and scored moderately. In this regard, a remark made by a relatively new staff member to the institution, but an experience at another private school, is expressive:

Although I am new to this private school, I am not sure why there is a difference in cooperation performance here compared to my previous private schools. Teachers in each classroom and at the departmental level. Everyone is working on their own. Yes, because school culture is so important, this institution is, I believe, emphasizing individual achievement over team achievement. (Interviewee, # 4, December 2020)

Similarly, the respondents' mean score in item 3 of the same table was 3.13. This means that a key problem of dispersed leadership techniques at the fifty private schools ranked moderate is a lack of communication.

Table 8 shows that the respondents' mean score for item 4 were 3.33. This indicates that respondents gave a moderate rating to the absence of shared accountability among school principals, vice principals, department heads, homeroom teachers, and subject teachers. Because one of the major aspects of distributed leadership practice is shared responsibility, it is easy to conclude that the lack of shared responsibility among staff members in the selected fifty private schools was the moderate challenge that hampered the practice of distributed leadership in these private schools.

Table 8 shows that the respondents' mean scores for items 5 and 6 were 3 and 3 respectively. These findings suggest that the fifty private schools' conventional and restrictive leadership structures, as well as the lack of collegial relationships among staff members, are issues that moderately impede the practice of dispersed leadership at these private schools chosen. Similarly, observational evidence shows that these private schools' leadership structures did not allow for successful dispersed leadership practice. The mean score of the responders was 3.2 for item 7 in the same table. Because most of the respondents rated loose ties among school principals, vice principals, department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers as a major challenge that deters the practices of distributed leadership in these private schools, the mean score of the respondents clearly depicts that loose ties among school principals, vice principals, department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers in the selected 50 private schools are considered the moderate challenges that deter the practices of distributed leadership in these private schools. The respondents' mean scores for items 8 and 9 in Table 8 were 2.71 and 2.81, respectively. These results show that department heads, homeroom teachers, and subject instructors are afraid to engage in decision-making, and their desire to participate in decision-making is ranked moderate. The following comment was made by one of the respondents, and it is rather telling:

As you can see, engaging in various committee members and other unusual decision-making areas leads a staff person to make a choice on another employee's most important issue. For example, terminating an employee. I believe that rather than being blamed by staff members, students, or students' families, the majority of staff members should be reserved for decision-making duties, which should have been done according to the distributed educational leadership philosophy. (Interviewee, # 3, December 2020)

As a result, both top leaders' fear of subject teachers participating in decision-making and subject teachers' unwillingness or less willingness to participate in decision-making in the selected 50 private schools at the five sub cities of Addis Ababa were considered as the moderate problems affecting the practice of distributed leadership in the selected private schools. Furthermore, inadequate leadership capacity, lack of commitment, lack of motivating skills, task overload, and lack of time were the key difficulties of dispersed leadership practices in the fifty private schools studied, according to open ended item findings. Work overload, frequent meetings, and special assignments were the major challenges of distributed leadership practice in these privately owned schools, according to the researcher's personal observation at the selected few private schools (Lambert, 2003).

<b>Table 9 OPPORTUNITIES OF DISTRIBUTED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS</b>											
Items	5 SA		4 A		3 U		2 D		1 SD		Mean
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1. In this private school, Distributed leadership ensures mutual respect among staff members	81	27	72	24	59	19.7	45	15	43	14.3	<b>3.34</b>
2. In this private school, distributed leadership encourage teachers to discuss the use of teaching Materials.	62	20.7	63	21	65	21.7	60	20	50	16.7	<b>3.09</b>



3. Teachers at this private school are encouraged to discuss the usage of instructional materials thanks to distributed leadership.	59	19.7	59	19.7	63	21	68	22.7	51	17	<b>3.02</b>
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In response to item 1 at Table 9, respondents were asked to rate how essential it is to establish mutual respect among staff members in the selected 50 private schools for improved teaching. As a result, the respondents' average score was 3.34. From this, it is clear that fostering mutual respect between staff members contributes moderately to improved teaching and learning processes at the 50 private schools mentioned. As a result, guaranteeing mutual respect among administrators, vice principals, department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers at the selected 50 private schools contributed moderately to improved teaching and learning in these schools. Identical to the given quantitative result one interviewee stated as follows:

The number one positive quality among the many that we have here is each employee's respect and discipline for his or her co-workers. The affection of the teachers, in my opinion, is the secret to staying at this private school. As you may be aware, because this private school is recognized for its branding quality, rival schools seek after its employees. Our staffs, on the other hand, are reasonably stable. Two staff members, to your surprise, have worked here for the past 19 years without moving schools. (Interviewee, # 1, December 2020)

The respondents' average score for item 2 in Table 9 was 3.09. Encouragement of staff members to discuss the use of teaching materials at the selected fifty private schools for improved teaching and learning service was modest, according to the respondents' mean ratings. One of the responders offered the following observation, which is rather telling:

Because each member of staff has a unique skill set, I've observed employees at this institution discussing how they work. Teachers exchange information on the character of those demanding students and parents, which aided us in improving our work. Similarly, because the school has a culture of quarterly experience sharing among colleague department heads, each employee will have the opportunity to provide and accept task-performance techniques. On top of that, staff members will conduct peer evaluations and provide quick feedback, which will allow them to discuss the instructional materials they used. (Interviewee, # 8, December 2020)

The respondents' average score for item 3 of Table 9 was 3.02. The respondents' mean scores clearly show that distributed leadership encourages teachers to discuss their students' behavior in groups. As a result of distributed leadership, teachers are encouraged to discuss their students' behavior in groups. In addition, administrators were instructed to emphasize the value of distributed leadership in these private schools in order to improve teaching and learning. As a result, all fifty principals and fifty vice principals agreed that incorporating department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers in decision-making and sharing responsibility is critical to the successful and efficient execution of the teaching and learning process.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

The study's key findings are categorized into four sections based on the four primary issues posed and reported below in the order they were posed.

### Respondents Perception about Distributed Educational Leadership in Private Schools

At terms of respondents' perceptions of distributed leadership, the majority of respondents in the fifty private schools have a moderate impression of the principles and features of distributed leadership. However, the researcher's personal observations suggest that the characteristics of distributed leadership were highly perceived by principals and vice principals in the fifty private schools studied in Addis Ababa city. When it came to respondents' perceptions of decision-making, the majority saw themselves as moderate decision-makers. At terms of respondents' perceptions of their colleagues' leadership responsibilities, the majority of respondents thought their colleagues somewhat demonstrated leadership responsibilities in the fifty private schools chosen moderately. In terms of the fifty private schools' leadership structures, the number of schools that allowed distribution leadership to be practiced was still moderate.

### **The Practices of Distributed Educational Leadership in Private Schools**

Employees' involvement in decision-making duties outside of their major responsibilities, particular classroom and department function was moderate. Employees assisting each other to address difficulties were not highly a common occurrence, according to respondents' moderate respond. In terms of respondents' collaboration to accomplish the fifty private schools' collective objective, collaboration was still moderate. The percentage of responders who shared collaborative obligations for their school's goal achievement was medium or moderate.

### **Major Challenges of Distributed Educational Leadership in Private Schools**

In the fifty private schools chosen, a lack of communication had a minor impact on the practice of distributed educational leadership. Lack of teamwork among respondents was a moderate hindrance to the practice of distributed leadership in the selected 50 private schools, according to the primary challenges of distributed leadership practice in the selected private schools. The practice of distributed leadership at the selected 50 private schools is moderately hindered by a lack of loose ties among homeroom teachers, department heads, and subject teachers. In terms of the problems of distributed leadership in the fifty private schools, the absence of shared accountability among homeroom teachers, department heads, and subject teachers was a the moderate deterrent to the practice of distributed leadership.

Poor leadership capacity, lack of commitment, lack of motivating skills, task overload, and lack of time were also the moderate obstacles of dispersed leadership practices at the fifty private schools, according to the data acquired from the open-ended questions. Furthermore, the data gathered through firsthand observation confirms this. The key problems that impact the practices of distributed leadership at the fifty private schools include a heavy workload, frequent meetings, and special tasks.

### **Opportunities of Distributed Educational Leadership in Private Schools**

In the selected fifty private schools, distributed leadership practice was playing a significant role in influencing collective effort in the teaching and learning process. The percentage of employees who were willing to take on leadership responsibilities in their departments was moderate. Mutual respect was moderate among responders in the fifty private schools chosen.

Involving home room teachers, subject teachers, and department heads in the decision-making process, as well as sharing responsibility for the teaching and learning processes of the selected fifty private schools, were also mentioned by principals and vice principals moderately as being critical to the effective and efficient practices of distributed educational leadership.

### SUMMARY

The study's main goal is to look into the views, practices, obstacles, and opportunities of distributed educational leadership at the fifty private schools in Addis Ababa's selected five sub- cities: Gulele, Arada, Kirkos, Yeka and Bole.

To achieve this aim, the following research questions were raised:

1. How do school principals, department heads, home room teachers and subject teachers understand the concept of distributed leadership in the private schools of Addis Ababa?
2. How far are distributed leadership practices in the private schools of Addis Ababa?
3. What are the major challenges influencing the successful implementation of distributed leadership in the private schools of Addis Ababa?
4. What are the opportunities of distributed leadership in the private schools of Addis Ababa?.

Based on the study questions posed, after making a review of related literature, simple random sampling techniques were used to pick 300 respondents. These respondents' opinions were acquired using a questionnaire including closed and open-ended items, rank order, and a Likert scale. Principals and vice principals were chosen using the available sampling approach since by default they are the only once. Observations were done for the selected ten private schools (two from each sub city) in order to get the essential information.

The data collected from the devices was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The data was tabulated and encoded on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 24.00). Percentages, frequencies, and mean scores were employed in the quantitative data analysis. In the qualitative data (the data mainly gathered from personal observation at the selected private schools) analysis, descriptive statements were employed and quantitatively with average mean scores ranging from 1.00-2.49 for low, 2.50-3.49, 3.50-4.49, and 4.50-5.00 for moderate, high, and very high, respectively.

### CONCLUDING REMARK

The following conclusions were formed based on the key findings:

1. The characteristics of distributed leadership were regarded moderately by principals, vice principals, homeroom teachers, department heads, and subject teachers in the selected fifty private schools. This demonstrates how a lack of awareness of dispersed leadership as an emerging leadership method in private schools can inhibit staff members from participating in and solving multifaceted challenges, as well as realizing the private schools' vision, purpose, and values.

2. In terms of the leadership structures of the fifty private schools chosen, the majority of respondents agreed that the leadership structures of the private schools allowed for distributed leadership techniques to be moderate. From this, it is clear that the fifty private schools' decision- making authority remains skewed toward their top executives, and the

majorities of respondents accept rather than participate in the decision-making process.

3. The majority of respondents from the fifty private schools reported that their engagement in decision-making duties outside of their own classroom and department activities was moderate. This clearly demonstrated that the majority of respondents in the fifty private schools chosen did moderately engaged in decision-making processes about their schools. Similarly, staff members' coordination to realize the selected fifty private schools' common aim was similarly moderate. This also suggests that achieving the school's common goal, which necessitates teamwork and shared responsibility as a moral fiber of success, will be too difficult without the participation of all staff members.

4. Lack of teamwork, weak ties among principals and vice principals, department heads and subject teachers, and a lack of shared accountability among staff members are the key issues that stymie dispersed leadership approaches at the fifty private schools studied. As a result, achieving the aims of the fifty private schools chosen is too difficult without resolving these issues.

5. Ensure well-built relationships among principals, vice principals, department heads, home room teachers, and subject teachers persuade team work and shared responsibility, creating favorable conditions to facilitate team leadership and collective responsibility, and ensuring tough collegial relationships among employees are solutions, according to selected fifty private school respondents. It is easy to deduce from this that implementing the recommendations made by the employees may enhance the practices of distributed leadership.

6. According to the study's findings, the majority of the staff at the fifty private schools felt that distributed leadership methods help to persuade collective effort in the teaching and learning process. As a result, it is easy to conclude that distributed leadership plays an important part in achieving the schools various goals.

7. According to the staff of the fifty private schools, fostering mutual respect among school employees would help to improve the teaching and learning process greatly.

8. Involving home room teachers, department heads, and subject teachers in the decision-making process, as well as guaranteeing team spirit and shared accountability, were also identified as important solutions to overcome the issues of distributed leadership practices at these private schools.

9. The effective and efficient practices of distributed leadership in the fifty private schools, which include involving homeroom teachers, department heads, and subject teachers in the decision-making process and sharing of responsibility amongst them, were also mentioned by the principals and vice principals.

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