Impact Of Leadership On Staff Development And School Improvement: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract:

Background: *School leadership plays a critical role in supporting staff transformational learning and improving overall school performance. The effectiveness of leadership is influenced by the availability and management of resources, particularly in relation to teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). High-quality professional development enhances teaching practices and contributes significantly to student achievement and institutional improvement. Understanding the relationship between leadership, staff development, and school improvement is therefore essential in the educational sector.*

Materials and Methods: *This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to examine existing research on leadership theories and their impact on staff development and school improvement. Relevant peer-reviewed studies were identified through structured database searches using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected literature was critically analyzed and synthesized to address the main research question and its sub-questions concerning leadership impact, CPD effectiveness, and school improvement.*

Results: *The review findings indicate that effective leadership significantly enhances staff motivation, professional growth, and workplace productivity. Continuing professional development was consistently associated with improved teaching quality and institutional performance. A strong positive relationship was identified between effective leadership practices and sustainable school improvement.*

Conclusion: *The study concludes that strategic and theory-informed leadership is fundamental to successful staff development and school improvement. Educational planners and policymakers should adopt structured professional development frameworks supported by effective leadership practices to achieve long-term institutional growth.*

Key Word: *Educational leadership; Staff development; Systematic literature review; Continuing professional development (CPD); School improvement; Educational effectiveness.*

I.   Introduction

The ways in which school leadership supports staff transformational learning are influenced by the amount and types of resources available. To improve education, teachers' continual professional development must be addressed, as well as a strategy for assisting teachers in realizing their untapped potential. Professional development that is of high quality has been shown to boost student progress in studies. Professional development, according to teachers, helps them enhance their teaching. This demonstrates that providing adequate professional development for teachers has a significant impact on school improvement.

II.   Material And Methods

A systematic literature review was conducted to answer the research question. Unambiguous approaches are used to systematically identify, select, and assess acceptable research, as well as to analyze the included data to answer a research question, according to a systematic literature review (Moher et al., 2009).

Planning: Prepared an excel sheet database (see Appendix A) which has been divided into six themes as follows:
1. Leadership
2. Staff Development
3. School improvement
4. Design of the staff development program
5. Effective implementation of staff development program
6. Evaluation of staff development program.

Conducting: The literature research was conducted using the following electronic database searching:
1. Google Scholar
2. BUiD Library
3. Science Direct

Under each of the above themes, I conducted a search for four to five different articles/ studies/ research. I had to choose 20 different papers/articles/studies from different countries if possible, mainly (Australia, USA, KSA, Malaysia, South Africa, Jordan, Ghana, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Turkey). And those papers mainly from 2013 to updated 2022.

Moreover, thematic or empirical research papers were searched for. Also, I had to search for quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or systematic literature papers to have a variety of options and comparisons.

Reading the abstracts yielded a total of thirty-four references. Twenty publications and reports were found using a fine-grained selection process and are the basis of this evaluation.

Reporting: After choosing the right twenty articles under their designated themes, I started to write down each ones aim in the database and take headlines of each important point related to the topic.

III. Discussion

This study answers the below three objectives (related to the research question):

What is the impact of good leadership on staff?

Leadership is a process of persuasion that leads to the accomplishment of goals. Based on their personal and professional principles, successful leaders create a vision for their institutions. They convey their vision at every opportunity and persuade their employees and other stakeholders to share it as well. The school's philosophy, institutions, and activities are all focused toward achieving this common goal (Bush and Glover, 2003)

As per Bush & Glover (2003), This working formulation yields three elements of leadership: Leadership as an influence, leadership as ideals, and leadership as vision. Taking the influence element will lead us to transformational leadership which is based on a follower's respect and admiration for the leader.

What is the relationship between good leadership and school improvement?

Leadership was characterized by a range of official and informal groups, typically assisted by engagement in external programs, according to Muijs and Harris's (2007, 961) research in three UK schools. Leadership was perceived as empowering teachers, and this empowerment, as well as the diffusion of excellent practice and initiatives developed by teachers, led to school improvement.

Bush (2009) concluded that educational leadership and administration are popular topics of discussion. Evidence of strong leadership's favorable benefits is increasingly supporting the widely held idea that it is critical for successful education (Hallinger 2003; Leithwood et al. 2006), and this will be reflected in the school improvement process.

What is the impact of continuing professional development (CPD) on improving productivity at work?

Collin K., Van Der, and Lewis P. (2012) noted that CPD seeks to improve professional knowledge, competence, and individual well-being, as well as the competitiveness and effectiveness of businesses and professions. It should occur on a constant basis, independent of the occupation or profession, and so be both a process and an outcome. As a result, CPD must be more closely related to organizational HRD practices and organizational learning as a whole, as well as professional advancements.

However, based on a study of three main countries: India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, Singh et al. (2020) performed research and found that some crucial insights enlighten the CPD situation in South Asia. To begin with, CPD's recent involvement in educational policy is still uncertain and modest. In terms of sources, time, and outcome, CPD is entirely undefined. It has nothing to do with service, career paths, or meeting professional standards. It is not tied to the teaching profession or teacher professional progress, despite the fact that it is increasingly defined in terms of student learning outcomes. Secondly, the school leaders are usually in charge of CPD, and the activities that teachers are authorized to participate in are decided by the school administration. Leaders aren't always receptive to teachers' desire to make changes, and colleagues don't expect instructors to try new things in the classroom. Finally, in comparison to institutions involved in initial teacher training, the institutional and organizational environment for CPD is virtually confusing in terms of its variety - significantly bigger in terms of purpose, scope, design, modalities, and structure. The vast array of institutions, resources, and modalities that make up the CPD landscape is partially due to finance and organization, but it also reflects the variety of ideas and motives that create it. CPD for teachers is likely to be more effective if there is more collaboration and simplification.

Thus, from what has been explained above, the staff professional development is playing a vital role in the school's performance and improvement in parallel with the main role of the school leader. That's why in this study three main themes were implemented in order to differentiate the process of the staff development program. The main themes are explained as follows:

Design of the staff development program

Barth, M. and Rieckmann, M. (2012) reached two primary conclusions from an Australian case study. For starters, education for sustainable development allows for the introduction of new and creative learning and teaching methods. As a result, it may be appealing and helpful not just to people interested in sustainability, but also to those who wish to enhance their teaching abilities and learn more about multidisciplinary, problem-based approaches. Staff development also opens up "windows of opportunity" for organizational reform. Even though organizational transformation toward sustainability does not necessarily begin with staff development, staff engagement as a key stakeholder group is recognized as significant, and empowering these stakeholders is seen as a critical step in organizational change (Kotter, 1996).

Different ideas by Kennedy (2016) on how teachers learn are used to build professional development programs. Reviewers frequently categorize programs based on design aspects like time, intensity, or the employment of particular approaches like coaches or online classes, but these categories don't reveal the programs' fundamental goals or ideas about teaching and teacher learning.

Moreover, professional development strives to improve people's career capabilities and help them to succeed in their chosen professions (Nguyen, 2019). Teachers, educational leaders, and policymakers all need to participate in appropriate professional development programs on a regular basis to obtain or enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the field of education. This research provides categories for school districts to explore when deciding whether or not to continue with present professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher-student connections and school environment. Understanding teachers' perspectives on CPD may be useful in facilitating and improving CPD for teachers in Saudi Arabia and worldwide (Sywelem et al, 2013). Also, A study by Jehanzeb (2013) observed that staff and organizations will gain in the long run if companies can support all employees in satisfying their needs. It is also critical for businesses to review the efficacy of their staff training and development programs on a regular basis. Not only are leaders responsible for designing the staff development program, but also if teachers are involved in the planning, execution, and assessment of a professional development program for teachers, it is more likely to succeed and be sustained (Luneta, K., 2012).

Effective Implementation of the staff development program

All participants agreed on the importance of professional development programs in increasing the delivery and implementation of the curriculum to reach a high level of student learning, according to qualitative data from research performed by Abdullah, R., and Wardat, Y. (2021) in Jordan MOE. In addition, all parties involved in the effective implementation of educational reforms should become more aware of and understand CPD programs (Mwila, 2022). According to the conclusions of a study conducted by Alexander Kyei Edwards (2019), continual or continuous professional development is extremely advantageous to the education delivery system.

Effective evaluation of staff development program

Research by Gokmenoglu and Clark (2015); sought to learn from teachers about the effectiveness of professional development programs aimed to promote national changes. Teachers said that professional development activities only somewhat pleased them 10 years into a period of intense national transformation. The Faculty Development program assessment, according to Fernandez and Audétat (2019), focuses on how professional roles evolve, new practice models arise, and change agents challenge existing norms and practices. Evaluation of the efficacy of professional development programs is a difficult and time-consuming task; this circumstance may cause researchers to be hesitant to devote adequate attention to program assessment (Erdas Kartal et. al, 2019)

IV.   Conclusion

This study concentrated on leadership methods to improve staff development programs that will definitely impact school improvement. From different literature reviews and readings, we may conclude that no matter what the leadership methodology is; there should be good attention to staff development involving not only the leader but other stakeholders including teachers in order to improve schools' results and achievements.

This paper can be used as a quick summary or a guide for researchers on the same topic. However, there were a lot of limitations to this study including the dangers of bias, such as selection bias, attrition bias, selective result reporting; inconsistency, and imprecision, which can lead to errors. But still, this study can be a base for other researchers to build on.

The foundation for the influence of leadership on staff development and school improvement has been laid out in this study. There is still a lot of work to be done, and there are a lot of additional ways to improve this research. As stated below, there are a variety of research studies that can be presented.
1. More time in order to conduct a quite professional systematic literature review.
2. Open-source search engine to obtain more accurate same related studies.
3. Search for more similar studies that can enhance the content of the research

As for recommendations for the study, leaders should go deep in studying the staff development methods to design and implement these programs and involve teachers in the evaluation process of staff development programs.

This study gave the author the opportunity to learn how to conduct a systematic literature review instead of a case study. With all its limitations, it still can be done. However, the time was so necessary to write such a study. And, by following the SLR techniques it can be done, all that it needs is good planning.

Finally, the evidence that high-quality leadership is critical for school development and student outcomes supports the need for specialized development for school leaders and teachers. And this shows the importance of staff development and its effect on school improvement.

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