

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AND PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN GOVERNMENT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAYUNGA DISTRICT, UGANDA**

**Dan Bubale<sup>1</sup>, George Wilson Kasule<sup>2</sup> and Edith Gladys Mayindo Mbabazi<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Senior Education Officer, Kayunga District, P.O Box 18000, Uganda

<sup>2 & 3</sup>Department of Educational Planning & Management, Kyambogo University P.O Box 1 Kyambogo, Kampala-Uganda

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2021.4213>

**ABSTRACT**

The study set out to examine the relationship between distributed leadership and pupils' performance in government-aided primary schools in Kayunga district, Uganda. The study displayed how the three distributed leadership practices of teacher collaboration, shared values and staff collegiality influence school performance. Quantitative research approach was used with the administration of survey questionnaires to 76 deputy headteachers, 76 heads of department and 76 class teachers from 76 study schools to obtain numeric data. The sample was purposively selected based on vast experiences and adequate relevant information appropriate to answer the research problem. The quantitative study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher collaboration and pupil's performance in primary schools. Results indicated a positive relationship between the two variables ( $r=0.627$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at 99% level of confidence. The study also found that there is a significant relationship between shared values and pupils' performance in primary schools. Results revealed a positive correlation between the two variables ( $r=0.736$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at 99% level of confidence. Similarly, the study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher collegiality and pupils' performance in primary schools. Results showed a positive correlation between the two variables ( $r=0.737$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at 99% level of confidence. Results of regression analysis indicated that the three distributed leadership constructs correlated with pupils' performance which suggests that the three constructs enhance and influence school performance. It is hereby recommended that distributed leadership could offer best practices for sustaining high levels of pupils' learning in primary schools in countries like Uganda.

**KEYWORDS:** Distributed leadership, Government-aided, primary schools, pupils' performance, Uganda

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, the evolution of pupils' performance has been a key issue in the education discourse. For instance, in the USA, since 1980, pupils' performance was mainly measured on data collected on very basic items such as school enrollment, attendance, participation rates, completion rates and school expenditures (Sniegowski, 1988). Overtime, measurement of pupils' performance changed from the teachers' bulk of observational assessments to standardised grading systems (Evans, 2012). The

grading systems are used to describe how well pupils perform based on a set of achievements derived from standardised tests (Schools White Paper, 2010).

Governments, parents, guardians and other stake holders inject a lot of resources especially money to ensure that children get the best education that could make them live a responsible and productive life in society. However, several studies indicate that the quality of education e.g. at the primary level in developing countries like Uganda is of a low quality. This is buttressed by several reports which indicate that pupils in government-aided primary schools in Uganda e.g. Kayunga District have and/or continue to perform poorly. For instance, in 2017, out of the 4370 candidates who sat for PLE in the aforementioned district, 35% failed the national examinations (UNEB, 2017). There are several factors e.g. low quality of teachers, poor background of learners, inadequacy of schools funds, low socio-economic status of parents/guardian, low quality of school management and leadership etc. These factors need to be addressed urgently so that wastage in education is lessened in Uganda. Accordingly, this study set out to establish the perceived relationship between distributed leadership and performance of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Uganda using Kayunga District as a case. This is deemed vital towards the attempts to improve school leadership which could lead to improved pupils' learning outcomes.

With such education aims highlighted above, coupled with more accountability and demands for good learner performance outcomes have led to the endless dramatic shifts in the way education systems are managed. Such shifts require flexible administrative structures to capture the potential of teacher participation and expand the value of a variety of opportunities for teacher and learner involvement in school improvement. It is only when such collective participation exists within schools that will the potential to benefit learners and teachers themselves be realised. The key is to give meaning to classroom teachers go beyond the context of their individual classroom work and feel part of the management process to forward improvement more effectively. Hence, it is coherently recommended that distributed leadership is key to the successful implementation of improvements in education (Harris, 2008; Sibanda, 2017). It creates the synergy between teachers and headteachers, thus, lead to increased education outcomes for large numbers of learners.

Scholars have argued and turned performance into a new way of relating to the learner's success and human development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). As the demand for good pupils' performance outcomes has increasingly characterised the area of primary education, schools are tasked with a duty to adopt an innovative and forward-looking leadership approach that would enhance teacher participation and school effectiveness for quality performance results in sustainable ways. Distributed leadership practices create space for teacher development and participation in school activities to ensure teachers effectively teach and perform routine, non-routine, and creative tasks that foster learners' academic success. Distributed leadership sets a culture of encouraging teachers' involvement in formal decision-making or leadership roles that will have a greater impact on student achievement (Harris, 2008; King & Stevenson, 2017).

Distributed leadership practice stems from the fact that the influence and involvement of teachers is a critical factor in determining essential learning needs and interests of pupils. As Greenlee, (2007) noted that when teachers take part in school wide decision making, they can mentor their colleagues, influence joint curriculum activities and plans to foster working arrangements to influence a positive change. This perspective is reflected in other studies that have paid attention to the idea of school leadership moving down from the person leading to the concept of organisational development. In education, such leadership is commonly attributed to the reformation of the school system itself aligned to the school vision and goals down to specific expectations related to pupils' outcomes (Gumus et al. 2016; Srivastava, 2018). In the developed countries, voluminous studies indicate that distributed leadership positively influence school operations which in turn lead to high learner achievement and learning outcomes. However, in developing countries like Uganda, there is no empirical data that indicate the relationship between distributed leadership and pupils' performance in primary schools.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study was guided by both the performance theory and activity theory. The performance theory of learning postulates that the types of knowledge towards which the learning process is directed, advocates for both the motivation, in which the pupils' needs for learning is made a central focus by all school actors and also redefining the structure that supports such a positive change. While goal of activity theory pertains, that successful leadership is possible when all members of the organisation work together in pursuit of common goals (Elmore, 2008; Harris, 2008). Most importantly, activity theory relates well with action theory approach of performance (Frese & Sonnentag, 2000). The action theory approach describes the performance process as any other action from both a process and a structural point of view (Frese & Zapf, 1994). The process point of view focuses on the sequential aspects of an action, while the structural point of view refers to its hierarchical organisation. From the process point of view, goal development, information flow, planning, execution of the action and its monitoring, and feedback processing are considered most important (Zapf, 2009).

Additionally, the blend of activity and action theory of performance advances that pupils' performance depends on setting high performance goals, developing good cognitive abilities of learners, ensuring detailed planning, and good feedback processing, and with a clear focus on how these various action process phases are interlinked with the aspects of work performance in the organisation. Therefore, in order to enhance performance based on action theory, control and social support moderate relations between teachers' work performance and job satisfaction which, in turn leads to higher levels of improvement (Gu & Johansson, 2013). Crucial findings within this current study are that high performing schools differed from moderate performers and struggling schools in the way they applied their leadership styles and performed tasks and how they arrived at solutions to school challenges. Such schools focused more on strategic goals and planned more in ill-structured tasks than well-structured tasks as also found in the studies by Leithwood and Steinbach, (2003).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was designed to examine the relationship between distributed leadership and pupils' performance within established school hierarchies. The contention is that the collaborative interactions of the individual teachers are a key aspect of distributed leadership (Angelle, 2010). Teacher collaboration serves as the means of moving concepts of school leadership beyond the heroic and the legendary (Hallinger, & Heck, 2010a; 2010b). Successful collaboration demands that leadership responsibilities are shared across schools, not with specific teachers. The sharing of leadership responsibilities starts with the headteacher who delegates authority over teachers to lead tasks (Gronn, 2008). Such collaboration is a response to accomplishment of shared academic targets and actions reinforced by promoting organisational ownership amongst teachers (O'Leary, Bingham, & Choi, 2010).

It is imperative to understand deeply how the nature and extent of teacher collaboration and school climate interact to affect pupils' performance. This current study attempted to identify schools where such collaborative habits and cultures exist and related the practices to pupils' performance. It is argued in various studies that teacher collaboration promotes learning and enhances pupils' performance (Coleman, 2011). Teacher collaboration widens pupils' learning opportunities by raising high expectations. As such within collaborative work environments, teachers and pupils are not treated as passive recipients and as such, good communication is ensured so that they are constantly engaged in instructional processes in order to improve and shape their curriculum performance

Similarly, shared values give collective guidance and direction of purpose in decision making processes for proper coordination of teaching and learning within the school systems (Cole, 2008). Anchored in the distributed leadership theory, shared values influence staff work group culture and facilitates the analysis of sequences of routine school activities. Besides, shared values promote teacher leadership approaches with a collective performance focus and objective for the maximum benefit of learners. Teachers embraced cooperative learning strategies, a commitment to collaborative working approaches and pursuit of shared performance values as a culture (Firestone & Louis 1999). When teachers feel it is safe to share ideas with their colleagues, they raise questions that relate to teaching, and seek answers; their leadership skills improve, they get empowered and their schools become better places for learning. They also become motivated and effective supporters of improved pupils' learning and development. Moreover, the leadership they practice based on values can promote common instructional improvement for pupils' benefit.

For instance, with shared values schools conduct rules, and set procedures that are taught and constantly implemented in the classroom and the whole school community. This guides staff in treating their colleagues and pupils fairly and with respect, whereby everyone's views are valued. The school mission uses 'learning for all' as the basic premise, and allows parents to actively participate in school activities. Teachers feel comfortable communicating with pupils and their parents and they feel great

to work for and are proud to tell others that they are part of the school (Davis, 2009). All these factors create a safe and orderly school climate of high expectation with pupils' academic success.

Shared values such as respect, trust, commitment, and attending to duty are considered to have a potential impact on pupils' performance. The study noted that securing performance improvement comes through the hearts and minds of teachers triggered off by a shared sense of achievement, which result from the real collective efforts of pupils and teachers. Teachers as middle and lower level managers are experts and mediators of change, negotiating effective teaching and learning processes to fit existing school values and attainment of curriculum goals. Elmore (2000) notes that the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance outcomes gained through a collective efficacy among teachers. The scholar further states that the roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement, and that leadership requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity constructed on shared values.

Nurturing leadership opportunities for teachers to build school capacity is the single most important aspect to make better schools with sustained improvement. Moreover, having a shared and monitored mission not only establishes a collaborative climate that promote the assessment of teachers against performance defined competencies but also it increases pressure for performance outcomes-based assessment at the class-level over time. In some of the participating schools it was noted that the real challenge was no longer how to improve but more importantly, how to sustain improvement. Harris and Muijs (2002) argue that sustainability will depend upon the school's internal capacity to maintain and support the set education programs and activities. The scholars further posit that sustaining improvement requires the leadership capability of the many rather than the few and that improvements in performance are more likely to be achieved when leadership is instructionally focused and located closest to the classroom.

Relatedly, teacher collegiality is an important component of a school's effort to increase pupils' performance outputs (Danielson, 2006). Collegiality builds strong networked behaviors of teachers guided by unity of purpose. These behaviours link what goes on routinely as common beliefs and practices in schools with pupil achievement (Keedy, 1991). Research by Little (1990) suggests that collegial interaction at least lays the groundwork for developing shared ideas and for generating collaborative forms of leadership that promote school improvement. The foregoing author points towards shared forms of leadership activity as a means of consolidating collegial and collaborative processes among teachers. The research concludes that effective schools have tighter congruence between values, norms and behaviors of principals and teachers and that this is more likely to result in positive school performance.

The implication from empirical studies is that improvement is more likely to occur when there are opportunities for teachers to work together in collegial ways in order to and contribute to school effectiveness. This substantial research field has consistently emphasised the importance of teacher

involvement in decision-making processes and the contribution of strong collegial relationships to positive school improvement. A study by Morrissey (2000) also contends that extending leadership responsibility beyond the principal is an important lever for creating strong collegial ties and professional engagements to enforce school performance. This study established that extending leadership roles to teachers through collegiality endeavors creates strong instructional efficiency and performance enhancement.

The study noted that teacher collegiality sets new forms of cooperate governance that allows expanding the powers of school leaders to middle-and lower-managers to effect change. Such a collegial leadership approach develops group problem-solving skills; sets explicit standards and measures of performance, promotes the use of expertise in performance management systems and clearly defines targets and indicators of success while placing a greater emphasis on performance outputs through adoption of effective instructional processes. It was further noted that schools where the headteachers' leadership was perceived by teachers as more collegial and supportive often yielded instructional excellence and school improvements in pupils learning outcomes over time. Literature reveals that a school climate that is open, collegial, professional, and focused on student achievement provides the atmosphere for productive teacher empowerment in taking important decisions that affect learner performance. As, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) noted that teacher empowerment relates to higher levels of teacher self-report as well as student proficiency in reading and mathematics. Through collegiality teachers work productively with colleagues while building a collaborative enterprise (Moolenaar, 2012). Therefore, distributed leadership practices such as teacher collaboration, shared values and staff collegiality are not discrete, nor does each exist in a vacuum. Rather, they are deeply intertwined, in other existing leadership approaches that are having impact on school practices that perfect good performance. Accordingly, this study set out to test the following hypotheses: H1: Teacher collaboration positively relates to pupils' performance; H2: Shared values positively relate to pupils' performance; and H3: There is a positive relationship between teacher collegiality and pupils' performance in government-aided primary schools of Kayunga district in Uganda.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. This design was deemed suitable because it allows a researcher to get useful data in a relatively short period of time (Bordens & Abbott, 2011). Put succinctly, a cross-section design allows data to be collected just once, perhaps over a period of days or weeks or months in order to answer a research question (Sekaran, 2000).

### **Sample and sampling techniques**

The study targeted middle-and lower-level school managers occupying various positions in government-aided primary schools. These included Deputy Headteachers, Heads of department of the four core examinable subjects at PLE such as English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies as well as class teachers of upper primary section including primary four, primary five, primary six and primary seven classes. The study engaged a purposeful sampling technique for selection of



participants. Purposeful sampling targeted participants who are in key positions and could provide vital information by virtue of their experience and knowledge about the leadership in schools under study (Kumar, 2011).

## Research Instruments

Since this study was about measurement of the relationship between distributed leadership and pupils' performance in light of improving quality education services in primary schools, a 5-Point Likert scale questionnaire instrument was used. A 5-Likert scale was preferred because it provided respondents with 5 answer options to gather information about a topic by including a neutral answer option to select in case they didn't wish to answer from the extreme choices. This larger step by step spectrum of choices offered more independence to a participant to pick the 'exact' option most preferred. The use of more items on the 5 Likert scale helped the researcher to collapse the answers into concise groups for appropriate analysis and to generate greater precision in the results. The responses based on a 5 Likert scale were scored ranging from one representing 'strongly Disagree', two 'Disagree', three 'Not Sure', four 'Agree' and five 'Strongly Agree'. This 5 Likert scale approach provided plenty of data within a short time and covered a wider scope. Pupils' performance as the dependent variable was conceptualised into questions that required each respondent to do self-rating scored on a similar scale. These response items were rated, combined, aggregated and treated in unison as recommended by Creswell, (2013). This enabled the researcher to correlate each of the three distributed leadership practices with pupils' performance in order to establish the degree of relationships between the two major variables.

## Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Three experts from Makerere University in the field of education administration and management vetted the content in the questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire items was established through computing the CVI by dividing the number of items declared valid with the total number of the items. The established validity for the questionnaire was found to be 0.95 which is above 0.7 which is recommended by Amin (2005) for an instrument to be considered valid in social science research. In order to establish reliability for the study, a pilot study was conducted in two government-aided primary schools which were not part of the main study, with 20 respondents. The established reliability was found to be 0.974 which is above 0.7 and was considered reliable for the research instrument as recommended by other scholar e.g. Amin (2005).

## Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done using self-administered questionnaire. The use of a questionnaire was considered appropriate because it is widely accepted as an efficient data collection mechanism in a positivist study where the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the variables under investigation (Sekaran, 2000). In quantitative inquiry, respondents read and respond to the statements given on the given scale. As such, participants responded to questions regarding their perceived impact of distributed leadership on pupils' performance along with the relational interactions

of headteachers, deputy headteachers, class teachers and pupils within their school contexts and situations. Out of the 684 questionnaires administered in the 76 schools, 640 respondents filled up and completed the survey questionnaire. This represents a 94% return response rate.

## **Data Analysis**

The filled-up questionnaires per school from respondents were collected from all the 76 study schools in the entire district. The response rate was computed and recorded in percentage form to ascertain the return rates. The data were analysed by use of Pearson Correlation Coefficient to test the study hypotheses regarding the relationship between three distributed leadership practices and pupils' performance in government-aided primary schools of Kayunga district in Uganda.

The statistical results indicated that each of three distributed leadership constructs of; teacher collaboration, shared values and teacher collegiality positively correlated with pupils' performance (see table 1, below). This suggests that the three distributed leadership constructs enhance and influence school performance. Therefore, if distributed leadership is employed in all schools in Kayunga district, it will help administrators to restructure and expand their leadership styles to allow flexibility and inclusion of other members of staff in decision making processes that would enhance and facilitate school performance improvement.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To establish the relationship between teacher collaboration, shared values, teacher collegiality and pupils' performance, a correlation test was performed. The results are shown and presented in the Table1 below:



**Table 1: Correlation between teacher collaboration, shared values, teacher collegiality and pupils' performance**

		Pupils' Performance	Teacher Collaboration	Shared Values	Teacher Collegiality
<b>Pupils' performance</b>	Pearson	1	.623**	.734**	.733**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
<b>Teacher collaboration</b>	N	640	640	640	640
	Pearson	.623**	1	.744**	.672**
	Correlation				
<b>Shared values</b>	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	640	640	640	640
	Pearson	.734**	.744**	1	.819**
<b>Teacher Collegiality</b>	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	640	640	640	640
<b>Teacher Collaboration</b>	Pearson	.733**	.672**	.819**	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
<b>Teacher Collegiality</b>	N	640	640	640	640

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis one intended to test the relationship between teacher collaboration and pupils' performance in Government-aided primary schools of Kayunga District. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher collaboration and pupil's performance in primary schools. There was a strong positive relationship between the two variables ( $r=0.627$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at 99% level of confidence. The mean values for teacher collaboration and pupils' performance were 4.072 and 3.917 respectively whereas the standard deviations were 0.4587 and 0.4335 respectively. This indicates the level of strength teacher collaboration would have on pupils' performance. Thus, null hypothesis that teacher collaboration does not affect pupils' performance was rejected and therefore the alternative hypothesis that teacher collaboration positively relates to pupils' performance was adopted. The implication of this finding is that teacher collaboration is a strong indicator of pupils' performance. It is argued that successful collaboration requires that teachers of different expertise share instructional practices and pursue common goals associated with teaching thus, improve school performance.

It is also noted that since different teachers handle same pupils in the same classes and departments when teachers collaborate, they accomplish networked responsibilities which are interlinked to their area of expertise so that they co-contribute effectively to the prescribed instructional and learning processes. This collective endeavor of concerted efforts promotes teamwork and collaborative forms of leadership that integrate differing viewpoints and interests to support a unified academic vision that enables them to improve performance (Davis, 2009; Sibanda, 2017). This finding suggests that collaborative engagements emphasise staff active participation and the application of collective

leadership practices effect quality teaching and learning in all schools. Such collaborative practices are strongly driven by open school systems where teachers willingly participate, discuss, share and learn from one another routinely for a common identity rather than in individualistic leadership interests. This study encourages adoption of such collaborative habits and cultures in schools that would constantly promote excellent pupils' performance.

It should be noted that current education reforms have advocated for a shift from administration to service and to orient management more to teacher performance outputs and learner achievement (OECD, 2001b). With such reforms the administrative role of the school leaders has evolved from the practicing teacher, with added technical and administrative duties, to the full-time manager and developer of human development (Burgess, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). Developing human capacity itself increases the pressure for new forms of governance and partnership including shared decision-making with teachers, parents and members of the community. As such, headteachers and teachers are expected to become collaborators and coalition builders as much as managers of the internal running of schools if they are to become effective. It is only when such collaborative practices exist within government-aided primary schools in Kayunga district that will the purpose of school performance improvement be realised. Such leadership processes and practices can be employed to link to collective efficacy among teachers, examining current practices critically, and developing common values that would guide everyday school operations.

It is argued that when schools engage in collaborative leadership processes it gives teachers the opportunity to reflect on and experiment with best instructional practices, which in turn helps them acquire the ability to align relevant learning activities and tasks with the school mission. Thus, teacher collaboration if effectively used in Kayunga schools it would create school structures that promote participative decision making grounded in teacher empowerment, shared commitment, and team planning for increased learner performance outcomes. As, it has been demonstrated that, leaders who form effective management teams have a more pervasive influence than those who rely on their own personal efforts (Harris, 2013a; National Teacher Policy, 2019).

Hypothesis two intended to test whether there is the relationship between shared values and pupils' performance in government-aided primary schools of Kayunga District. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between shared values and pupils' performance. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variables ( $r=0.736$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at 99% level of confidence. The mean values for shared values and pupils' performance were 3.973 and 3.917 respectively whereas the standard deviations were 0.4886 and 0.4335 respectively. This indicates the level of strength shared values would have on both teachers and pupils' performance. Thus, null hypothesis that shared values do not affect pupils' performance was rejected and therefore the alternative hypothesis that shared values positively relates to pupils' performance was adopted. The implication of this finding is that shared values are a very strong indicator of good performance for both teachers and pupils.

The finding implies that when teachers are glued by shared values to guide their instructional practices, everyone's participation is clearly guided and this creates sound performance frameworks that use school values for proper coordination of teaching and learning within the school systems. Moreover, such performance frameworks would serve as a lever to push education goals forward. This suggests that shared values can greatly influence group institutional practices thus promoting desired performance outcomes. This study encourages such a shared culture of leadership premised on school values that would constantly promote good pupils' performance and unveil individuals' self-discovery. It should be noted that school values enable members of the school community to perpetually keep their minds open towards unlimited performance possibilities.

The study presents shared values as a key attribute of effective school leadership. School leadership is an activity that is related to shared work practices, holistic school functions, and collective task execution. It associates itself with joint performance effort, engagement, diligence, and common direction. Shared values allow teachers and pupils to become actively and purposively engaged, involved together in accomplishments of designed tasks. It is argued that when tasks are shared or distributed; teachers actively participate in school activities and they really contribute to the increased production and reproduction of quality performance outcomes. As every person is allowed and enabled to contribute productively towards the realisation of performance outcomes. The interplay between individual and collective participation is expansive when it contributes to desired performance and whereby new learning possibilities are mediated by shared work environments, which inherently enhance performance.

Thus, good performance has a collective purpose that exists in various forms enacted through concrete shared human actions directed toward achievement of common goals that target school improvement in totality as an organisation (Daniels & Cole, 2002; Spillane, 2006). Shared values direct concrete school activities characterised by collective nature of task performance. Good task execution contributes to outstanding school performance if directed by shared values and joint staff actions. Due to the fact that the outcome of joint actions cannot be anticipated with perfect accuracy, the school contexts and leadership situations in which teachers connect can lead to the performance of successful joint actions for improved performance outcomes. Thus, school performance is shaped not only by the education goal in itself but by the objective learning conditions set by shared values. Therefore, good performance emerges in response to the relationships between the set performance targets, the values attached, the state of the leadership action and its material school context.

Hypothesis three intended to test the relationship between teacher collegiality and pupils' performance in Government-aided primary schools of Kayunga District. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher collegiality and pupils' performance. There was a strong positive correlation between the two variables ( $r=0.737$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) at 99% level of confidence. The mean values for teacher collegiality and pupils' performance were 3.987 and 3.917 respectively whereas the standard deviations were 0.5113 and 0.4335 respectively. Thus, null hypothesis that

teacher collegiality does not affect pupils' performance was rejected and therefore the alternative hypothesis that teacher collegiality positively relates to pupils' performance was adopted. The implication of this finding is that teacher collegiality is a very strong predictor of pupils' performance. This finding from the questionnaires imply that staff collegiality involves people working together towards a common understanding guided by a shared vision, beliefs and practices. This implies that successful leadership becomes powerful when grounded in school cultures which promote staff collegiality, relational trust and shared responsibility around genuine common goals set to guide performance.

Teacher collegiality is perceived as concerted action that could be used to enhance teaching and learning to advance sustained school improvement. It was noted that, teacher collegiality gives teachers freedom to brainstorm, and take on initiatives that address school instructional challenges through collective endeavors. Similarly, in this study, it was reported that teachers embraced collegial work practices which were used to significantly and successfully impact on both their own practice and the performance of learners in productive ways. This study suggests that teacher collegiality rests on building interdependence and recognition of the benefits of meaningful staff engagements which are critical to the realisation of outstanding pupils' performance. It is argued that teacher collegiality values individual uniqueness which offers a wider understanding of navigating the school organisation to effectively enhance performance. Thus, teacher collegiality can be best explained when teachers perceive themselves as members of the team performance with a common objective toward desired performance outputs. Therefore, shared leadership practices such as teacher collaboration, shared values and staff collegiality are not discrete, nor does each exist in a vacuum. Rather, they are deeply intertwined, in other existing leadership approaches that are having impact on school practices that perfect good performance outcomes.

The study clearly indicated that the best leadership approach for improving school performance rests on a headteacher skilled in collegial leadership designed to attract support and actions from other colleagues including deputy headteachers, heads of department and class teachers who are actively involved in the core functions of the school. It was reported through interviews that in the few well performing schools; teachers actively and collectively participated in school administration and that they felt that their contributions were valued. This enabled school administration to establish a school structure that promoted and allowed participative decision making, delegation and collegiality that encouraged teacher decision making autonomy. Such a practice enhanced the implementation of common academic goals by working toward whole-staff consensus on school priorities. This created a strong sense of schools' overall purpose amongst staff. It also contributed to setting high performance expectations for teachers and pupils as well as reflect on their practice with a willingness attitude to adopt to new understanding of shared leadership and accountability.

Teacher collaboration and shared values embrace networking principles and can build strong collegial relationships that would potentially secure significant change processes for improvement (Hopkins,

2007). It was noted from this study that all the three distributed leadership practices enable teacher networks to stimulate and spread innovation to raise both collective and individual performance outputs. As pedagogical leadership strategies, collaboration, shared values and collegiality could be used to facilitate a move from individual professionalism to collective professionalism where it is the norm for practitioners to work inter-dependently rather than independently. It is through such mutual dependence and collective working practices that the school will build capacity to deliver quality teaching for better pupils' performance outcomes. This study affirms with what literature presents that the move to improve results in the 21st century leads to correlations between organisational structure, collaboration, shared leadership and learning outcomes (Ainscow, Muijs & West, 2006). How school leaders affect the dynamics of the education system depends on concepts aligned with the individualised school goals and its environment (Fullan, 2009b). Thus, the relevance of distributed leadership has gained prominence for improved education outcomes (Walker & Hallinger, 2015).

The study results suggest that distributed leadership links well with pupils' performance as evidenced through respondents' responses that pupils' learning was enhanced when teachers collaboratively worked together in a collaborative and collegial workplace atmosphere based on focused and accepted academic decisions. This implies that if all schools adopted and emphasised distributed leadership in Kayunga district with collaborative structures premised on a culture of collegiality and shared values, it can help teachers to closely work with headteachers to objectively support instructional programs to improve school performance. This kind of leadership approach redesigns the practice of leadership for school and pupils' success by sharing responsibility and accountability. All staff ought to be responsible for everything that takes place in the school. This study disagrees with the current perception that school and pupils' performance is a sole responsibility of the heads of education institutions. It is because headteachers have a duty to manipulate situations enlist cooperation and collaboration of staff and motivate staff to work better and make schools better places for learning to ensure improved performance. It is therefore their duty to influence and lead collective action that result into positive school performance.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that involving teachers in collaborative leadership activities influences the quality of teaching and learning, and consequently it can increase pupils' performance. The perceived effects of collaborative leadership have a bearing on school effectiveness and results into pupils' academic performance. The study concludes that shared values serve as vehicle to promote unity of purpose for increased performance in the quality management of schools. Thus, schools need concerted effort towards establishing common tools and values, forecasting useful performance goals into the limelight while responding to today's institutionalised education challenges. The study further concludes that for any school leader to be successful in their role, they need to build blocks of working teams and individual capacity for the entire organisational work so that they lead the best way in driving teaching and learning outcomes. However, this involves setting high expectations about the school's teaching and learning practices and ensuring that school values and staff behaviors underpin

a focus on improving learners' success. Additionally, it is hereby concluded that when distributed and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership at school, the influence on overall school performance, measured by the quality of its instructional pedagogies and the achievement of its learners, is far-reaching.

The study only used quantitative data collection and analysis and we suggest that further research should be conducted using mixed research methods. The authors suggest the following further research areas: 'Distributed leadership and school quality in Uganda education system'; 'The role of parents in the era of distributed leadership paradigm in education'; and 'Transforming policy and practice for distributed leadership in education in Uganda'.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The study recommends that distributed leadership could be a more attractive school leadership approach for delivering government policies on school governance. Headteachers need to relinquish power and authority; that there is an inevitable shift away from leadership as position to leadership as interaction in order to pursue common goals. The study also proposes teacher leadership, which is closely associated with distributed leadership, that would cement authority and hierarchy whereby headteachers monitor teachers and their work to ensure that a set of predetermined standards are met. Headteachers will need to build a high degree of reciprocal trust to negotiate a shared leadership practice deeply rooted in liberal versions of performing schools.

The study further recommends collaborative leadership structures that would allow teacher participation and involvement in making school decisions so as to promote effective teaching and learning to ensure increased education quality. Such practices promote a unity of purpose whereby teachers jointly define appropriate school performance pathways for school improvement. It creates the idea of collaborative school culture that ensures rigorous and sustainable performance pathways that effect change. Such an approach serves as a reference point to evaluate school performance in consistent ways with all the potentials from a collective lens. In addition, the study recommends that middle-and-lower-level leaders should be facilitated to grow the performance gateways faster in their own understanding and then be enabled to contribute to the performance systemic leadership collectively. Such an approach to school leadership enhances teacher actions in classrooms that raises positive performance scores and pupil' cognitive skills for desired results.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## **Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank all the deputy headteachers, heads of departments and class teachers of Government aided primary schools in Kayunga District who participated in this study for their contributions.



## REFERENCES

- Aincow, M, Muijs, D., & West, M. (2006). “Collaboration as a strategy for improving schools in challenging circumstances” improving schools, 9(3)192-202.
- Amin, M., E. (2005). Social science research, conception, methodology and analysis. Kampala. Makerere University press.
- Angelle, P., S. (2010). An organizational perspective of distributed leadership: A portrait of a middle school. RMLE Online: Research in Middle Level Education, 33(5), 1–16.
- Bordens, S. K., & Abbott, B. B. (2011). Research design and methods: A process approach (8th Ed.). NY, USA: McGraw-Hill.
- Burgess, S. M. (2016). Human Capital and Education: The State of the Art in the Economics of Education. Burgess, Simon, Human Capital and Education: IZA Discussion Paper No. 9885. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2769193>
- Cole, R., P. (2008). The distributed leadership experiment: First year impacts on school culture, teacher networks, and student achievement. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- Coleman, A. (2011). Towards a blended model of leadership for school-based collaborations. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 39(3), 296-316.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Daniels, H. & Cole, T. (2002). The Development of Provision for Young People with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties: An activity theory analysis.
- Danielson, C. (2006). The many faces of leadership. Educational Leadership, 65(1), 14-19.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2019). Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development. Applied Developmental Science, 1-44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>
- Davis, M., W. (2009). Distributed Leadership and School Performance. Doctoral Dissertation Submitted to the faculty of The Graduate School of Education and Human Development of the George Washington University, UMI Number: 3344534.

Elmore, R., F. (2000). Building a new structure for school leadership. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute.

Elmore, R. (2008). "Leadership as the Practice of Improvement", in Pont, B., D. Nusche and D. Hopkins (eds.), Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership, OECD, Paris.

Evans, R. (2012). The Hope for American School Reform. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Firestone, W. A., & Louis, K. S. (1999). Handbook of research on educational administration 2, 297-322.

Frese, M., & Sonnentag, S. (2000). High performance: An action theory approach. Working paper. University of Giessen and University of Konstanz.

Frese, M., & Zapf, D. (1994). Action as the core of work psychology: A german approach. In H. C. Triandis, M. D. Dunnette, & L. M. Hough (Eds.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology (2nd edn., Vol. 4, pp. 271-340). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Fullan, M. (2009b). Large scale reform comes of ages. Journal of educational change, 10(2-3), 101-113.

Greenlee, B. J. (2007). Building teacher leadership capacity through educational leadership programs. Journal of Research for Educational Leaders, 4(1), 44-74.

Gronn, P. (2008). The future of distributed leadership. Journal of Educational Administration, 46, 141-158.

Gu, Q., & Johansson, O. (2013). Sustaining school performance: School contexts matter. International Journal of Leadership in Education, 16, 301-326.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R., H. (2010a). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. School Leadership & Management, 30(2), 95-110.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010b). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative leadership make a difference in school improvement? Educational Management, Administration & Leadership, 38(6), 654-678.

Harris, A. & Muijs, D. (2002). Teacher Leadership: A review of Research.

Harris, A. (2008). *Distributed leadership in schools: Developing the leaders of tomorrow*. Routledge & Falmer Press.

Harris, A. (2013a). *Distributed leadership matters: Potential, practicalities and possibilities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hopkins, D. (2007). *Every School a Great School*. Maidenhead: Open University Press / McGraw Hill.

Keedy, J. L. (1991). *A strategy to develop teacher leadership for school restructuring: teacher collegiality groups (Working Paper)*. New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED331130).

King, F., & Stevenson, H. (2017). Generating change from below: what role for leadership from above? *Journal of Educational Administration* 55(6):657-670.

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research methodology: a step – by – step guide for beginner (3rd ed.)*. London: SAGE Publication Ltd.

Leithwood, K., & Steinbach, R. (2003). *Leadership for Change and School Reform* (pp. 50–66). London: Routledge. Google Scholar.

Little, J., W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record* 91(4): 509–536.

Moolenaar, N. (2012). A social network perspective on teacher collaboration in schools: Theory, methodology, and applications. *American Journal of Education*, 119 (1), 7-39.

Morrissey, M. S. (2000). *Professional learning communities: An exploration*. Basic Learning, Alberta Education. Eric.

National Teacher Policy. (2019). *National Teacher Policy to Increase Teacher Quality in Uganda*. Ministry of Education and Sports, Kampala.

OECD (2001b). *The Well-being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital*, OECD, Paris.

O'Leary, R., Bingham, L., B., & Choi, Y. (2010). Teaching collaborative leadership: Ideas and lessons for the field. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 16(4), 565-592.

School White Paper, (2010). *The Impact of Teaching*. New York Press.

Sekaran, U. (2000). Research methods for business: A skill building approach (3rd Ed.). USA: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Sibanda, L. (2017). Understanding distributed leadership in South African schools: Challenges and prospects. *Issues in Educational Research*, 27(3), 567-581. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier27/sibanda.pdf>

Sniegowski, S. J. (1988). The Department of Education. Improving the Quality of Education in America. New York: Chelsea House.

Srivastava, O. P. (2018). Bhagavad Gita: The Art and Science of Management for the 21st Century. New Delhi: Zorba Books.

Sweetland, S. R., & Hoy, W. K. (2000). School Characteristics and Educational Outcomes: Toward an Organizational Model of Student Achievement.

Uganda National Examinations Board. (2017). Report on Work of Candidates PLE 2017: Statement on Release of 2017 Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) Examination Results.

Walker, A., & Hallinger, P. (2015). A synthesis of reviews of research on principal leadership in East Asia. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53(4).

Zapf, K. M. (2009). Social Work and the Environment: Understanding People and Place. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press. ISBN 9781551303574, 229 pp