


Chapter 4

The Impact of Distributed Leadership on Effective Professional Development via Organizational Innovativeness

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to explore to what extent distributed leadership affects effective professional development of teachers mediating organizational innovativeness in the sample of the countries participating in the TALIS 2018 survey. Accordingly, the sample consisted of 15,980 schools and 261,429 teachers from 48 countries participating in TALIS 2018. The study found that teachers' gender, education level, and experience have a significant, albeit low, effect on their thoughts on the effectiveness of professional development activities. Another important research finding has shown that school principals' distributed leadership behaviors contribute to the effectiveness of professional development activities by promoting organizational innovativeness. Based on the findings of this study, the identified variables should be considered in the development of policies and practices for teacher learning. Future research could explore multilevel models that would examine the potential impacts of various leadership styles and teacher attributes on teacher learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary educational research focusing on educational administration and policies shows that teacher quality has a significant impact on school outcomes (Buske, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hattie, 2009). For this reason, studies to determine the characteristics of effective professional development activities that improve the quality of teachers' knowledge and skills remain a priority for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers (Ainley & Carstens, 2018; Bates & Morgan, 2018; Desimone, 2009). Therefore, despite the gap between theory and practice in teacher professional development, the linkage of the relationship between them should be taken into account (Day, 1997; EL-Deghaidy et al., 2015; Mansour et al., 2014). Enhancing teacher attributes and learning is the main focus of most education reforms to improve student learning outcomes. Remarkably, several studies highlight that teacher professional development is equivalent to educational reforms (Desimone, 2009; Sykes, 1996). Along with these efforts, it is seen that there is a need for empirical studies using advanced statistics to discover the characteristics of activities that increase the quality of teachers and to determine the school and individual level variables that affect teacher learning (Ainley & Carstens, 2018, p. 49; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009). When these studies are scrutinized, the school principal's leadership behaviors and the school's innovative structure come to the fore as variables emerge as characteristics that can affect teachers' professional development studies at school level.

Leadership is essential for organizational innovativeness and effective school improvement efforts. The study of hierarchies dominated organizational theory for most of the last century, but now researchers are more interested in peer-based dynamics, interactions and distributed leadership (Heckscher, 2007). This shift is evident in both the academic and the practical literature on management, especially in the growing fields of complexity science and network theory. According to a complexity view, formal leaders focus on "managing interdependencies" and care more about fostering rich relational networks than "controlling processes or outcomes" (Leithwood et al., 2009). This circumstance has been one of the key forces that highlight distributed leadership in the context of altering contemporary school management approaches as well as effective school and organizational innovativeness activities.

Many studies have explored the organizational structures, leadership roles, and school conditions that foster innovation (Blase & Blase, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1996). For decades, theoretical perspectives on management and leadership have traditionally been viewed as individual activities, i.e.,

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