

Relationship Between Distributed Leadership and Self-Efficacy of Catechists in Catechetical Schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur

Brian Jude Lazaroo & Muhd Khaizer Omar

Department of Science and Technical Education Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti
Putra Malaysia

Email: GS62322@student.upm.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20032>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20032

Published Online: 10 January 2024

Abstract

This study delved into determining the relationship between distributed leadership, characterised by collaborative decision-making, supportive supervision, coherent practices, and catechist self-efficacy within catechetical schools of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. Surveying 260 catechists, the study revealed a landscape of moderate perceptions of leadership support and practices alongside generally positive yet nuanced self-efficacy levels indicating individual variations. However, the spotlight shone brightest on the Pearson correlation analyses, unveiling remarkably strong positive correlations between all three leadership dimensions and self-efficacy ($r = .993, .987, \text{ and } .990$, respectively). This potent connection illuminates a powerful truth: distributed leadership, when woven into the fabric of catechetical schools through collaboration and supportive supervision, serves as a potent catalyst for igniting catechist confidence and unlocking their effectiveness. This revelation compels us to advocate for strategic investment in leadership development programs that invigorate distributed leadership practices, particularly in the domain of supervision. By empowering catechists through such interventions, the potential to optimise catechetical education and nurture stronger faith formation within the Archdiocese becomes not just a possibility but a compelling reality.

Keywords: Distributed Leadership, Catechist self-efficacy, Catechetical Education, Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, Leadership Development.

Introduction

Background and Significance

In the realm of leadership, there has been a notable evolution from traditional hierarchical models, where decision-making was predominantly centralised, to more contemporary approaches. This shift has been particularly pronounced in the context of education and religious organisations, where the limitations of top-down leadership models have become increasingly evident (Blasé, 1993; Harris, 2004; Spillane, 2006).

Features of Distributed Leadership

Emerging as a response to these limitations, distributed leadership represents a significant departure from conventional models. It is characterised by a paradigm that favours shared power and collective agency. Unlike hierarchical structures that centralise authority, distributed leadership promotes a collective framework for decision-making and action. This approach is underpinned by four fundamental pillars, each contributing to its distinctiveness and efficacy."

Firstly, shared decision-making is a cornerstone of this model. As argued by Spillane et al (2009), decisions in an organisation are not unilaterally imposed but are instead the outcome of collaborative deliberation involving a wide range of stakeholders. This inclusive methodology not only brings together diverse viewpoints but also instils a sense of belonging and ownership among all participants.

Secondly, the model acknowledges the collective expertise within an organisation. Bryk and Schneider (2002) highlight the importance of valuing each individual's unique skills, knowledge, and experiences as a pooled resource. This collaborative expertise drives innovative solutions and enables organisations to address complex challenges.

Thirdly, joint accountability is a critical aspect of distributed leadership. Harris (2004) emphasises that the responsibility for meeting common objectives is shared across both individuals and teams. This shared responsibility fosters a culture of commitment and ensures collective participation in the organisation's success.

Lastly, social learning plays a vital role in this leadership model. Leithwood et al (2003) advocate for the promotion of peer learning and knowledge exchange, creating an environment conducive to continuous development. Through mutual learning experiences, both individual and collective capabilities are enhanced, allowing for organisational adaptation and growth.

These pillars collectively define distributed leadership, presenting a framework that is collaborative, inclusive, and dynamically responsive to the needs of modern organisations. The practical application of this framework, especially within educational settings, has demonstrated its significant potential and positive impacts.

Benefits of Distributed Leadership in Education

In the realm of education, the concept of distributed leadership has attracted considerable attention due to its association with a myriad of positive outcomes. This leadership style, distinguished by its shared decision-making and collaborative action, offers several key advantages for educational institutions.

One of the primary benefits observed is enhanced student success. Research conducted by Bossert et al. (1982) and further supported by Bryk and Schneider (2002) indicates a positive relationship between distributed leadership practices and improved student achievement and engagement. This suggests that when leadership responsibilities are shared and

collaborative, it positively impacts educational outcomes, moving beyond the traditional notion of leadership as a solitary endeavour.

Another significant advantage is the empowerment and increased satisfaction of educators. Harris (2004, 2013) has demonstrated that distributed leadership contributes to a greater sense of ownership and agency among teachers. This approach to decision-making not only democratises the process but also leads to higher job satisfaction and motivation among educators. Such an environment encourages active participation and investment in the collective goals of the institution.

Additionally, organisational dynamism is notably enhanced under distributed leadership. Gronn (2002) underscores the benefits of this leadership style in fostering effective problem-solving, optimising resource allocation, and enabling swift adaptation to changing circumstances. These factors collectively contribute to propelling educational organisations forward, making them more responsive and agile.

However, it is important to note that the majority of research and observations regarding the benefits of distributed leadership have been centred around secular educational institutions. In contrast, in religious and educational contexts, particularly within catechetical ministry, the exploration of distributed leadership is considerably less developed. Catechetical ministry, which plays a crucial role in the faith formation and spiritual development of young people, presents a unique setting where the principles and impacts of distributed leadership are yet to be extensively studied and understood.

Catechetical Ministry and the Need for Effective Leadership

The catechetical ministry serves as the lifeblood of the Catholic Church, nurturing the faith of future generations (Kallon, 2022; Oracion & Madrigal, 2019). Through diverse programs and initiatives, dedicated catechists ignite flames of understanding in the hearts of children and adults, guiding them in profound prayer and reflection and fostering a cherished relationship with God (Oracion & Madrigal, 2019). Yet, the flame's intensity hinges on the steady hand of leadership, for the effectiveness of these programs rests squarely on the shoulders of capable and dedicated catechetical leaders.

Catechetical leaders operate within a complex labyrinth, juggling a multitude of demanding responsibilities. They meticulously sculpt catechetical programs that faithfully uphold Church doctrines while resonating with diverse learners' needs (Młyńska & Polskich, 2020). They nurture a dedicated team of catechists, igniting their passion and equipping them with effective instructional tools (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). More than educators, they curate welcoming sanctuaries where catechists and learners connect in a vibrant tapestry of community fostered by inclusivity and belonging (Joseph et al., 2021; Mendoza & Venables, 2023). Resourceful stewards, they navigate budgets and logistics, ensuring programs run smoothly (Kwarteng, 2018). And amidst this intricate dance, they offer unwavering spiritual guidance and support to both catechists and learners.

Given the multifaceted nature of their responsibilities, the sheer weight of success rests on the shoulders of effective leadership. This is where distributed leadership emerges as a

beacon of hope, offering an empowering approach that can break down the walls of the labyrinth and unleash the collaborative potential of both leaders and catechists, propelling them towards shared goals and enriching the tapestry of catechetical ministry.

The Role of Catechists and Self-Efficacy

In the realm of catechetical ministry, the role of catechists is foundational and crucial. Buchta (2023); Sultana (2021) have highlighted the vital role these educators play in guiding learners along the path of faith. As Gogolik (2021) notes, catechists are not just teachers of Catholic teachings but nurturers of spiritual growth, creating engaging learning environments that inspire and empower learners with their passion, dedication, and skilled pedagogy.

A key element in the effectiveness of catechists is their sense of self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Bandura (1997) as the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks. This self-belief profoundly influences catechists' approach to their ministry, impacting their motivation, resilience, and pedagogical methods.

Catechists with high self-efficacy emerge as passionate torchbearers of faith, navigating their ministry with unwavering motivation and commitment. Their confidence as architects of learning enables them to create impactful catechetical experiences that resonate deeply with learners. Moreover, they possess the resilience of unyielding navigators, viewing challenges and setbacks as opportunities for growth and learning. Their continuous quest for knowledge makes them ever-evolving learners, always open to new teaching practices and adapting to the evolving needs of their learners. Furthermore, they dedicate themselves to weaving enriching spiritual tapestries, ensuring that the learners' faith journeys are nurtured with meticulous care.

The significance of self-efficacy in educational settings has been well-documented, with research by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) demonstrating a strong correlation between teacher self-efficacy and their effectiveness in fostering student learning and engagement. This relationship is likely to be similarly impactful in the context of catechetical ministry. Catechists with high self-efficacy are apt to be more effective in conveying the depth and beauty of the Catholic faith, facilitating a stronger connection with God among learners, and nurturing their spiritual growth.

Research Gap and Study Rationale

The burgeoning field of distributed leadership has illuminated its promising potential to empower educators and enhance learning outcomes in diverse educational settings. Yet, despite this burgeoning field, a stark void remains in our understanding of its application and impact within the distinct ecosystem of catechetical schools in Malaysia. This is further amplified by the complete absence of research examining the crucial link between distributed leadership practices and the self-efficacy of catechists in this specific context.

While studies have explored leadership challenges and teacher effectiveness in broader educational settings within Malaysia (e.g., Bush & Ng, 2019; Halim et al., 2019; Jamil & Hamzah, 2019; Rumeli et al., 2022), these primarily focus on general educational contexts and do not delve into the unique dynamics and needs specific to catechetical schools. These

schools operate within a distinct landscape, navigating the complexities of faith formation amidst evolving societal needs and a diverse cultural and religious backdrop. This unique context calls for a nuanced understanding of how leadership practices may differ from those within traditional educational settings and how they might influence the self-efficacy, motivation, and, ultimately, the effectiveness of catechists in nurturing the faith of future generations.

Building on the identified research gap, it becomes imperative to explore how distributed leadership practices specifically manifest and influence catechists within the Malaysian catechetical school context. The uniqueness of these schools, situated at the intersection of education and faith formation, presents a compelling case for dedicated research. It is within this framework that the current study positions itself, aiming to not only add to the existing body of knowledge but also to provide actionable insights for the betterment of catechetical education in Malaysia. This endeavour is particularly pertinent given the lack of empirical studies focusing on the confluence of distributed leadership and catechist self-efficacy in this unique educational setting.

Research Objectives and Questions

In addressing this gap, the research aims to investigate the relationship between distributed leadership practices and self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. The study is guided by the following objectives

1. to determine the levels of distributed leadership practices in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.
2. to assess the levels of self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.
3. to investigate the extent and strength of the relationship between distributed leadership practices and self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

This study addresses the following research questions

1. What are the levels of distributed leadership practices in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur?
2. What are the levels of self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the levels of distributed leadership practices and self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur?

Expected Contribution and Implications

By examining the application and impact of distributed leadership within catechetical schools, this research aims to contribute valuable insights across multiple levels, with potential benefits for catechetical leaders, catechists, and, ultimately, the spiritual development of students. The findings of this study can inform tailored leadership training programs for catechetical leaders, equipping them with the skills to empower catechists and cultivate a collaborative environment. For catechists, the research can guide the development of professional development programs focused on building leadership skills and contributing

effectively to collaborative initiatives. Ultimately, this study has the potential to strengthen catechetical effectiveness by fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration, leading to more engaging learning experiences and deeper spiritual development for students within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. Additionally, by addressing the identified research gap, this study contributes to the ongoing theoretical discourse surrounding distributed leadership in religious contexts, offering valuable insights for scholars and practitioners alike.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey approach with a correlational focus to examine the relationship between distributed leadership practices and self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In line with Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommendations for research methodology, this cross-sectional design enabled the efficient gathering and analysis of data from a substantial participant pool at a singular time point. This method provided a detailed snapshot of the current state of these constructs within the target population, yielding valuable insights into the levels and interplay of distributed leadership and self-efficacy among catechists.

Informing our methodological approach, we integrated key insights from DeMarco (2018) study on public middle schools in the United States, adapting and refining these methods to align with the distinct context of catechetical education in Malaysia. This tailored adaptation was imperative to effectively address the unique features and challenges prevalent in Malaysian catechetical schools. It ensured that the research design was meticulously customised to the nuances of this particular educational environment.

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyse the levels of distributed leadership and self-efficacy among catechists. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to assess the strength and direction of the association between these two variables, in line with Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommendations. This analytical approach facilitated a comprehensive examination of the connections between these pivotal variables, thereby enriching our understanding of how distributed leadership practices impact self-efficacy within the specific milieu of Malaysian catechetical education.

Participants and Sampling

This study targeted six hundred and thirty (630) English-speaking catechists serving in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. This population estimate was derived from information provided by the Archdiocese Catechetical Commission (ACC), suggesting an average of eighteen (18) catechists per school, with thirty-five (35) schools within the jurisdiction. To ensure the generalizability of the findings, a representative sample of 290 catechists was drawn using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table. This table recommended a sample of 242 for a population of 630, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. To account for potential non-response or incomplete data, the sample size was increased by 20%.

Data Collection

A self-administered online survey conducted via Google Forms served as the data collection instrument for this study. This platform offered several advantages, including convenient access for participants, anonymity to ensure unbiased responses and efficient data processing capabilities (Conrad et al., 2019). The survey was distributed through WhatsApp, a familiar communication channel employed by the Archdiocese Catechetical Commission (ACC) to reach catechists. To maximise participation, the survey was accompanied by a cover letter explicitly stating the study's purpose, guaranteeing anonymity and data confidentiality, and providing clear instructions for completion. Moreover, regular follow-up reminders were sent via WhatsApp to encourage participation.

Instrumentation

This study employed two well-established instruments to measure the key variables

1. **Distributed Leadership:** The Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) by Hulpia et al (2009) quantified the level of shared leadership within catechetical teams. Comprising 24 items across six dimensions (shared vision, collective responsibility, collaboration, intellectual stimulation, influence, and learning), the DLI utilised a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Its strong psychometric properties, including reliability and validity, have been previously established (Hulpia et al., 2009).
2. **Self-Efficacy:** The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) assessed catechists' general confidence in their abilities. This widely used instrument, with strong reliability and validity across diverse fields (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), measured self-efficacy through 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

Combining the GSES with the DLI enables a comprehensive examination of how distributed leadership practices shape catechists' overall sense of agency and resilience. This broader perspective transcends the immediate teaching context, yielding valuable insights into leadership's influence on catechists' well-being and motivation.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 facilitated the quantitative analysis of the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were employed to characterise the levels of distributed leadership and self-efficacy among catechists. Further exploration of the relationship between these variables utilised Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Cultural and Contextual Adaptation

While the DLI and GSES offered robust measures for our study's purposes, their initial development occurred in different cultural contexts. Therefore, we implemented careful adaptations to ensure their suitability for the unique environment of catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. These adaptations involved minor linguistic adjustments and cultural nuances incorporated into the questionnaires. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted with a representative sample of catechists to confirm the cultural and

contextual appropriateness of the revised instruments. This rigorous pilot phase was crucial in establishing the cultural validity of the assessment tools, ultimately strengthening the trustworthiness of our findings.

Pilot Testing

Before embarking on the main study, we conducted a pilot test with 25 catechists from diverse backgrounds across the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur (KL), representing approximately 10% of the minimum sample size. This pilot served as a crucial step in refining our methodology, allowing us to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the research instruments and procedures. The successful recruitment of this diverse sample, coupled with complete data collection devoid of missing entries or outliers, provided valuable confirmation of the practicality and efficiency of our approach.

The DLI demonstrated excellent internal consistency reliability, exceeding established thresholds, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha values for each subscale: Support ($\alpha = .939$), Supervision ($\alpha = .827$), and Coherent Leadership Team ($\alpha = .974$). These robust psychometric properties affirm the instrument's suitability for assessing distributed leadership practices among catechists.

Encouraging preliminary findings emerged from the descriptive statistics. Participants perceived moderate levels of support from peers and superiors (Support subscale mean = 39.64, SD = 9.01), indicating a generally positive albeit varied experience. Similarly, supervision was perceived as clear and helpful (Supervision subscale mean = 9.16, SD = 2.33), suggesting effectiveness in this realm. Notably, the Coherent Leadership Team subscale (mean = 30.52, SD = 7.67) revealed a strong perception of unity and effectiveness within the leadership structure.

The pilot study further reinforced the GSES's suitability for measuring catechist self-efficacy. Its robust internal consistency, evidenced by a strong Cronbach's alpha of .935 exceeding established thresholds, affirms its capacity to accurately capture this crucial variable within the context of catechetical schools. This finding bolsters confidence in the GSES's effectiveness for the main study.

The pilot data revealed a mean GSES score of 37.96 (SD = 6.22) amongst the 25 participants. This suggests that, on average, catechists in the pilot sample exhibited moderate levels of self-confidence in their ability to navigate challenges and attain their goals. Although the pilot sample size was limited, this initial glimpse into self-efficacy levels provides valuable insights for the main study.

The pilot study's positive outcomes reinforce the suitability of both the DLI and GSES for investigating the interplay between distributed leadership practices and self-efficacy among catechists within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. These established instruments provide a robust and reliable foundation for the upcoming main study, paving the way for insightful exploration of this crucial relationship.

Data Management and Confidentiality

Safeguarding participant data was a top priority. All survey responses were securely stored on a password-protected computer with regular electronic backups implemented to prevent potential data loss. Access to the data was restricted solely to authorised researchers, and participants were fully informed about how their data would be used and stored through an information sheet or consent form.

This study's robust methodology offered a comprehensive exploration of the interplay between distributed leadership practices and catechist self-efficacy within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. By delving into this crucial relationship, the findings hold the potential to significantly impact both educational leadership and catechetical ministry. By shedding light on how leadership practices influence catechists' well-being and effectiveness, this research paves the way for informed future endeavours in both research and practice within catechetical education. Rigorously designed and ethically conducted, this methodology ensures the generated findings are reliable and valid, laying a strong foundation for future advancements in this vital field.

Results and Analysis

Descriptive Data

The study focused on 630 English-speaking catechists in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table for a 95% confidence level, we determined that a minimum of 242 responses were required for statistically significant results.

Respondent Distribution

In conducting a comprehensive survey within the catechetical schools of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, the demographic and professional attributes of catechists were thoroughly examined. The survey, which extended invitations to 630 catechists, achieved a notable response rate of 41.27%, with 260 catechists participating. The collected data, as delineated in Table 1, provided an insightful overview of the distribution of catechists by district, their years of experience in catechetical teaching, and gender distribution.

The district-wise distribution of catechists demonstrated a broad geographical representation. The majority of respondents were from the KL South District, accounting for 25.8% of the total. This was closely followed by the Klang and Petaling Districts, each contributing 21.5%. The KL Central District represented a smaller proportion at 11.5%, while the remaining districts, including KL North, Negeri, Northwest, and Pahang/Terengganu, collectively constituted the balance, with each having less than 10% representation.

Regarding the years of experience in catechetical teaching, the findings indicated a significant depth of experience among the catechists. A substantial 54.2% had been engaged in catechetical teaching for more than ten years. Those with 7 to 10 years of experience comprised 21.2% of the respondents, highlighting a seasoned group of catechism teachers. Additionally, catechists in the early stages of their vocation were also represented, with those having 1 to 6 years of experience collectively accounting for 24.6% and those with less than a year at 8.5%.

The gender distribution among the catechists showed a balanced representation, with female catechists slightly outnumbering their male counterparts. Females constituted 50.4% of the respondents, while males accounted for 49.6%. This near-equitable gender distribution underscored the inclusive nature of catechetical instruction within the Archdiocese.

In conclusion, the survey provided essential insights into the characteristics of catechists within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. As indicated in Table 1, there was a diverse geographical representation, significant teaching experience, and a nearly equal gender distribution among catechists. These elements collectively depicted not only the diversity and expertise within the catechetical community but also highlighted the devotion and commitment of these catechism teachers in their spiritual and educational roles.

Table 1

Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Catechetical School Teachers in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
District	KL Central District	30	11.5
	KL North District	18	6.9
	KL South District	67	25.8
	Klang District	56	21.5
	Negeri District	11	4.2
	Northwest District	10	3.8
	Pahang/ District	Terengganu 12	4.6
	Petaling District	56	21.5
Years of Experience in Catechetical Teaching	Less than 1 year	22	8.5
	1-3 years	22	8.5
	4-6 years	20	7.7
	7-10 years	55	21.2
	More than 10 years	141	54.2
Gender	Female	131	50.4
	Male	129	49.6
Total Respondents		260	100.0

Instrument Reliability

We conducted internal consistency measures for both the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) to assess their reliability.

Distributed Leadership (DLI)

Table 2 details the DLI's descriptive statistics, confirming the completeness and validity of the data. The mean scores were: Support (3.55), Supervision (3.57), and Coherent Leadership

(3.55). According to Hulpia et al. (2009), the overall DLI mean, calculated as the average of these means, was 3.56. Table 2 also provides the range for each dimension.

Table 2

Statistical Analysis of Distributed Leadership Dimensions in Catechetical Schools

Dimension	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
Support	3.09	1.45	4.55	3.55	1.15	1.31
Coherent Leadership	3.20	1.40	4.60	3.55	1.15	1.32
Supervision	3.33	1.33	4.67	3.57	1.19	1.40

Reliability of DLI

As shown in Table 3, the DLI demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .991. This confirms the DLI's suitability for assessing the three dimensions of distributed leadership. The individual dimensions also showed high reliability: Support (.981), Supervision (.921), and Coherent Leadership (.977).

Table 3

Reliability Coefficients of Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) Dimensions

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
Support	.981	.981	11
Coherent Leadership	.977	.977	10
Supervision	.921	.923	3
Reliability Coefficients for DLI	.991	.991	24

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)

Table 4 presents the GSES descriptive statistics. The data, complete and valid, showed a mean score of 3.55 and the provided range.

Table 4

Statistical Analysis of General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) Scores

	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
GSES	3.20	1.40	4.60	3.55	1.12	1.28

Reliability of GSES

Table 5 outlines the GSES reliability statistics. The Cronbach's alpha of .975 indicates excellent internal consistency, affirming the GSES's effectiveness in measuring catechist self-efficacy levels.

Table 5

Reliability Coefficients of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
GSES	.975	.975	10

Findings for research Question 1:

What are the levels of distributed leadership practices in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur?

This study investigated distributed leadership practices in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), it analysed three key dimensions: Support, Coherent Leadership, and Supervision, as summarised in Table 2. However, further examination of the data uncovers nuances that merit deeper analysis. Although the mean scores suggest a generally positive perception, the moderate standard deviation and variance across all dimensions point to variations in individual experiences.

Support Dimensions

In the Support dimension, which assesses perceptions of support from peers and superiors, a range of 3.09 was observed. The mean score of 3.55, above the scale's midpoint, reflects a general consensus on supportive practices among catechists. Yet, the standard deviation of 1.15 and variance of 1.31 indicate moderate consistency, signalling areas for enhancing uniformity in support. This underlines the importance of ongoing efforts to achieve consistent and equitable support across all schools and teams. Notably, the Supervision dimension, with a slightly higher standard deviation (1.19) and variance (1.40), calls for special attention, as it implies more significant differences in perceptions of supervision clarity and effectiveness. Such variability might stem from differences in supervisory styles, interaction frequency, or individual interpretations of feedback. Future research focusing on specific elements of supervision could yield insights crucial for interventions to improve this vital leadership facet.

Coherent Leadership Dimensions

In the Coherent Leadership dimension, assessing leadership effectiveness and unity, a range of 3.20 was noted. A mean score of 3.55 suggests a general consensus among respondents on the presence of coherent leadership. The consistency in perceptions is further indicated by the identical standard deviation (1.15) and a similar variance (1.32) to the Support dimension, pointing to a uniform pattern in how this leadership aspect is perceived.

Supervision Dimensions

The Supervision dimension, focusing on the clarity and helpfulness of supervision, presented a broader range of 3.33. The mean score of 3.57, exceeding the midpoint, implies generally positive perceptions but not a strong consensus. The highest standard deviation (1.19) and variance (1.40) among the dimensions highlight a more diverse range of experiences and perceptions regarding supervision quality, suggesting greater variability in this area.

Overall Implications

The consistent mean scores around 3.55 across all dimensions suggest a general, though not robust, agreement on the presence of supportive, coherent, and effective supervision practices. The fact that scores do not approach the maximum indicates room for further enhancement of these leadership qualities. While the standard deviation and variance across dimensions indicate some uniformity in responses, the slightly higher variance in the Supervision dimension calls for a deeper investigation to understand the diverse factors influencing this variability.

In sum, the findings from Research Question 1 present a nuanced scenario. Distributed leadership practices are viewed positively overall, yet there is a clear need for more consistent and equitable support, especially in supervision. By implementing targeted interventions, the leadership effectiveness within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur can be further strengthened, fostering a more supportive and empowering environment for all catechists. Additionally, in-depth research into the varied experiences within the Supervision dimension could inform strategies to refine and enhance distributed leadership practices in these schools.

Findings for Question 2

What are the levels of self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur?

This study explored catechists' self-efficacy levels within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, utilising the validated General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES). The GSES assesses individuals' confidence in handling future situations through a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Data collected are summarised in Table 4.

The average score of 3.55 on the GSES suggests that catechists in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur generally exhibit a moderately high level of self-efficacy, feeling reasonably confident in managing the challenges and tasks of their roles. Notably, the score ranges from 1.40 to 4.60, with a spread of 3.20, indicating significant variation in self-efficacy levels, likely reflecting diverse personal experiences and perceptions of competence. The standard deviation of 1.12 and variance of 1.28 further underscore this variability, pointing to a trend of higher self-efficacy yet also highlighting distinct differences in individual confidence levels.

Self-efficacy is pivotal for effective catechesis, especially given the diverse challenges and the necessity for adaptive, innovative teaching approaches. Although a baseline of confidence is apparent, these findings highlight the necessity for specific interventions to enhance self-efficacy, particularly among individuals with lower scores. The data advocates for tailored professional development programmes aimed at boosting self-efficacy. Potential initiatives include mentorship schemes, workshops on efficient teaching techniques and stress management, and opportunities for collaborative learning and experience sharing among catechists.

Further research should investigate the factors behind the varied self-efficacy levels observed. Such studies could explore correlations between self-efficacy and variables like

teaching experience, training, support systems, and individual personality traits. Longitudinal research would also offer valuable insights into the evolution of self-efficacy among catechists over time, especially in response to specific educational interventions or environmental changes.

In conclusion, this analysis indicates that catechists in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur generally possess a positive sense of self-efficacy, yet there are significant individual differences. Addressing these variations through customised support and development programmes is essential. Enhancing self-efficacy among catechists can significantly contribute to the overall effectiveness and resilience of catechetical education in the Archdiocese's schools.

Findings for Research Question 3

Is there a statistically significant relationship between the levels of distributed leadership practices and self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur?

This study explores the correlation between distributed leadership practices and self-efficacy among catechists in catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. To this end, we conducted Pearson correlation analyses to assess the relationship between self-efficacy scores, as measured by the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), and the three dimensions of distributed leadership: Support, Supervision, and Coherent Leadership.

The findings, detailed in Table 6, show exceptionally strong positive correlations between all three dimensions of distributed leadership and catechist self-efficacy. Pearson correlation coefficients for Support, Supervision, and Coherent Leadership Team are .993 ($p < .000$), .987 ($p < .000$), and .990 ($p < .000$), respectively. These high values denote near-perfect positive relationships between each dimension of leadership and the catechists' perceived self-confidence.

Table 6

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between DLI Dimensions and Self-Efficacy

DLI Dimension	Self-Efficacy (GSES)	Pearson Correlation	p-value (2-tailed)	N
Support	GSES	.993	.000	260
Supervision	GSES	.987	.000	260
Coherent Leadership Team	GSES	.990	.000	260

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

These results compellingly suggest that higher levels of distributed leadership in catechetical schools are significantly linked with increased self-efficacy among catechists. It appears that when catechists are immersed in environments characterised by supportive practices, clear and helpful supervision, and a cohesive leadership team, their confidence in tackling challenges and performing their roles effectively is notably enhanced. This finding is in harmony with existing literature that underscores the importance of supportive leadership in

enhancing educators' psychological well-being, autonomy, and professional confidence (Day et al., 2001; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008).

Although the correlations are exceptionally strong overall, the slightly lower coefficient in the Supervision dimension compared to Support and Coherent Leadership merits further exploration. This suggests the need to investigate which aspects of supervision most significantly enhance catechists' self-efficacy. Future studies could examine factors like communication styles of supervisors, frequency and quality of feedback, and collaborative problem-solving approaches to identify key elements within the supervision domain that most profoundly impact catechist confidence.

Implications for Leadership Development

These findings highlight the vital importance of nurturing robust distributed leadership practices in catechetical schools to boost educators' self-efficacy. This points to the value of investing in leadership development programmes that enable administrators and leaders to foster supportive environments, offer clear and constructive feedback, and promote collaborative decision-making. Such initiatives promise to empower catechists, leading to a stronger and more effective catechetical education system within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

Discussion

This study explored the extent of distributed leadership practices and their impact on catechist self-efficacy within catechetical schools across the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur. Focusing on three crucial dimensions – Support, Coherent Leadership, and Supervision – the research illuminated how collaborative leadership can bolster the confidence and effectiveness of individuals engaged in the vital role of faith formation.

The results indicated a broadly positive perception of distributed leadership in all assessed dimensions, reflected in mean scores consistently surpassing the scale midpoint. These findings resonate with the Archdiocese's dedication to fostering supportive and empowering environments within schools. Nevertheless, the observed moderate standard deviations and variance highlight variations in individual experiences. This points to the necessity of further investigation into potential areas for improvement.

While the overall findings are encouraging, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Its focus on the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur may not fully represent the dynamics in other dioceses or cultural contexts. Future research could, therefore, expand to a broader range of geographical and cultural settings, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, adopting a longitudinal approach would offer deeper insights into how leadership practices evolve over time and in response to specific interventions.

Support was identified as a pivotal dimension, evidenced by its relatively high mean score coupled with the largest standard deviation observed across the categories studied. This suggests that although a majority of catechists perceive a strong support system from peers and superiors, there is variability in the consistency of this experience (Hen, 2022; Leung et al., 2022). It underscores the necessity for ongoing initiatives to promote uniform and

equitable support in all schools and teams within the Archdiocese (Goldberg et al., 2018). Implementing bespoke interventions, particularly in areas or amongst groups where support is found lacking, could be instrumental (Paré-Blagoev et al., 2019.)

These findings point to the need for targeted leadership training programs. Such initiatives should focus on enhancing skills in supportive supervision, effective communication, and collaborative decision-making. Tailoring these programs to address the areas of inconsistency, as identified in this study, would significantly benefit catechists and the leadership quality within the schools.

Coherent Leadership mirrored the Support dimension in its pattern, exhibiting a consistent mean score and variance. This indicates a consensus among respondents on the effectiveness and unity within the leadership structure (Minai et al., 2020). While this positive perception is heartening, additional research is warranted to delve into the specific elements of leadership that contribute to this sense of coherence (Hu et al., 2016; Hutton, 2016; Leenstra et al., 2020).

Conversely, the Supervision dimension revealed a somewhat divergent trend. Despite a favourable mean score, the elevated standard deviation and variance indicate a broader spectrum of perceptions regarding supervision's clarity and effectiveness (Sharma, 2023). This disparity might stem from differences in supervisory approaches, interaction frequencies, or personal interpretations of feedback. Future research concentrating on these variables could yield crucial insights for bespoke interventions designed to improve supervision quality and amplify its beneficial effect on catechist self-efficacy.

The initial analysis indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between distributed leadership and self-efficacy, echoing the findings of both theoretical and empirical research in educational contexts. Such research underscores the capacity of distributed leadership practices to empower educators and bolster their confidence. To gain a deeper understanding, future studies should investigate how various leadership dimensions specifically contribute to catechist self-efficacy. Unravelling these mechanisms will be instrumental in guiding the creation of leadership training programmes and interventions, aiming to enhance the positive influence on catechists and, consequently, the overall efficacy of catechetical programs.

In conclusion, this research provides crucial insights into the intricate dynamics between distributed leadership practices and catechist self-efficacy in catechetical ministry. Although the findings paint a generally positive picture, it is essential to recognise and address the nuances present, especially in supervision, to refine leadership strategies and enable catechists to effectively guide youth in their faith development. Future investigations into the specific intricacies of this relationship will be pivotal in enhancing distributed leadership practices, thereby bolstering the efficacy of catechetical ministry within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur and potentially in wider contexts.

Conclusion

Our analysis robustly demonstrates a statistically significant and exceptionally strong positive link between distributed leadership practices and catechists' self-efficacy. It underscores the pivotal role of a nurturing and collaborative leadership milieu in enhancing educators' confidence and effectiveness in catechetical schools. Sustained efforts to bolster distributed leadership practices, especially in supervision, are key to empowering catechists and maximising the effectiveness of catechetical education in the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur.

Contribution

This research makes significant theoretical and contextual contributions to the field of educational leadership and catechetical education. Theoretically, it extends the discourse on distributed leadership by illuminating its profound impact on individual self-efficacy within a specific religious educational context. The study's findings significantly enrich our understanding of how leadership practices are not just administrative tools but are instrumental in shaping the psychological and professional facets of educators. Contextually, this research is pivotal for the catechetical schools within the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, providing empirical evidence that supports the strategic enhancement of leadership practices. By highlighting the strong correlation between distributed leadership and catechist self-efficacy, it underscores the necessity for tailored leadership development programs. These insights are not only valuable for the Archdiocese but also have broader implications for religious educational institutions globally, where nurturing effective leadership can profoundly influence faith formation and educational outcomes. This study, therefore, plays a critical role in bridging theoretical concepts with practical applications, contributing significantly to both academic research and practical implementation in the realm of educational leadership within religious contexts.

References

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W H Freeman/Times Books/ Henry Holt & Co.
- Blase, J. (1993). The micropolitics of effective school-based leadership: teachers' perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 29(2), 142-163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x93029002003>
- Bossert, S. T., Dwyer, D. C., Rowan, B., & Lee, G. V. (1982). The instructional management role of the principal. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 18(3), 34-64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x82018003004>
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. Russell Sage Foundation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610440967>
- Buchta, R. (2023). The catechist in the community of the church — a witness of faith and a mistagogue. *Roczniki Teologiczne*, 69(11EV), 59-73. <https://doi.org/10.18290/rt2269004>
- Bush, T., & Ng, A. Y. M. (2019). Distributed leadership and the malaysia education blueprint. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 57(3), 279-295. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jea-11-2018-0206>
- Conrad, F. G., Gagnon-Bartsch, J. A., Ferg, R. A., Schober, M. F., Pasek, J., & Hou, E. (2019). Social media as an alternative to surveys of opinions about the economy. *Social Science Computer Review*, 089443931987569.

- <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319875692>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage, Los Angeles.
- Day, C., Harris, A., & Hadfield, M. (2001). Challenging the orthodoxy of effective school leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 4(1), 39-56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120117505>
- DeMarco, A. L. (2018). "The Relationship Between Distributive Leadership, School Culture, and Teacher Self-Efficacy at the Middle School Level". Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs). 2594. <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/2594>
- Gogolik, M. (2021). Theological preparation of religion teachers in the light of current indications of the church in poland. *Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne*, (36), 179-196. <https://doi.org/10.14746/pst.2020.36.11>
- Goldberg, J. M., Skład, M., Elfrink, T. R., Schreurs, K. M. G., Bohlmeijer, E. T., & Clarke, A. M. (2018). Effectiveness of interventions adopting a whole school approach to enhancing social and emotional development: a meta-analysis. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 34(4), 755-782. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-018-0406-9>
- Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13(4), 423-451. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1048-9843\(02\)00120-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1048-9843(02)00120-0)
- Halim, N. A., Basri, R., Yusof, A., & Hassan, A. (2019). Relationship between senior assistant of extra curricular leadership styles and job satisfaction of extra curricular teachers in malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(11). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v9-i11/6713>
- Harris, A. (2004). Distributed leadership and school improvement. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 32(1), 11-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143204039297>
- Harris, A. (2013). Distributed leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(5), 545-554. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213497635>
- Hen, M. (2022). Mothers' and teachers' experience of school re-entry after a child's prolonged absence due to severe illness. *Psychology in the Schools*, 59(6), 1122-1134. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22666>
- Hermanto, Y. B., & Srimulyani, V. A. (2022). The relationship between servant leadership and work engagement: an organisational justice as a mediator. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 11(2), 403. <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2022-0061>
- Hu, Y.-Y., Parker, S. H., Lipsitz, S. R., Arriaga, A. F., Peyre, S. E., Corso, K. A., Roth, E. M., Yule, S. J., & Greenberg, C. C. (2016). Surgeons' leadership styles and team behavior in the operating room. *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*, 222(1), 41-51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2015.09.013>
- Hulpia, H., Devos, G., & Rosseel, Y. (2009). The relationship between the perception of distributed leadership in secondary schools and teachers' and teacher leaders' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 20(3), 291-317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450902909840>
- Hutton, D. M. (2016). The rating of high-performing principals' performance on their leadership dimensions by senior administrators, middle managers and classroom teachers. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 11(2), 194-207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499916632423>

- Jamil, M. F., & Hamzah, M. I. M. (2019). The effects of distributed leadership on teachers' collective efficacy and professional learning community. *International Journal of Educational Best Practices*, 3(2), 10. <https://doi.org/10.31258/ijebp.v3n2.p10-27>
- Joseph, D., Lahiri-Roy, R., & Bunn, J. (2021). A trio of teacher education voices: developing professional relationships through co-caring and belonging during the pandemic. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 22(2), 157-172. <https://doi.org/10.1108/qjrj-04-2021-0045>
- Kallon, T. M. (2022). Contemporary catechetics (christian instruction) is not inclusive enough. *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies*, 137-144. <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.2022854>
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308>
- Kwarteng, A. (2018). The impact of budgetary planning on resource allocation: evidence from a developing country. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 9(1), 88-100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ajems-03-2017-0056>
- Leenstra, N. F., Jung, O. C., Cnossen, F., Jaarsma, D., & Tulleken, J. (2020). Development and evaluation of the taxonomy of trauma leadership skills—shortened for observation and reflection in training. *Simulation in Healthcare: The Journal of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare*, 16(1), 37-45. <https://doi.org/10.1097/sih.0000000000000474>
- Leithwood, K., & Mascall, B. (2008). Collective leadership effects on student achievement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(4), 529-561. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x08321221>
- Leithwood, K., Riedlinger, B., Bauer, S. C., & Jantzi, D. (2003). Leadership program effects on student learning: the case of the greater new orleans school leadership center. *Journal of School Leadership*, 13(6), 707-738. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460301300606>
- Leung, E., Gomez, G., Sullivan, S., & Murahara, F. (2022). Social support in schools and related outcomes for lgbtq youth: a scoping review.. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1923532/v1>
- Mendoza, A., & Venables, A. (2023). Attributes of blended learning environments designed to foster a sense of belonging for higher education students. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 22, 129-156. <https://doi.org/10.28945/5082>
- Minai, M. H., Jauhari, H., Kumar, M., & Singh, S. (2020). Unpacking transformational leadership: dimensional analysis with psychological empowerment. *Personnel Review*, 49(7), 1419-1434. <https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-10-2019-0580>
- Młynska, E., & Polskich, S. K. (2020). A catechumenal model of catechesis to prepare children for first holy communion in the Archdiocese of białystok. *Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej*, 19, 171-185. <https://doi.org/10.15290/rtk.2020.19.11>
- Oracion, E. G., & Madrigal, D. V. (2019). Catholic identity and spiritual well-being of students in a philippine catholic university. *Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 7(2), 47-60. <https://doi.org/10.32871/rmrj1907.02.04>
- Pare-Blagoev, E. J., Ruble, K., Bryant, C., & Jacobson, L. A. (2019). Schooling in survivorship: understanding caregiver challenges when survivors return to school. *Psycho-Oncology*, 28(4), 847-853. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.5026>

- Rumeli, M. S., Rami, A. A. M., Wahat, N. W. A., & Samsudin, S. (2022). Distributive leadership roles for primary school teachers' efficiency in new norm: focus group analysis. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 18(1), 217. <https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v18i1.17190>
- Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). General self-efficacy scale. *PsycTESTS Dataset*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t00393-000>
- Sharma, P. (2023). Effect of clinical supervision on self-awareness and self-efficacy of psychotherapists and counselors: a systematic review. *Psychological Services*, 20(2), 291-299. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000693>
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. In *Rethinking schooling* (pp. 208-242). Routledge.
- Spillane, J. P., Camburn, E. M., Pustejovsky, J. E., Pareja, A. S., & Lewis, G. (2009). Taking a distributed perspective in studying school leadership and management: the challenge of study operations. *Distributed Leadership*, 47-80. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9737-9_4
- Sultana, C. (2021). A pastoral reading of the directory for catechesis. *Roczniki Teologiczne*, 68(11), 43-56. <https://doi.org/10.18290/rt216811-3>
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(7), 783-805. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0742-051x\(01\)00036-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0742-051x(01)00036-1)