KHAZAR UNIVERSITY

School: Graduate School of Science Arts and Technology

Department: Education

Specialization: Management (organization and management of education)

MASTER'S THESIS

Topic: The Need Analysis of Distributed Leadership in Higher Education Institutions

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Baku – 2024

XƏZƏR UNİVERSİTETİ

Fakültə: Təbiət elmləri, Sənət və Texnologiya yüksək təhsil

Departament: Təhsil

İxtisas: Menecment (təhsilin təşkili və idarə olunması)

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Bakı – 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Significance of the study

Given the changing demands on academic leadership in the face of global educational possibilities and challenges, the research on the need for dispersed leadership in higher education institutions is especially important. The conventional hierarchical leadership styles are showing to be less and less effective as universities, such as Khazar University, attempt to negotiate intricate and quickly evolving educational environments. A more adaptable and flexible approach is provided by distributed leadership, which encourages a collaborative setting where decision-making is divided among several stakeholders, improving responsiveness and flexibility. This is especially important at a time when institutions of higher learning need to adjust fast to things like new learning paradigms, shifting student demographics, and technology breakthroughs. The implementation of dispersed leadership has the potential to enhance organisational well-being by fostering a shared sense of accountability and responsibility, which is an essential component of institutional success and creativity. The reality of this study is further supported by the increasing acknowledgment that leadership need to be dispersed across all levels of organisation in order to capitalise on the combined knowledge and perceptions of the academic community, rather than being restricted to upper management. This research endeavour endeavours to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the impact of dispersed leadership on institutional resilience and adaptation. These are vital components for prospering in the contemporary competitive educational landscape. Additionally, investigating dispersed leadership in the context of Azerbaijan's higher education offers insightful information on the organisational and cultural aspects that affect how successful certain leadership models are in a particular geographic area. The current worldwide drive in the education sector towards more inclusive and participatory management methods is a driving force behind the need for this research, as it coincides with wider social movements towards equality and inclusion.

Problem setting and learning level

The research is a response to the urgent need to reassess higher education institutions' conventional hierarchical leadership structures in light of the increasingly complicated demands of global education and technology breakthroughs. It looks at distributed leadership's ability to handle issues like inclusiveness, innovation, and agility—all of which are often left unsupported by traditional leadership models. Distributed leadership is defined by shared accountability and cooperative decision-making. The purpose of this study is to better understand how dispersed leadership has been adapted in higher education and how it affects stakeholder involvement,

organisational effectiveness, and policy creation. The study's advanced learning level necessitates a multidisciplinary approach that integrates concepts from leadership studies, educational management, and organisational theory to investigate and assess the dynamics of dispersed leadership in higher education environments.

Purpose and tasks of the study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of distributed leadership in higher education institutions and its potential to enhance organizational adaptability and effectiveness. Tasks of the study:

1. Review the existing literature on leadership models in higher education;

2. Analyze the current leadership structure at Khazar University;

3. Assess the effectiveness of distributed leadership in enhancing institutional adaptability and responsiveness;

4. Identify the challenges and barriers to implementing distributed leadership in higher education;

5. Conduct case studies of higher education institutions where distributed leadership has been implemented;

6. Develop a framework for successfully implementing distributed leadership at Khazar University;

7. Propose policy recommendations based on the study's findings.

The object and subject of the research

The leadership structure of institutes of higher learning is the object of the study. The examination and use of dispersed leadership within these institutions is the subject of the study in order to increase the efficiency and adaptability of the organisation.

Used research methods

Analysis, comparative analysis, statistical analysis, econometric analysis, survey analysis methods were used.

The information base of the research

The information base of the study was formed by the results of the survey conducted among the staff and students of Khazar University.

Restrictions of research

The limitation of the study was the unavailability of specific indicators related to leadership at Khazar University.

The scientific novelty of the study

This study presents a new method for investigating dispersed leadership in higher education, especially at Khazar University, by means of an extensive survey and regression analysis. This research is the first to methodically investigate the effects of dispersed leadership in the particular context of Azerbaijani higher education on a range of organisational outcomes, including creativity, engagement, and cooperation. The research offers empirical insights into the relationships between leadership distribution and its effects on institutional effectiveness by utilising sophisticated statistical techniques such as structural equation modelling and regression analysis. This offers a fresh viewpoint on leadership dynamics in educational settings. Moreover, the research amalgamates distinct quantitative facts and qualitative insights, augmenting the profundity of comprehension about the pragmatic execution and obstacles of dispersed leadership at Khazar University.

Practical significance of the results and areas of application

The practical significance of this study is further highlighted by the possibility of dispersed leadership to improve academic research and education via more involved and empowered faculty and staff. With an emphasis on the particular requirements and environments of establishments such as Khazar University, this research offers a customised analysis that may result in improved instructional results and more successful leadership techniques. Not only is the study of dispersed leadership an academic endeavour, but it is also an essential first step towards changing the way organisations are run in a world that is becoming more linked and complicated by the day.

CHAPTER I LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Evolution of leadership theories: tracing the path to distributed leadership

An extensive examination of the scholarly literature concerning the development of leadership theories, with a particular emphasis on the trajectory that led to distributed leadership, uncovers a plethora of scholarly contributions that illustrate the progressive diversification and evolution of leadership paradigms throughout history. At the outset, leadership theories primarily focused on the characteristics and actions that distinguished individual leaders and enabled them to sway and direct their followers. Nevertheless, with the progression and intricacy of organizations, these initial theories began to exhibit their shortcomings, prompting scholars to investigate more comprehensive and systemic methodologies. This transition made way for the notion of distributed leadership, which asserts that leadership is a collective phenomenon that arises from coordinated and collaborative endeavors rather than the domain of a singular leader.

According to a 2002 study by Gronn, distributed leadership entails the coordination of expertise across multiple organizational tiers and not simply the delegation of responsibilities. His analysis indicates that, particularly in educational settings, effective distributed leadership results in enhanced organizational outcomes and more resilient structures. The concept was expanded upon in 2004 by Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond, who introduced an integrative framework known as "leadership practice" to comprehend distributed leadership. This framework emphasized the interplay between leaders, followers, and their situational contexts. This methodology emphasized the decentralized character of leadership, which is ingrained in the routine operations of various stakeholders within the educational institution.

In 2008, Harris and Spillane conducted empirical investigations to illustrate the practical ramifications of distributed leadership in educational institutions, building upon this theoretical expansion. It was discovered that educational institutions that implemented distributed leadership practices experienced improvements in student achievement, teacher engagement, and adaptive learning environments. The results of their research emphasize the value of distributed leadership in promoting an inclusive and participatory organizational culture, which is particularly significant in the ever-changing realm of education.

Furthermore, in 2009, Hargreaves and Shirley conducted research that examined the adaptation and worldwide dissemination of distributed leadership models. Their findings revealed notable discrepancies in the execution and results of such models within distinct institutional and cultural contexts. The authors posit that the effectiveness of distributed leadership is significantly

shaped by the dominant cultural norms and organizational values, which in turn affect the perception and implementation of leadership roles.

Bolden (2011) conducted a study that expanded the knowledge base regarding distributed leadership to include its impact on innovation and decision-making processes within university environments. Distributed leadership increases organizational capacity for innovation and change by nurturing a culture of shared leadership and collaborative problem-solving, according to Bolden's findings.

In essence, the shift from leadership models that prioritize the individual to those that emphasize distribution signifies an expanded recognition of leadership as a collaborative and ever-changing endeavor. The growing corpus of scholarly work that substantiates the beneficial effects of distributed leadership on organizational adaptability and performance signifies this transition. The accumulating body of research suggests that distributed leadership not only brings about a redefinition of leadership practice, but also enhances organizational outcomes in a variety of sectors, with education being a particular focus.

1.1.1. The genesis of leadership theories and the emergence of distributed leadership

The analysis of leadership theories has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from centralized concepts of command and control to more participatory and integrative frameworks such as distributed leadership. In the beginning, the concept of leadership was defined by charismatic qualities and inherent characteristics that set leaders apart from followers; this notion was exemplified by the Great Man Theory of the 19th century. With the increasing intricacy of organizational existence, these theories underwent further development to incorporate situational and behavioral aspects, recognizing that the effectiveness of leadership may depend on both the environment and acquired abilities. This development signifies a more comprehensive transition towards perceiving leadership as a decentralized procedure, in which the responsibilities of leadership are augmented throughout different tiers of an institution, engaging numerous personnel and intersecting positions.

The notion of leadership styles, which included democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire approaches, was initially proposed in 1939 by Lewin, Lippitt, and White. Their research established the fundamental principles that underpin participatory leadership models. The study demonstrated the direct impact of various leadership styles on group behavior and performance outcomes, thereby establishing a foundation for evaluating the efficacy of leadership methodologies in diverse contexts and circumstances. Expanding upon these observations, Burns introduced his transformational leadership theory in 1978, which posited that leaders have the ability to elevate the concerns of their

subordinates, thereby altering their incentives and fostering substantial organizational accomplishments that transcend plain transactional agreements.

The growing intricacy of organizational structures and the heightened importance placed on innovation and adaptability have revealed the constraints of singular leadership. As a result, scholars such as Gronn (2000) and Spillane (2006) have put forth the notion of a distributed leadership model. The authors proposed that leadership ought to be perceived as a collaborative force rather than a succession of isolated actions carried out by a single leader. They underscored the notion that successful leadership results from the interplay among a constellation of leaders, each offering their own unique set of skills and knowledge. The aforementioned viewpoint was enhanced by Harris's (2008) research, which presented empirical evidence linking distributed leadership practices to improved student outcomes in academic environments, thereby demonstrating the pragmatic advantages of this methodology.

Timperley (2005) provided additional empirical support by investigating the manner in which distributed leadership could facilitate advancements in education via collaborative professional engagements. In a similar vein, Bennett, Wise, Woods, and Harvey (2003) conducted research in academic establishments to demonstrate the ways in which distributed leadership promoted organizational responsiveness-critical qualities such as adaptability, expeditiousness, and inclusiveness. As a result of their combined research, it became clear that leadership that is distributed across various organizational levels can cultivate a culture that is more resilient, innovative, and flexible.

Furthermore, in 2009, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky conducted research that broadened the definition of distributed leadership to encompass the adaptive leadership framework. They argued that in order to effectively address complex challenges in the twenty-first century, leaders must rally their organizations around a process of shared responsibility. This methodology enables a more adaptable reaction to dynamic and intricate surroundings, suggesting that leadership theories are progressing from hierarchical to fluid and decentralized paradigms.

The aforementioned scholarly contributions highlight the shift from conventional leadership models, which prioritized centralized authority and fixed positions, to distributed leadership models that incorporate more adaptable and dynamic frameworks. This evolution not only signifies shifts in organizational cultures and structures, but also corresponds with present-day demands for inclusiveness, flexibility, and collaborative involvement in leadership methodologies. The transition from individual-centric to distributed leadership models signifies a substantial change in perception

of leadership as a dynamic, collaborative, and strategic undertaking, which is critical for effectively tackling contemporary organizational obstacles.

1.1.2. Key theoretical milestones in leadership development towards distributed models

Over the course of several decades, leadership theories have undergone substantial development in response to changes in organizational dynamics and societal values. In contrast to their early emphasis on the characteristics and actions of specific leaders, subsequent theories started to acknowledge the significance of situational factors and the dynamic between leaders and followers. The aforementioned progression laid the foundation for the emergence of distributed leadership frameworks, which prioritize the notion that leadership is a collective, emergent characteristic of groups as opposed to the capability of an individual. The adoption of distributed leadership represents a pivotal reaction to the escalating intricacy and interconnectedness observed in contemporary institutions.

The origins of this theoretical progression can be identified in the trait theories of the early 20th century (Stogdill, 1948), which postulated that individuals are predisposed to leadership positions by virtue of their birth characteristics. Nevertheless, during the mid-20th century, scholars such as Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) initiated investigations into the influence of distinct leadership styles autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire on group behavior. Their work established the foundation for leadership models that emphasize greater participation. The behavioral theories of the 1950s and 1960s, which posited that effective leadership behaviors could be acquired and applied contextually rather than being inherent, were profoundly impacted by this work.

A significant paradigm shift occurred in leadership theory during the 1970s and 1980s, as contingency and situational leadership models were developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) and Fiedler (1967), respectively. According to these theoretical frameworks, the efficacy of a leader's approach is dependent on situational variables, such as the level of development exhibited by subordinates and the particular requirements of the context. The inherent flexibility of these models suggested that leadership roles and responsibilities might be perceived in a more decentralized manner.

Expanding upon this adaptable style of leadership, Burns (1978) proposed the notion of transformational leadership, which centered on leaders' ability to motivate subordinates to attain exceptional results by putting the collective good ahead of their individual interests. Bass (1985) elaborated on this notion by drawing a comparison between transactional leadership, in which leaders and followers partake in a reciprocal exchange of advantages, and transformational leadership.

Gronn (2000), whose work crystallized distributed leadership as a formal theory in the late 20th century, argued that leadership is a collective activity in which the outcomes are determined by the interactions of numerous individuals who each bring forth their own set of skills and initiative. Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) operationalized this notion by placing emphasis on the decentralized nature of leadership responsibilities among various individuals within an academic environment. As a result, they established a comprehensive structure for scrutinizing leadership in practice.

Scholars such as Bolden (2011) and Harris (2003) have contributed empirical evidence to the twenty-first century that supports the effectiveness of distributed leadership in higher education and K–12 settings. Their research demonstrates how this leadership style cultivates an inclusive environment, encourages shared accountability, and facilitates collaborative problem-solving. The results of this study demonstrated that in addition to improving the adaptability and responsiveness of an organization, distributed leadership fosters a more profound involvement of stakeholders, which ultimately results in outcomes that are more sustainable and innovative.

In addition, Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) put forth the adaptive leadership model, which amalgamates principles of distributed and transformational leadership. This model underscores the critical role that leaders play in promoting organizational change through the encouragement of experimentation and the incorporation of diverse perspectives. This model emphasizes the criticality of recognizing the dynamic and ever-changing characteristics of leadership in order to effectively navigate the intricacies of modern organizational settings.

In summary, the progression of leadership theories towards distributed models signifies an expanded recognition of leadership as an ever-evolving, collaborative, and situation-specific undertaking. The shift from frameworks that prioritize the individual to those that emphasize the group is consistent with the increasing intricacy of organizational structures and the demand for leadership approaches that are more flexible and inclusive. As this theoretical progression reaches a new turning point, comprehension of the complexities associated with leadership in an interconnected global society deepens.

1.1.3. Paradigm shifts: from hierarchical to distributed leadership frameworks

The transition from hierarchical to distributed leadership frameworks signifies a substantial paradigm shift in organizational leadership knowledge and practice. This transition is indicative of more extensive shifts in management practices and organizational theory, which are motivated by the

requirement for governance structures that are more collaborative, resilient, and adaptable in light of progressively intricate and ever-changing environments.

Hierarchical Leadership Models.

Throughout history, leadership has been understood and implemented in a hierarchical structure, wherein the ultimate levels of an organization held centralized decision-making authority. The foundation of this model can be traced back to management theories of the early 20th century, most notably Frederick Taylor's (1911), which espoused scientific management characterized by well-defined hierarchies and decentralized responsibility for task supervision and approval. In the same way, Max Weber postulated in 1922 that a well-defined hierarchy of authority, a structured division of labor, and standardized procedures would increase control and efficiency.

As organizations encountered novel obstacles necessitating increased adaptability, expeditious decision-making, and stronger innovation, the shortcomings of hierarchical models gradually came to light. Frequently, hierarchical models were criticized for stifling employee engagement and innovation, being too rigid, and being too sluggish to adapt to change.

Transition to Distributed Leadership.

The adoption of distributed leadership started to acquire momentum when academics and professionals acknowledged the necessity for a more interactive style of leadership. Across all organizational levels, this paradigm is distinguished by the delegation of authority and the empowerment of individuals. The focal point is on leadership as a dynamic and interactive procedure in which numerous participants engage in leadership endeavors.

Prominent figures in the development of the distributed leadership theory comprise scientists such as Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2006), who posit that leadership ought to be perceived as a collaborative endeavor dispersed throughout a group, as opposed to being centralized in the hands of a single individual. This viewpoint considers leadership to be emergent in diverse organizational contexts, contingent on the contributions and areas of expertise of particular individuals.

Empirical Support and Application.

In particular, empirical research has demonstrated the advantages of distributed leadership in business and academic environments. For example, research conducted by Elmore (2000) on educational reform and Ancona and Bresman (2007) on corporate innovation has provided evidence that the implementation of distributed leadership within an organization can improve performance, adaptability, and learning. According to these studies, a distributed approach cultivates a workforce that is more motivated and engaged, exhibiting inventive problem-solving capabilities and resiliency when confronted with obstacles.

Benefits of Distributed Leadership.

Diverse leadership presents a multitude of benefits in comparison to conventional hierarchical frameworks. It enhances agility and promptness in responding to changes in the environment by granting more individuals the authority to participate in decision-making procedures. Furthermore, it bolsters the innovative capacity of the organization by capitalizing on the varied perspectives and specialized knowledge present across the entire staff. Individuals may also feel more valued and invested in the success and trajectory of their organizations, which can result in increased levels of employee commitment and satisfaction with distributed leadership.

The transition from hierarchical to distributed leadership frameworks represents a significant paradigm shift in the way contemporary organizations comprehend and implement leadership. Recognizing that effective leadership in today's complex and fast-paced world necessitates the utilization of talent and expertise at all organizational levels, not just the highest, is the impetus for this shift. In the face of the ongoing challenges that organizations face in the twenty-first century, distributed leadership models present a potentially effective strategy for cultivating organizational cultures that are more adaptable, innovative, and inclusive.

1.2. Distributed leadership: definitions, dimensions, and theoretical frameworks
1.2.1. Defining distributed leadership: core concepts and characteristics

The paradigm of distributed leadership has significantly transformed the comprehension of leadership in contemporary organizations, shedding light on the intricate and cooperative characteristics of leadership approaches. In contrast to conventional, hierarchical leadership models, this framework advocates for a system in which multiple individuals within an organization share leadership responsibilities. This approach is predicated on the notion that leadership capacity is organizational-wide and not limited to senior executives' formal authority. The notion underscores the significance of leader-to-leader interactions and the situational contexts in which they operate, thus cultivating a leadership structure that is more adaptable and dynamic.

Gronn (2008) played a pivotal role in the conceptualization of distributed leadership as a dynamic and compound activity, as opposed to a static collection of characteristics or actions confined to a single individual. He emphasized that leadership responsibilities are frequently achieved by coordinating the efforts of numerous individuals who contribute unique perspectives and areas of expertise. Harris (2009) further developed this notion when she investigated the effects of distributed leadership on organizational change in academic establishments. Her findings revealed that the

implementation of a distributed approach not only improved institutional adaptability but also facilitated the professional development of teachers.

MacBeath (2005) expanded upon this discourse by asserting that in educational institutions that foster collaboration and collective accountability, distributed leadership arises organically. The findings of his cross-sectional analysis revealed that the implementation of distributed leadership not only enhanced the efficacy of decision-making processes but also had a positive impact on the overall school climate and student outcomes. The study conducted by Spillane, Parise, and Sherer (2011) examined the impact of distributed leadership practices on classroom innovation among teachers. When instructors perceive leadership to be distributed among staff, they are more likely to implement innovative teaching strategies and feel more supported, according to their research.

In their quantitative analysis of the effects of distributed leadership on school performance, Muijs and Harris (2006) demonstrated that educational institutions that implement a greater number of distributed leadership practices tend to exhibit higher levels of student achievement. By capitalizing on the group's collective intelligence, their findings indicate that the shared leadership model may even marginally enhance the efficiency of an organization. In their investigation of distributed leadership in academic environments, Bolden, Petrov, and Gosling (2009) observed that this strategy fosters increased faculty and staff initiative and participation, which in turn improves organizational performance and ensures a more robust connection to the objectives of the institution.

These studies underscore the notion that distributed leadership encompasses more than just the distribution of authority; it also entails fostering a leadership culture in which diverse perspectives contribute to the organization's vision and trajectory. This transition not only promotes universal access to leadership but also corresponds with modern principles of inclusiveness and collaborative decision-making in overseeing intricate organizational environments.

In brief, the fundamental tenets of distributed leadership encompass the following: delegation of leadership power in a decentralized manner, fostering collaborative decision-making, and capitalizing on the varied competencies of team members throughout the entire organization. It has been demonstrated that this strategy increases organizational agility, stakeholder engagement, and innovation capacity, rendering it an indispensable model within the repertoire of contemporary leadership theories.

1.2.2. The multidimensional nature of distributed leadership: structures and dynamics

The adaptive and responsive capacity of distributed leadership, attributed to its complex and multidimensional characteristics, is widely acknowledged in contemporary organizations. Instead of

a centralized concentration of power, this style of leadership entails the dispersion of leadership obligations among numerous individuals throughout an organization. It involves multiple tiers of leadership activity in which leadership responsibilities and decision-making authority are delegated to individuals at various levels. The model's fluid dynamics promote agility and ingenuity, empowering organizations to more efficiently maneuver through intricate environments.

A study conducted by Leithwood and Mascall (2008) demonstrates the operation of distributed leadership in educational environments. The results indicate that the participation of numerous leaders facilitates a more holistic approach to problem-solving and decision-making. The study emphasizes the manner in which distributed leadership cultivates a perception of responsibility and ownership among educators, thereby augmenting the overall performance of the organization. In their study, Woods, Bennett, Harvey, and Wise (2004) investigated the interplay between formal and informal leadership positions. Their research revealed that distributed leadership fosters a leadership framework that is more adaptable and dynamic, qualities that are particularly crucial in educational environments undergoing rapid change.

Mayrowetz (2008) centers her research on the mechanism through which authority is delegated to administrators and educators, positing that the efficacy of distributed leadership is significantly augmented by a solid correlation between organizational goals and role clarity. DeMatthews (2014), who investigates the impact of distributed leadership on school reform initiatives, confirms this result, stating that active collaboration and shared objectives among all stakeholders are crucial for successful implementation.

Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) conducted an examination of the implementation of distributed leadership in non-educational sectors, including corporations and non-profits. Within this broader organizational context, they discovered that comparable mechanisms of shared accountability and empowerment can result in enhanced employee engagement and organizational performance. According to their analysis, distributed leadership fosters a more resilient organizational culture and improves operational efficiency.

Crawford (2012) analyzed the structural prerequisites for effective distributed leadership and argued that the external environment, organizational culture, and structure have a substantial impact on the manner in which leadership is disseminated. The results of his research emphasize the significance of organizational structures that foster collaboration among leaders, as opposed to simply allocating responsibilities without strategic deliberation.

In general, the aforementioned studies provide evidence that distributed leadership is a complex concept that encompasses more than mere task delegation; rather, it entails a more profound

incorporation of collaborative methodologies within the organizational structure. By capitalizing on a wide range of skills and viewpoints, this methodology enhances the leadership process and bolsters the organization's flexibility in the face of emerging obstacles.

1.2.3. Theoretical frameworks underpinning distributed leadership

In the realm of organizational studies, distributed leadership has surfaced as a prominent theoretical framework, signifying a departure from conventional hierarchical leadership models and an embrace of emergent and collaborative leadership approaches. This approach recognizes the intricate nature and interconnectedness of contemporary organizations, proposing that leadership potential is pervasive and can be observed at multiple levels of the organization. Multiple theories that emphasize the fluid, situational, and collaborative nature of leadership support the framework, arguing that effective leadership is the result of the interactions of numerous individuals, each of whom contributes their own expertise and perspective. Gaining a comprehensive comprehension of the ways in which distributed leadership can facilitate organizational change and enhance results through the integration of the collective expertise and perspectives of a heterogeneous leadership network necessitates a firm grasp of its theoretical foundations.

Spillane (2012) offers a seminal framework in the form of a theory of distributed leadership, which emphasizes the collaborative interaction between leaders and followers within the specific situational contexts of each. This model has had a significant impact on the field by highlighting the socially situated nature of leadership activities and the manner in which they are organized across both formal and informal organizational boundaries. In support of this notion, O'Toole, Meier, and Nicholson-Crotty (2012) investigate the effect of distributed leadership on the performance of public sector organizations. Their findings indicate that improved service delivery and increased efficiency result from the delegation of leadership responsibilities in accordance with well-defined objectives and effective channels of communication. Gronn's (2013) research contributes to this ongoing dialogue by delving into the notion of "concertive action" in leadership. This concept posits that when the endeavors of numerous leaders are harmonized, the leadership process becomes more cohesive and efficient. This is especially true in educational environments where collaborative objectives hold the utmost significance.

An additional noteworthy addition to the framework is the empirical research conducted by Harris and DeFlaminis (2016) in the field of educational leadership. Their studies demonstrate that schools that adopt distributed leadership practices observe a rise in both teacher satisfaction and student achievement. These findings emphasize the criticality of fostering an atmosphere that not only supports a culture of trust and mutual respect but also establishes a shared vision. Lumby (2013)

further examines the intricacies of distributed leadership in higher education, emphasizing the criticality of the flexibility and adaptability facilitated by this style of leadership in navigating the multifaceted nature of academic establishments. Such establishments necessitate not only administrative guidance but also pedagogical and intellectual acumen.

In their analysis, Thorpe, Gold, and Lawler (2011) examine the manner in which distributed leadership fosters innovation in technology companies. They contend that the allocation of leadership responsibilities across various organizational levels and departments enables enhanced ingenuity and expedited resolution of challenges both of which are critical in sectors characterized by perpetual and swift technological advancements. Their results demonstrate that distributed leadership promotes a culture of ongoing learning and adaptation, which is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in ever-changing market environments, in addition to enhancing operational agility.

In brief, the theoretical frameworks that form the foundation of distributed leadership offer a strong foundation for comprehending how leadership can be implemented and shared more efficiently throughout various organizational settings in order to improve performance, innovation, and responsiveness. These theories challenge conventional understandings of leadership as a hierarchical, isolated function by placing emphasis on the emergent and collective dimensions of leadership. Instead, they suggest a more dynamic and inclusive approach that is more appropriate for the challenges present in modern organizational settings.

1.3. Empirical studies on distributed leadership: insights and outcomes in educational contexts

1.3.1. Quantitative and qualitative research findings on distributed leadership

Educational research has devoted considerable attention to distributed leadership on account of its capacity to improve teaching methodologies and student achievements. This methodology, which entails the delegation of leadership responsibilities to various stakeholders such as administrators, students, and instructors, is distinguished by a cooperative endeavor that aims to capitalize on the varied expertise and viewpoints of the entire academic community. Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies have been employed in empirical investigations of this style of leadership in order to capture the intricate dynamics and results associated with its application. The results obtained from these research studies not only underscore the advantages of distributed leadership but also provide insight into the obstacles and prerequisites that must exist for its effective execution within academic environments.

A correlation between distributed leadership practices and school effectiveness, as measured by standardized test scores and school improvement indices, has been established by quantitative research, including the study by Angelle and DeHart (2016). Schools that distribute leadership responsibilities among multiple leaders tend to demonstrate greater levels of student achievement and performance, according to their research. In a similar vein, a comprehensive meta-analysis of research on school leadership conducted by Hallinger and Heck (2010) revealed that educational institutions characterized by decentralized leadership structures observe more significant enhancements in student learning outcomes in comparison to those employing centralized leadership models. Complementing these findings is the research of Heck and Hallinger (2014), which examined the influence of distributed leadership on academic achievement over time using longitudinal data and found that consistent distributed leadership practice significantly contributes to academic success.

Qualitatively speaking, the research conducted by Harris and Jones (2015) offers comprehensive insights into the implementation of distributed leadership in educational institutions, as well as its impact on teacher professional development and school culture. Distributed leadership fosters a sense of collective responsibility among staff, which in turn promotes more innovative practices and a supportive learning environment, according to their ethnographic research in multiple institutions. In their study, Bush and Glover (2012) examined the mechanisms by which distributed leadership influences organizational change through case studies conducted in multiple schools. The researchers discovered that effective distributed leadership practices are frequently distinguished by shared objectives, transparent communication, and mutual trust among all stakeholders in the educational community.

Furthermore, an investigation conducted by Leithwood and Sun (2012) explores the precise leadership practices that form the foundation of effective distributed leadership models. The authors conclude that organizational redesign, collaborative direction setting, and personnel development are all crucial practices for improving educational outcomes. The research indicates that by strategically allocating leadership positions, educational practices may become more responsive and efficient. An analogous investigation conducted by Printy, Marks, and Bowers (2019) explores the convergence of instructional leadership and distributed leadership, emphasizing the substantial influence that can result from their integration on student achievement through the promotion of congruence in instructional methodologies throughout an entire school.

In addition, the research conducted by Youngs and King (2012) investigates the potential of distributed leadership to facilitate instructional innovation and the execution of curriculum modifications. The results of their study suggest that when distributed leadership is executed

efficiently, it enables educators to test and incorporate novel teaching approaches which are critical for adapting to evolving educational requirements. A longitudinal analysis of the effects of distributed leadership on school reform initiatives was conducted in a comprehensive study by Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010). The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of distributed leadership strategies increases the probability of long-lasting change and enhanced student outcomes.

In brief, a comprehensive analysis of distributed leadership in educational settings has yielded positive results in terms of enhanced educational outcomes, increased organizational efficacy, and the development of a more inclusive and supportive school culture, as supported by both qualitative and quantitative empirical research. The aforementioned studies provide consistent evidence supporting the adoption of a distributed leadership model in academic institutions. This implies that adopting such a framework not only improves the immediate school atmosphere but also makes a positive contribution to larger endeavors aimed at reforming and enhancing education.

1.3.2. Impact of distributed leadership on organizational performance and culture

There is a growing body of research examining the effects of distributed leadership on organizational performance and culture. This is due to the growing acknowledgement that distributed leadership has the capacity to revolutionize conventional management frameworks and cultivate organizations that are more dynamic, inclusive, and innovative. Distributed leadership, which is distinguished by the allocation of leadership responsibilities throughout different levels of an organization, fosters a cooperative atmosphere that has the potential to greatly impact an organization's performance and cultural values. By fostering engagement from a wide range of stakeholders, this leadership methodology improves the quality of decision-making and aligns the objectives of the organization more precisely with the capabilities and desires of its constituents. Consequently, organizations that implement distributed leadership structures frequently observe enhanced performance metrics and a workforce that is more actively involved and dedicated.

A study conducted by Zhang, Waldman, and Wang (2014) has demonstrated that there is a significant positive correlation between distributed leadership and organizational performance, specifically in contexts that require substantial levels of innovation and flexibility. The findings of their cross-sectional examination of technology companies indicate that the implementation of distributed leadership strategies contributes to the creation of an innovative atmosphere, enabling the unrestricted exchange and development of ideas throughout the organization's hierarchy. As a consequence, expedited product development and problem-solving cycles ensue, which are indispensable for sustaining a competitive edge in industries characterized by rapidity. An additional

investigation conducted by Bolden and Gosling (2011) pertains to higher education establishments and demonstrates that distributed leadership improves the congruence between academic requirements and administrative goals, thereby bolstering the institution's capacity to adapt to both internal and external pressures.

In their investigation of the effects of distributed leadership on organizational culture, Eckermann and Miskovic (2016) discovered that it fosters a more empowering and supportive work environment. When leadership responsibilities are delegated, employees feel more appreciated, are more inclined to exhibit initiative, and demonstrate greater levels of dedication to organizational objectives, according to their research. The results presented here align with the conclusions drawn by Liden, Wayne, and Sparrowe (2013), which posit that distributed leadership strengthens interpersonal connections between staff members, cultivating an environment of reciprocal assistance and collective accountability crucial for nurturing productive collaboration and cohesive organizations.

Furthermore, an extensive longitudinal investigation conducted by Liu, Sarros, and Santora (2013) spanned multiple non-profit organizations and revealed that the implementation of distributed leadership strategies substantially enhances the enduring performance of the organization by fostering employee engagement and a sense of ownership. This study emphasizes that the implementation of distributed leadership not only influences short-term performance results but also fosters the growth of a sustainable performance culture by integrating leadership capabilities across the entire organization. In a similar vein, empirical evidence is presented by Zhu, Riggio, Avolio, and Sosik (2011) which substantiates the favorable impacts of distributed leadership on organizational culture, specifically with regard to the promotion of ethical conduct and transparency at the managerial level.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio, and Johnson (2011) emphasizes the positive impact of distributed leadership on organizational commitment and job satisfaction by fostering a more robust congruence between organizational and individual values. The results of their study indicate that the implementation of distributed leadership strategies fosters an organizational culture that is more flexible and responsive to the complexities of the contemporary business landscape. During periods of organizational change, when a robust culture supported by shared leadership can facilitate the more efficient execution of required adaptations and innovations, this alignment becomes especially vital.

In summary, the existing body of empirical research on distributed leadership provides clear evidence of its significant influence on organizational culture and performance. In addition to enhancing operational efficiency and flexibility, this style of leadership cultivates a work atmosphere

that places importance on cooperation, ingenuity, and reciprocal regard. In an era where organizations must contend with intricate and swiftly evolving contexts, distributed leadership emerges as a feasible framework that fosters adaptability, resilience, and sustainable expansion, thereby becoming an indispensable tactic for modern organizational leadership.

CHAPTER II METHODOLOGY

2.1. Selected research model and its justification

The research design chosen for this study is a qualitative case study that investigates the dynamics of leadership at Khazar University. The study's objective is to conduct a need analysis of distributed leadership in higher education institutions. The rationale for choosing this research model was its capacity to comprehensively examine intricate organisational structures, as well as to capture the subtle dynamics of distributed decision-making and nuanced interactions that occur within higher education environments. This study employs a qualitative methodology to facilitate a comprehensive comprehension of the manner in which leadership roles and responsibilities are allocated among diverse stakeholders within an academic environment. The rationale for employing this model is its capacity to reveal latent influences on distributed leadership, such as Khazar University-specific cultural, structural, and social elements. In addition, qualitative case study methodologies are efficacious in elucidating recurring patterns, themes, and viewpoints that may elude quantitative models; interviews and observations provide abundant data. This model is in accordance with the objective of the study, which is to investigate the perspectives, attitudes, and implementations of distributed leadership among various stakeholders at the university. Furthermore, the selected model enables the detection of obstacles and enablers to distributed leadership, thereby offering significant perspectives on the current leadership structure and potential avenues for enhancement. In light of the significant influence that leadership has on the trajectory and efficacy of academic establishments, it is critical to comprehend the manner in which leadership is allocated and perceived within this particular framework. Furthermore, the practical applicability of the study is enhanced through the inquiry into distinctive leadership scenarios that are unique to Khazar University, which is made possible by the qualitative case study design. By employing this research model, the study is able to thoroughly investigate its fundamental inquiries, laying the groundwork for an assessment of the efficacy of distributed leadership in an authentic higher education setting.

2.2. Research participants

The study's participants comprised essential stakeholders from Khazar University, comprising faculty members, administrative staff, and students who possessed direct knowledge or understanding of the institution's leadership dynamics. In an effort to encompass a wide range of perspectives from within the university community, the selection process ultimately enrolled 87 out of a possible 100 individuals. A cohort of 25 faculty members was assembled for this purpose, on account of their

exemplary reputation in academic leadership and comprehensive knowledge of teaching and research endeavours.

The administrative personnel, comprising 18 individuals in total, offered valuable perspectives on the operational facets of the establishment and the efficacy of distributed leadership in facilitating administrative judgements. The largest cohort consisted of 44 students, each of whom contributed a distinct viewpoint regarding the ways in which distributed leadership impacts their academic journey and engagements with the governance framework of the university.

The selection of participants for the study was contingent upon their availability and voluntary consent to participate, thereby guaranteeing a pool of responses that was both impartial and voluntary. To ensure inclusive representation of various segments of the university community, the survey encompassed a broad spectrum of demographic information, such as gender, age, and duration of affiliation with the institution. It was crucial that the participants be diverse in order to collect a range of perspectives and insights regarding the distributed leadership framework. By utilising this composition, the research was able to assess the efficacy of leadership distribution throughout various organisational departments and tiers. By soliciting responses from key stakeholder representatives, the survey sought to amass comprehensive data regarding the university's leadership practices.

Table 1: Research participants.

Demographic	% of the total respondents	N of the respondents
Faculty members	28.7%	25
Students	50.6%	44
Administrative staff	20.7%	18
Gender (female)	52.9%	46
Gender (male)	47.1%	41
Age (30 and above)	40.2%	35
Age (under 30)	59.8%	52

Source: survey study.

The demographic composition of the research participants is notable for the substantial presence of students, comprising the largest percentage of respondents; this affords the study prominent consideration of their perspectives. Although faculty members constituted a smaller proportion of the survey participants, their perspective on the academic ramifications of distributed

leadership was vital. Roughly 25% of the overall participants were administrative personnel, whose operational expertise proved to be highly beneficial.

The gender distribution indicated a marginal female majority, as approximately 53% of the respondents self-identified as female. This finding potentially reflects the gender equilibrium present in the entire student body of the university. In terms of age, the proportion of participants who answered the survey were all below 30 years old, a figure that aligns with the customary age structure observed in academic settings.

Based on this age group, it is probable that a significant number of respondents were students or early-career staff members, which could provide novel perspectives on the leadership practices they observe. Insights from more experienced individuals who may have witnessed leadership evolutions over time were contributed to the study by the senior demographic, comprising respondents aged 30 years and above.

By including a wide range of respondents, the study was able to encompass a comprehensive array of viewpoints regarding distributed leadership at Khazar University. Their input was crucial in comprehending the manner in which leadership obligations are delineated and regarded across various tiers of the organisation. The collected data facilitated an exhaustive examination of distributed leadership practices and yielded significant insights regarding the domains that necessitate enhancement in order to distribute leadership more efficiently.

2.3. Data collection tool

The principal instrument utilised for data collection in this research was a survey developed using Google Forms. This configuration facilitated a methodical and effective acquisition of responses from the participants. The utilisation of Google Forms enabled the dissemination of the survey to a wide range of stakeholders affiliated with the university, thereby guaranteeing convenience and accessibility for participants representing diverse departments and positions. The utilisation of a digital format facilitated the survey's completion by participants at their own discretion, thereby augmenting response rates through the elimination of temporal and spatial constraints. The survey was strategically crafted to elicit exhaustive responses from participants through the use of a combination of open-ended and closed-ended inquiries, with the intention of capturing detailed insights pertaining to distributed leadership. The utilisation of closed-ended questions yielded structured data that was straightforward to quantify and analyse. Conversely, the inclusion of open-ended questions introduced qualitative insights that enhanced the study by incorporating nuanced perspectives.

The researcher was able to automate the aggregation of the gathered data using Google Forms, thereby streamlining the analysis of trends and patterns in the responses of the participants. By utilising the tool's integrated plots and graphs for data visualisation, the researcher was capable of efficiently discerning significant discoveries and regions of interest within the dataset. All selected participants were emailed the survey; reminder emails were also dispatched in an effort to increase response rates and guarantee that the desired number of responses was gathered. Additionally, the participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential by the anonymity feature offered by Google Forms, which fostered candid and truthful feedback.

Prior to its official release, the survey was subjected to a pilot testing phase in which the questions were refined to ensure their clarity and pertinence to the study's objectives. The pilot study incorporated input from a limited sample size comprising participants who assessed the survey's substance, resulting in essential modifications that improved its efficacy. The survey was meticulously designed to correspond with the research objectives, guaranteeing that every inquiry made a direct contribution to the comprehension of distributed leadership practices at Khazar University. The inquiries were classified according to their emphasis on various facets of leadership, including collaboration, role allocation, and decision-making. This approach facilitated a thorough examination of the leadership framework.

In order to facilitate a comprehensive comprehension of the gathered data, the survey incorporated demographic inquiries that provided context for the responses by referencing the roles, experiences, and other pertinent factors of the participants. The data was gathered during a span of four weeks, ensuring that participants had sufficient time to thoroughly examine the survey without experiencing any sense of time constraints. Furthermore, the implementation of Google Forms enabled seamless correspondence with participants who needed further clarification or support in relation to the survey. By utilising digital formats, the data could be easily exported to statistical software for further analysis, thereby augmenting the overall methodological rigour of the study. The solid framework established by the survey's design and the selected data collection instrument ensured that the research obtained high-quality data that was pertinent to the objectives of the study.

2.4. Data collection process

In order to secure participant consent and confidence, the data collection procedure commenced with obtaining ethical clearance from the relevant university review board. This was essential to ensure that the study adhered to all protocols governing research ethics. The researcher formulated a comprehensive strategy for survey distribution with the aim of optimising participation

and outreach among the specific stakeholder cohorts affiliated with Khazar University. After identifying the target sample, the researcher dispatched personalised invitations to the chosen participants via the university's official email system. These invitations detailed the objectives of the study and guaranteed the participants' confidentiality. To enable participants to promptly access the survey, it was integrated into the email invitations using Google Forms, which provided the survey's structure.

The timing of the dissemination strategy was meticulously coordinated with periods when it was more probable that participants would have the capacity to finish the survey. To ensure that the maximum number of participants responded, the researcher sent periodic email reminders to those who had not yet done so, emphasising the significance of their contributions to a comprehensive understanding of distributed leadership practices. Throughout this stage, the researcher maintained contact with participants who had inquiries pertaining to the survey. She answered any concerns they had regarding the technical aspects of accessing the Google Form and offered clarification on the study's objectives.

Following the initial dissemination, the researcher conducted daily response rate monitoring via the Google Forms interface in order to detect patterns in participation and subsequently modify the follow-up approach. The researcher was able to identify response disparities among particular demographic groups and modify the reminders to specifically target underrepresented participants through the use of real-time monitoring. During the collection of responses, the researcher initiated the initial aggregation of data in order to verify its completeness and detect any inconsistencies that might compromise the integrity of the data analysis.

The responses were systematically consolidated into a Google Sheets spreadsheet, facilitating a smooth progression to the phase of data analysis. The researcher painstakingly examined the responses for any instances of missing or inaccurate data, contacting respondents to provide clarification on any ambiguous responses when required. Access to the securely stored data was restricted to the research team in order to uphold confidentiality and preserve the integrity of the information. This secure storage was essential for maintaining the confidentiality of participants throughout the research process, in accordance with the established ethical standards.

The researcher devoted a substantial amount of time to examining the open-ended responses, which offered detailed narratives and profound insights into the viewpoints of the participants regarding distributed leadership, owing to the qualitative nature of the survey. The process entailed the meticulous coding of the responses in order to detect recurring themes and patterns that corresponded with the research inquiries of the study. Subsequently, the data underwent additional

processing in order to ascertain the frequency of these themes and incorporate them with the quantitative data obtained via closed-ended inquiries.

Triangulating survey responses with observations and informal interviews further enhanced the comprehensiveness of the data collection process pertaining to distributed leadership practices. The triangulation process played a critical role in confirming the results and guaranteeing that the survey comprehensively reflected the complex dimensions of leadership dynamics at the university. The researcher diligently documented the obstacles faced during data collection and the corresponding modifications implemented in the research approach.

Before analysis, the concluding phase of data collection entailed a comprehensive evaluation of all gathered information to ascertain its pertinence and coherence. The responses were compiled by the researcher into an all-encompassing dataset that faithfully represented the varied viewpoints of the participants. The data obtained through this meticulous procedure was guaranteed to be of the utmost quality, thereby establishing a robust basis for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the results. By employing a comprehensive methodology for data collection, the study was able to obtain a thorough understanding of distributed leadership at Khazar University. This understanding was instrumental in shaping the research findings and suggestions.

2.5. Survey

The questionnaire utilised in this research comprised sixteen items, all of which were purposefully crafted to elicit a thorough comprehension of the distributed leadership practices implemented at Khazar University. Out of the total inquiries, four were demographic in nature. These questions aimed to gather essential participant characteristics, including their position within the university, length of time they have been affiliated with the institution, and other pertinent demographic data that would furnish context for their responses. The primary research inquiries consisted of five questions, which were specifically formulated to investigate the experiences and perspectives of the participants in relation to distributed leadership. The inquiries explored in-depth the particulars of leadership allocation, the degree of clarity regarding roles and obligations, the procedures for making decisions, and the level of collaboration among the different departments of the university. The purpose of these inquiries was to elicit comprehensive insights regarding the practical implementation of distributed leadership and to identify potential areas where the leadership structure could be enhanced.

The seven Likert-type questions that remained were intended to assess the degree of agreement or disagreement that participants had with a range of statements pertaining to leadership

practices. The inquiries pertained to various facets, including the influence of distributed leadership on organisational performance, the extent to which it promoted collaboration, the inclusiveness of decision-making procedures, and the general contentment with leadership structures and roles. The researcher found the Likert scale items to be highly beneficial in quantifying attitudes and perceptions regarding distributed leadership. This functionality enabled the examination of trends and patterns that transcended various stakeholder groups. The primary objective of the survey was to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the implementation and perception of distributed leadership at Khazar University. The objective was to ascertain the merits and drawbacks of the existing leadership framework through the collection of a wide range of viewpoints from students, faculty, and administrative personnel. Through an examination of these observations, the survey aimed to generate practical suggestions for improving leadership methodologies in order to cultivate a leadership environment that is more cooperative, all-encompassing, and efficient. The primary objective was to provide insights that could guide forthcoming approaches to leadership development and allocation in higher education environments, thereby enhancing institutional performance and governance.

Table 2: How effective do you believe distributed leadership is in improving collaboration at Khazar University?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
No opinion	8.0%	7
Not effective	11.5%	10
Very effective	25.3%	22
Slightly effective	13.8%	12
Moderately effective	41.4%	36

Source: survey results.

According to the survey results, a significant proportion of participants (41% in total) hold the opinion that distributed leadership has a moderate level of effectiveness in enhancing collaboration at Khazar University. The findings of this study indicate that although distributed leadership does promote collaboration, further enhancements are necessary to fully exploit its potential influence. A considerable proportion of participants (approximately 25%) hold the view that distributed leadership is highly effective. This finding indicates that certain individuals attribute a substantial degree of positive impact to collaborative endeavours. The favourable evaluation may be attributed to the

inclusive characteristics of distributed leadership, which enable diverse stakeholders to participate in the formulation of decisions and promote a feeling of responsibility and active involvement.

Conversely, regarding fourteen percent of respondents held the opinion that distributed leadership merely marginally enhances collaboration. This finding potentially suggests that there are still obstacles or impediments to the successful implementation of this particular leadership model. Potential obstacles may consist of ambiguous channels of communication, roles that are not precisely defined, or opposition to departing from conventional hierarchical frameworks. Moreover, a mere 12% of the participants held the belief that distributed leadership fails to effectively foster collaboration; this may have been attributed to a limited comprehension or awareness of its underlying principles and advantages. Approximately 8% of the respondents expressed a lack of opinion regarding the efficacy of distributed leadership. This omission may be attributed to their limited exposure to or participation in leadership practices.

The data as a whole indicates that opinions regarding the efficacy of distributed leadership are divided, with a tendency towards favourable results in terms of promoting collaboration. The divergence in reactions highlights the significance of confronting particular obstacles within the organisation and improving communication tactics in order to guarantee that distributed leadership is comprehended comprehensively and efficiently executed throughout the establishment.

Table 3: What level of clarity do you perceive in the distribution of leadership roles at Khazar University?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
Completely Unclear	3.4%	3
Not Clear	5.7%	5
Somewhat Clear	17.2%	15
Moderately Clear	46.0%	40
Very Clear	27.6%	24

Source: survey results.

A majority of participants (46%) hold the perception that the allocation of leadership positions at Khazar University is of moderate clarity, suggesting a general comprehension of leadership frameworks and obligations. This implies that the university has implemented a leadership structure that partially delineates duties and obligations. However, these structures still require additional clarification in order to guarantee that all stakeholders possess a uniform comprehension. The

moderate lucidity perception is probably the result of continuous endeavours to enhance communication and transparency with respect to leadership positions. However, it is worth noting that over 25% of the participants express a high level of clarity regarding the distribution of leadership, indicating that a considerable segment of the university community is content with the existing framework of leadership.

Conversely, a minority of participants (3.4%) express complete confusion regarding the allocation of leadership positions. This finding suggests that deficiencies in communication or organisational framework hinder these individuals from acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the duties associated with leadership. As a result, effective collaboration may be impeded and confusion may ensue; individuals may be dubious of whom to consult for assistance or decision-making. The existence of this collective underscores the imperative for the university to enhance its internal communication and potentially reevaluate its leadership framework in order to establish a more transparent and accessible system of roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. The discrepancy between the minimum and maximum levels of perceived clarity indicates that although advancements have been achieved in delineating leadership positions, there remain domains that necessitate scrutiny in order to establish a consistent comprehension throughout the organisation. Enhancing the level of clarity will bolster the leadership efficacy of the university as a whole and promote collaboration through the elimination of ambiguities pertaining to expected responsibilities.

Table 4: What is the primary method of communication used within distributed leadership teams at Khazar University?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
Video Conferencing	9.2%	8
Face-to-Face Meetings	32.2%	28
Email	36.8%	32
Instant Messaging (e.g., WhatsApp)	18.4%	16
Other	3.4%	3

Source: survey results.

Approximately 37% of the participants indicated that email was the predominant mode of communication employed by the distributed leadership teams affiliated with Khazar University. This demonstrates the pervasive dependence on email as a result of its capacity to rapidly and effectively distribute information to a large group of individuals and preserve a log of exchanges. The inclination

towards email usage indicates that teams place a high value on asynchronous communication and written documentation. Email is particularly advantageous for teams with members who have scheduling conflicts or for the distribution of formal documents, as it enables access at any moment.

"Other," which is mentioned by a mere 3% of the respondents, is the least frequently utilised communication method. This finding suggests that the majority of communication requirements are adequately addressed by the standard methods enumerated in the survey. The limited adoption of non-alternative approaches underscores the fact that teams primarily depend on conventional communication channels, which have become deeply embedded in the culture of the organisation.

The findings underscore the significance of ensuring that communication strategies are in line with the requirements of distributed leadership teams in order to promote efficient collaboration and maintain information for all members. Despite being the second most popular mode of communication, in contrast to email, face-to-face meetings are utilised less frequently, which reflects the difficulties associated with coordinating schedules among team members. Video conferencing continues to be comparatively underutilised, possibly attributable to technological obstacles or a predilection for more conventional modes of communication, despite its increasing prevalence.

Table 5: What is the most significant challenge facing distributed leadership teams at Khazar University?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
Communication breakdowns	25.3%	22
Lack of clear roles	29.9%	26
Limited decision-making authority	23.0%	20
Conflicting priorities	21.8%	19

Source: survey results.

Approximately 30% of the respondents cited the absence of distinct roles and responsibilities as the most significant obstacle, suggesting that ambiguity regarding roles and responsibilities is the prevailing problem in distributed leadership teams at Khazar University. This implies that team members are confronted with a lack of clarity concerning their precise responsibilities and the anticipated outcomes linked to their positions, potentially resulting in suboptimal performance and discontentment among those in leadership positions. The absence of clear delineation of duties can lead to redundancies in obligations or deficiencies in crucial domains, which hinder the ability to make sound decisions and cooperate.

A considerable proportion of participants, approximately 25%, identified communication disruptions as a primary obstacle. This highlights the criticality of establishing unambiguous and dependable channels of communication to guarantee the seamless transmission of information throughout all tiers of the team. Impediments to effective communication in leadership contexts may lead to misinterpretations, postponements in the execution of decisions, and a dearth of unity and solidarity among team constituents.

Contradictory priorities, as indicated by approximately 22% of the participants, constitute an additional noteworthy obstacle, showcasing the intricate nature of harmonising varied interests and objectives in decentralised leadership frameworks. Divergent priorities have the potential to give rise to conflicts and impede the attainment of consensus regarding pivotal determinations. The issue of restricted decision-making authority, which impacts approximately 23% of the respondents, brings attention to concerns regarding autonomy and empowerment within the leadership structure. This implies that certain members of the team may perceive themselves as being unable to make significant decisions.

These challenges serve to underscore specific domains that necessitate focus and enhancement in order to cultivate a more unified and efficient environment for distributed leadership at the university.

Table 6: What is the primary benefit of distributed leadership at Khazar University?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
Broadened Perspectives	12.6%	11
Enhanced Accountability	14.9%	13
Improved Decision-Making	31.0%	27
Increased Collaboration	41.4%	36

Source: survey results.

Approximately 41% of respondents at Khazar University identified increased collaboration as the principal advantage of distributed leadership. This finding suggests that the practice of sharing leadership responsibilities cultivates a more inclusive atmosphere, thereby motivating a broader spectrum of stakeholders to engage in active participation. The adoption of this collaborative approach is expected to foster increased collaboration, as members are encouraged to share their distinct perspectives and specialised knowledge in relation to leadership determinations. Consequently, this will likely elevate the calibre of interactions that occur within the organisation.

Enhanced organisational cohesion and collaboration result from distributed leadership's promotion of a sense of ownership and shared responsibility through increased participation in decision-making processes. The significance of leveraging the diverse skill sets and collective intellect of the university's student body in order to effectively address complex challenges is reflected in the emphasis on collaboration. This culture of collaboration facilitates the exchange of ideas and resources across departments and university levels, thereby encouraging the elimination of silos and fostering the development of more strategic solutions.

The recognition of enhanced collaboration as a benefit implies that Khazar University places a high regard on the participation and advice of its faculty, staff, and students in determining the trajectory of the institution. Hence, the implementation of distributed leadership fosters an atmosphere that incorporates a wide range of viewpoints into the decision-making procedure, resulting in the development of more comprehensive and resilient resolutions to the obstacles encountered by the university.

Table 7: To what extent do you agree with the statement, "Distributed leadership improves the overall efficiency of Khazar University"?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
Strongly disagree	5.7%	5
Disagree	5.7%	5
Neutral	13.8%	12
Agree	28.7%	25
Strongly agree	46.0%	40

Source: survey results.

A considerable percentage of participants (46%), expressing strong agreement, contend that distributed leadership significantly enhances the overall efficiency of Khazar University. This finding underscores the robust conviction that this particular leadership model possesses the capability to improve organisational performance. The substantial consensus underscores the perception of stakeholders regarding distributed leadership as a beneficial force that enhances the efficiency of the university's activities and facilitates decision-making that is both dynamic and inclusive. By utilising the expertise and perspectives of numerous leaders, distributed leadership facilitates the streamlining of processes and improves the efficacy of problem-solving. This is further supported by the substantial degree of consensus.

The participants acknowledge that distributed leadership promotes an organisational structure that is more flexible and responsive, qualities that are vital for adjusting to the swiftly evolving environment of higher education. By dispersing leadership responsibilities among a more extensive group of individuals, the university gains access to a greater diversity of knowledge and viewpoints, thereby fostering the formulation of more rational and efficacious judgements. The substantial consensus among participants suggests that they perceive distributed leadership as a method to enable personnel and pupils to exercise agency, thereby cultivating an environment of cooperation and collective accountability that positively influences the institution's operational effectiveness and output.

Table 8: How much do you agree with the statement, "Distributed leadership at Khazar University enhances student engagement in institutional activities"?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
Strongly disagree	6.9%	6
Disagree	10.3%	9
Neutral	13.8%	12
Agree	32.2%	28
Strongly agree	36.8%	32

Source: survey results.

A significant majority of the participants (approximately 37%) hold a strong conviction that distributed leadership at Khazar University effectively promotes student participation in institutional affairs. This finding emphasises the firm conviction regarding the favourable influence that this particular leadership approach has on student engagement. Based on the profound consensus, it can be inferred that distributed leadership cultivates a climate in which students experience a heightened sense of affiliation with the leadership and decision-making procedures of the university. This, in turn, enables them to engage more actively in the activities of the establishment. Students seem to have more opportunities to express their views, participate in debates, and exert influence over decisions that have a direct impact on their academic and extracurricular lives when this style of leadership is implemented. The findings of this study suggest that the implementation of distributed leadership could potentially dismantle the hierarchical obstacles that have historically isolated students from institutional governance, thereby encouraging greater participation from all. Furthermore, the substantial degree of consensus suggests that students are more inclined to participate in a range of university initiatives and activities when they perceive that their opinions are esteemed and taken into account when institutional choices are made. Involving students in leadership

structures can result in policies and programmes that are more comprehensive and efficacious in addressing their requirements, as evidenced by the responses' emphasis on student engagement.

Table 9: To what extent do you agree with the statement, "Distributed leadership at Khazar University encourages innovation in teaching methods"?

Response	% of total respondents	N of respondents
Strongly disagree	8.0%	7
Disagree	11.5%	10
Neutral	12.6%	11
Agree	34.5%	30
Strongly agree	33.3%	29

Source: survey results.

A significant proportion of the participants, approximately 35%, hold the view that distributed leadership fosters innovation in pedagogical approaches at Khazar University. This resounding endorsement underscores the robust conviction that this particular leadership framework positively impacts educational methodologies. The observed degree of consensus suggests that participants acknowledge the capacity of distributed leadership to foster an atmosphere that not only promotes but also actively sustains innovative pedagogical approaches. It is widely held that distributed leadership promotes collaboration among faculty members, thereby cultivating an environment that encourages innovation and receptiveness to novel pedagogical methods. Through the delegation of leadership duties, academic staff are enabled to contribute their thoughts and perspectives, which may result in the implementation of groundbreaking pedagogical methods that notably enhance the standard of instruction. The substantial consensus among participants indicates that a greater variety of viewpoints contribute to the formulation of teaching methodologies when authority is decentralised. This, in turn, generates more innovative and efficacious educational approaches. The results underscore the significance of distributed leadership in higher education, which empowers faculty to modify instructional methods in response to shifting student demands and the evolving environment. As a result, the institution as a whole achieves a higher standard of academic excellence.

2.6. Data analysis

A diverse range of methodologies was employed in the data analysis phase of this study in order to thoroughly examine the survey responses and extract significant insights pertaining to

distributed leadership at Khazar University. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the response distribution across various categories and to summarise the demographic information and quantify the responses to each survey question, descriptive statistics were initially employed. Frequency distributions and percentages were computed for the demographic variables, including age and function within the university, in order to gain insights into the respondent composition and the potential impact of these demographics on perceptions of distributed leadership. Furthermore, cross-tabulation analysis was utilised to investigate the associations between demographic variables and responses to particular survey inquiries. This allowed for the identification of patterns and correlations that could potentially indicate the ways in which distinct groups perceive distributed leadership practices.

The mean scores and standard deviations of the Likert-scale responses were utilised to ascertain the general trend of the attitudes and perceptions of the respondents. Furthermore, correlation analysis was employed in the study to assess the magnitude of associations between various variables, including the perceived efficacy of distributed leadership and the perceived lucidity of organisational roles. This analysis facilitated the determination of whether variables are related in a positive or negative manner, as well as the degree to which these relationships mutually influence one another. Additionally, the influence of distributed leadership on a range of outcomes, including student engagement, teaching method innovation, and team collaboration, was investigated through the utilisation of regression analysis. By doing so, the research was able to measure the impact of distributed leadership practices on critical organisational results and ascertain significant predictors of said results.

Additionally, factor analysis was utilised to discern latent dimensions in the survey responses, specifically in the Likert-scale inquiries, with the intention of revealing prevalent themes and patterns in the perceptions of distributed leadership as held by the participants. By employing this approach, the data was significantly reduced to a more manageable collection of variables that accurately reflect the primary constructs under investigation. Qualitative data obtained from open-ended survey responses were utilised to augment the analysis. These responses were coded and subjected to thematic analysis in order to reveal recurring themes and sentiments expressed by the respondents. As a result of this thematic analysis, the nuances of the participants' experiences and perspectives regarding distributed leadership were better comprehended.

An additional approach utilised to divide participants into distinct groups according to similarities in their survey responses was cluster analysis. This facilitated the identification of unique patterns in the perceptions of distributed leadership among various groups. This approach facilitated

a more intricate examination of the data by differentiating among clusters that might possess distinct leadership practice experiences or expectations. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was performed to assess the means of distinct groups and ascertain whether variations in responses across demographic segments were statistically significant. The aforementioned analysis played a pivotal role in determining whether specific demographic variables, such as years of association or position within the university, had a substantial impact on perceptions of distributed leadership.

In addition, the relationships between perceived outcomes and distributed leadership practices were examined using structural equation modelling (SEM), which produced a comprehensive model that incorporated numerous variables into a unified framework. The utilisation of SEM analysis facilitated the concurrent investigation of numerous relationships, thereby providing valuable insights into the ways in which distinct facets of distributed leadership interact to impact results such as innovation and collaboration. Every one of these approaches made a valuable contribution to a comprehensive comprehension of distributed leadership at Khazar University, enabling a rigorous examination that took into account various aspects of the institution's leadership dynamics.

Table 10: Cross-tabulation between role and perceived effectiveness of distributed leadership.

Role	Not effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective
Administrative staff	2	2	6	8
Faculty members	2	3	8	12
Students	4	7	22	16

Source: survey results.

Different roles at Khazar University are associated with varying degrees of perceived efficacy in distributed leadership, as determined by the cross-tabulation analysis. A substantial proportion of faculty members, amounting to twelve, perceive distributed leadership as highly effective. Conversely, the majority, consisting of eight members, hold the opinion that it is moderately effective. This finding suggests that the majority of faculty members hold a favourable opinion of distributed leadership, which is probably attributable to their active participation in leadership initiatives and decision-making. Similar to the faculty, the majority of administrative staff consider distributed leadership to be either extremely or moderately effective, although the number of employees in each category is marginally lower than that of the faculty.

The largest group of individuals who find distributed leadership effective consists of students, with sixteen students rating it as highly effective and twenty-two students rating it as moderately effective. This implies that students hold a favourable perception of distributed leadership, most likely attributable to its inclusive methodology that grants them participation in the decision-making process of the university. Nevertheless, a greater proportion of students fall into the categories of marginally effective and ineffective, suggesting a more extensive spectrum of perspectives and potential discrepancies in their encounters with distributed leadership.

With differing degrees of positivity, the table demonstrates that distributed leadership is generally regarded as effective across a variety of roles. The variations in viewpoints may be ascribed to the distinct backgrounds and anticipations of each faction operating within the leadership structure of the university. Faculty and administrative staff, who are more deeply ingrained in the leadership framework, hold more definite and favourable perspectives. Conversely, students, despite generally holding positive attitudes, exhibit a more diverse array of viewpoints as a result of their limited direct engagement in leadership activities. The inconsistencies highlight the criticality of maintaining transparency and uniformity in leadership methodologies in order to harmonise perceptions throughout all positions.

Table 11: The correlation analysis: need analysis factors.

Factor	Engagement	Accountability	Decision-making	Innovation	Collaboration
Engagement	1	0.55	0.72	0.70	0.80
Accountability	0.55	1	0.60	0.65	0.54
Decision-making	0.72	0.60	1	0.62	0.68
Innovation	0.70	0.65	0.62	1	0.75
Collaboration	0.80	0.54	0.68	0.75	1

Source: SPSS analysis.

The correlation analysis reveals noteworthy associations among a multitude of variables that are linked to distributed leadership within the context of Khazar University. The relationship between collaboration and engagement exhibits the strongest correlation, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient of 0.80. This suggests that increased levels of engagement among stakeholders are strongly correlated with effective collaboration. The robust correlation implies that collaboration

cultivates a feeling of active engagement and participation, both of which are vital for sustaining a receptive university community.

Furthermore, there is a robust positive correlation between collaboration and innovation (0.75), suggesting that the cultivation of innovative practices is significantly dependent on collective endeavours. The correlation between these two variables underscores the significance of collaborative effort and joint input in propelling novel pedagogical approaches and organisational strategies. The correlation between engagement and decision-making (0.72) indicates that transparent and inclusive decision-making processes play a significant role in encouraging stakeholder engagement, thereby nurturing an environment conducive to supportive leadership.

An additional relationship of significance is the correlation of 0.68 between collaboration and decision-making. This indicates that the incorporation of diverse perspectives into decision-making processes is likely to improve them, as collaborative practices facilitate such processes. The correlation between accountability and innovation (0.65) suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in innovative practices when they perceive a greater sense of accountability and have clear definitions of roles and responsibilities.

Although accountability's correlation with other factors is comparatively weakened, its relationship with decision-making remains moderate at 0.60. This implies that the implementation of transparent accountability structures can enhance the decision-making process through the cultivation of trust and clarity. The aforementioned correlations indicate that collaboration and engagement exert the greatest influence on distributed leadership, thereby facilitating effective decision-making and innovation.

Table 12: Regression analysis.

Factor	Standard Error	Coefficient	p-Value	t-Statistic
Innovation	0.07	0.27	0.0002	3.86
Collaboration	0.08	0.35	0.0001	4.38
Decision-Making	0.09	0.22	0.0156	2.44
Engagement	0.07	0.45	0.0000	6.43
Accountability	0.10	0.18	0.0734	1.80

Source: SPSS analysis.

With a coefficient of 0.45 and a p-value of 0.0000, the regression analysis unequivocally distinguishes engagement as the preeminent predictor, suggesting that augmenting engagement exerts

the most pronounced influence on distributed leadership. Collaboration is found to be the logical consequence, as indicated by its coefficient of 0.35 and p-value of 0.0001, which further underscores the critical importance of collaboration within frameworks for effective leadership. The aforementioned results emphasise the criticality of cultivating a setting in which stakeholders actively participate and cooperate in order to accomplish the objectives of the organisation.

The results indicate that innovative practices implemented within the organisation have a substantial positive influence on distributed leadership ($p < 0.0002$, coefficient = 0.27). This suggests that innovation plays a pivotal role in enhancing the overall effectiveness of leadership structures. Furthermore, the significance of decision-making is evident in the coefficient of 0.22 and p-value of 0.0156, which indicate that transparent and inclusive decision-making processes are critical for effective leadership.

Although accountability's p-value is 0.0734 and its coefficient is 0.18, suggesting a less significant but still pertinent contribution, it underscores the significance of well-defined roles and responsibilities in bolstering leadership practices. The analysis underscores the criticality of involving stakeholders, promoting collaboration, and inspiring innovation as critical elements in augmenting the effectiveness of leadership.

Table 13: Factor loadings.

Component	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Leadership Roles	0.10	0.37	0.72	0.26
Resource Sharing	0.82	0.13	0.09	0.18
Adaptability	0.05	0.80	0.28	0.35
Inclusivity	0.11	0.22	0.85	0.12
Transparency	0.08	0.30	0.15	0.73
Communication	0.10	0.05	0.24	0.82

Source: SPSS analysis.

The statistical significance of these variables indicates that they collectively influence distributed leadership. As a result, strategic planning and leadership development must take these variables into account. Furthermore, the findings underscore the significance of adopting a comprehensive perspective, in which enhancements to one element have a constructive impact on others, thereby promoting a climate of cooperation, ingenuity, and all-encompassing judgement.

Based on the results of the factor analysis, communication is found to have a substantial burden of 0.82 on Factor 4. This indicates that communication makes a substantial contribution to this factor and emphasises the critical role it plays in cultivating effective leadership practices. Furthermore, transparency exhibits a robust correlation with Factor 4 (0.73), underscoring its contribution to leadership dynamics characterised by clarity and openness, which fosters trust and collaboration.

The significance of inclusivity in ensuring that leadership structures are inclusive and that all voices are heard in decision-making processes is supported by its high loading of 0.85 on Factor 3 Additionally, leadership positions have a substantial weighting on Factor 3 (0.72), which underscores the criticality of establishing unambiguous leadership roles that foster inclusivity within the organisation.

The fact that adaptability has a substantial impact on Factor23 (0.80) underscores the criticality of leadership structures that are flexible enough to accommodate evolving conditions and maintain a responsive stance towards institutional requirements. The substantial weight assigned to resource sharing on Factor 1 (0.82) indicates that the efficient allocation of resources is critical for facilitating leadership practices and guaranteeing that teams have the necessary resources at their disposal.

The analysis of factor loadings demonstrates the presence of discernible clusters; one such cluster comprises communication and transparency, which are both essential for effective leadership; another cluster comprises inclusivity and leadership roles, which underscores the significance of incorporating inclusivity into role definition. Adaptability and resource sharing are distinct elements that have a substantial influence on the leadership framework as a whole. This analysis underscores the intricate and diverse characteristics of effective leadership and stresses the significance of incorporating these elements in order to cultivate a unified leadership approach.

Table 14: Key themes and frequency of occurrence.

Theme	Frequency
Innovation	18
Communication	20
Role Clarity	24
Decision-Making	28
Collaboration	32

Source: SPSS analysis.

The thematic analysis reveals that collaboration is the most commonly referenced theme, appearing 32 times. This indicates that collaboration is fundamental to distributed leadership practices and reflects a wide-ranging agreement regarding its significance in facilitating efficient cooperation and decision-making. An additional significant theme that surfaced 28 times was decision-making, which underscored the importance of transparent and inclusive procedures in order to attain agreement and inspire effective leadership.

Twenty-four instances of role clarity emphasise the significance of delineating leadership roles and responsibilities with precision in order to prevent ambiguity and guarantee effective leadership. The importance of clear and open channels of communication to facilitate the exchange of ideas and keep all stakeholders informed of institutional decisions and changes is reflected in the communication frequency of twenty. The fact that innovation is mentioned eighteen times indicates that the significance of innovative practices in fostering institutional expansion and adjusting to evolving surroundings is acknowledged.

These themes underscore the complex and diverse characteristics of distributed leadership and draw attention to critical components that are vital to its efficacy. Effective leadership requires a cohesive leadership environment, which is established upon collaboration and decision-making as fundamental principles. Role clarity and communication serve as the structural and informational framework that bolsters such leadership. Innovation contributes a dynamic element that fosters ongoing enhancement and guarantees the institution's adaptability to emergent opportunities and challenges.

The prioritisation of these themes indicates a distinct comprehension that the achievement of prosperous distributed leadership is contingent upon a synergy of collaboration, openness, and efficient correspondence. The importance attributed to collaboration and decision-making underscores their fundamental functions in cultivating a unified and all-encompassing leadership environment.

Table 15: Clusters of respondents based on distributed leadership perceptions.

Cluster	Key Characteristics	Number of Respondents
Cluster 1 (Advocates)	Strongly favourable perspectives on collaboration and decision-making	36
Cluster 2 (Skeptics)	Negative to neutral perspectives on leadership effectiveness	26
Cluster 3 (Moderates)	Mixed opinions with moderate evaluations across the board	25

Source: survey analysis.

Three discrete groups were identified through cluster analysis, predicated on the perceptions of the respondents regarding distributed leadership at Khazar University. Cluster 1, denoted as "Advocates," consists of 36 participants who are extremely favourable towards distributed leadership, placing special emphasis on the importance of collaboration and sound decision-making. Their evident fervour signifies a firm endorsement of distributed leadership methodologies, implying that they may have personally encountered their advantages or hold a firm conviction regarding their tenets. Cluster 2, referred to as the "Sceptics," comprises 26 participants who hold neutral to negative perspectives on the efficacy of distributed leadership. There may be apprehensions regarding the execution of distributed leadership or its broader implications for university activities. Such concerns underscore the criticality of tackling particular obstacles that impede the effective integration of distributed leadership. Scepticism may arise from past encounters characterised by ambiguous leadership roles or a perceived inefficiency in the decision-making process. Cluster 3, labelled "Moderates," comprises 25 participants who hold moderate opinions on all facets of distributed leadership and present a range of perspectives. The responses of this group suggest that while they acknowledge certain favourable attributes, they maintain a prudent stance regarding its overall efficacy. This may be attributed to inconsistent execution or differing standards of leadership calibre.

The unique viewpoints expressed by these clusters highlight the diverse range of experiences and perspectives regarding distributed leadership throughout the university. Although the "Advocates" exhibit substantial support, the existence of the "Sceptics" and "Moderates" signifies the necessity to acknowledge concerns and enhance procedures in order to foster greater acceptance on the whole. Enhancing the lucidity surrounding leadership positions, cultivating an environment of transparent correspondence, and guaranteeing efficient decision-making may contribute to a transformation of the perspectives of "Sceptics" and "Moderates" into more favourable ones.

Table 16: ANOVA test: role impact on perceptions of distributed leadership.

Source of Variation	p-Value	F-Value	Mean Square	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares
Within Groups			1.77	68	120.4
Between Groups	0.013	4.45	7.9	2	15.8
Total				70	136.2

Source: survey analysis.

Based on the roles of the respondents at Khazar University, the ANOVA results demonstrate a statistically significant distinction in the perceptions of distributed leadership. This is supported by

the F-value of 4.45 and the p-value of 0.013. This indicates that the perception of distributed leadership may vary among individuals in various roles, potentially due to factors such as their different degrees of engagement and familiarity with leadership methodologies. The substantial difference between the mean squares of the variances within and between groups provides further support for the significance of the perception differences.

The divergence in viewpoints can be ascribed to the distinct obligations and obligations that are linked to each position. Distributed leadership may be perceived more positively by faculty members who have greater direct involvement in decision-making processes, as opposed to administrative staff who may perceive it as less pertinent to their routine responsibilities. The substantial within-group variance signifies the presence of divergent perspectives even among members of the same group, implying that individual experiences and particular conditions may also contribute. This discovery emphasises the significance of customised leadership and communication approaches that take into account the varied requirements and anticipations of distinct cohorts. This underscores the importance of establishing unambiguous role definitions and employing efficient communication strategies in order to reconcile gaps in perception and increase comprehension of the advantages of distributed leadership. The notable disparities additionally indicate that the influence and awareness of distributed leadership practices vary among groups, thereby underscoring the necessity for leadership approaches that are more inclusive in nature. Leadership can enhance overall perceptions and effectively address these differences by developing targeted strategies that are informed by the specific concerns and perspectives of various roles. Potential strategies to promote inclusivity in decision-making and clarify leadership roles and expectations include encouraging transparent communication. The implications of the ANOVA results underscore the criticality of incorporating role-based variations into assessments of the efficacy and influence of distributed leadership strategies within the context of higher education.

Table 17: Structural equation modeling (sem): factors impacting distributed leadership.

Path	p-Value	t-Value	Standardized Coefficient
Innovation -> Collaboration	0.000	4.78	0.38
Collaboration -> Engagement	0.000	6.23	0.52
Decision-Making -> Engagement	0.000	5.15	0.44
Communication -> Engagement	0.000	4.45	0.36
Role Clarity -> Engagement	0.000	3.89	0.31

Source: survey analysis.

With a standardised coefficient of 0.52, the SEM results indicate a significant positive relationship between engagement and collaboration, suggesting that effective collaboration has a substantial impact on stakeholder engagement in distributed leadership at Khazar University. The robust rapport suggests that promoting collaboration among members of the team inspires increased levels of engagement and dedication.

The coefficient of 0.38, which signifies the favourable influence of innovation on collaboration, underscores the criticality of innovative methodologies in cultivating cooperation and transparent communication within leadership frameworks. The promotion of innovation by leadership teams fosters a culture that places importance on a wide range of contributions, ultimately improving collaboration.

The impact of decision-making on engagement is substantial, as indicated by the coefficient of 0.44. This suggests that inclusive decision-making procedures are vital in cultivating a feeling of inclusion and active participation among stakeholders. Effective decision-making channels facilitate the meaningful participation of stakeholders, thereby augmenting their level of engagement.

The relationship between role clarity and engagement is also statistically significant (coefficient = 0.31), indicating that individuals are more invested in their work when they perceive their responsibilities as being clearly defined. This enhanced clarity mitigates ambiguity and facilitates more efficient effort coordination among team members.

The significance of communication in fostering engagement is supported by a coefficient of 0.36, which signifies that channels of communication that are both open and transparent are indispensable for informing and motivating stakeholders. The level of transparency and ease of access to information has a direct influence on the desire of stakeholders to actively participate.

The findings from this SEM analysis demonstrate that communication, collaboration, innovation, decision-making, and role clarity are critical factors that influence engagement in distributed leadership. The statistical significance of each path is highlighted by the fact that all p-values are 0.000, which emphasises the critical role that these factors play in establishing the leadership culture at the university. The results of this study indicate that in order to enhance student engagement, the institution should prioritise the following: fostering innovation, enhancing collaborative practices, ensuring transparent decision-making processes, defining roles, and maintaining open channels of communication.

2.7. Ethical consideration

In this study, ethical considerations encompassed the utmost integrity and regard for the rights of participants. This was initiated by the acquisition of informed consent, which guaranteed that all individuals participated with complete knowledge regarding the research's objectives, methodologies, and potential hazards prior to their involvement.

Ensuring the utmost importance of privacy and confidentiality, no personal identifiers were included in the survey responses. Furthermore, the data was securely stored to prevent unauthorised access, thereby preventing any information from being attributed to specific respondents. The research study implemented rigorous data management protocols, including the storage of digital records in encrypted formats and restricting access solely to the research team. These measures were implemented to ensure the data remained secure and prevented any of potential misuse or violations.

The participants were duly notified of their prerogative to discontinue their involvement in the research at any given moment without incurring any adverse consequences, thereby underscoring the importance of voluntary participation and minimising any potential for coercion. The research design incorporated precautions to mitigate potential psychological or emotional distress, guaranteeing that inquiries and engagements were suitable and attuned to the experiences of the participants. The study's protocols were approved by the ethical review board of Khazar University, which signifies the institution's dedication to following well-established ethical principles in research that involves human subjects.

Consistent with principles of transparency, the research ensured that all participants were furnished with unambiguous details regarding the intended application of the results and guaranteed that their input would be consolidated for analytical purposes. Participants were also provided with feedback following the study in order to foster an ongoing and enlightening conversation regarding the research findings, in accordance with the ethical principle of beneficence. In order to eliminate any potential bias or influence that might distort the data, the methodology was meticulously designed to guarantee that the study's findings would be maximally precise and impartial. Finally, the distribution of results was carried out in a responsible manner, ensuring that the anonymity of participants was maintained and that no potential damage was caused to the institution or individuals.

2.8. Limitations of the study

There were numerous constraints on the research that may have had an effect on the applicability and understanding of the results. To begin with, it is important to note that although the sample size was sufficient to obtain qualitative insights, it was restricted to Khazar University. As a result, the experiences of distributed leadership in other higher education institutions may not have been adequately represented. The limitations imposed by the restricted geographical and institutional scope hinder the capacity to extrapolate the results to more extensive contexts. Further, the research was significantly dependent on self-reported information, a method that is inherently susceptible to biases including personal interpretation and social desirability. These factors could have distorted the validity of the findings.

The research methodology predominantly relied on survey data, which, in comparison to qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews and direct observation, might not have fully captured the intricacies and profundities of distributed leadership practices. The researcher constructed the survey instrument according to their own assumptions and the literature at their disposal. This may have had an impact on the formulation of the questions and, by extension, the responses gathered. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that the study's cross-sectional design restricts its capacity to encompass temporal developments and changes in distributed leadership practices. To rectify this, a longitudinal approach would be necessary.

Furthermore, the study's capacity to investigate distributed leadership practices in a more extensive array of organisational contexts was restricted by time limitations, which hindered the identification of more nuanced insights. Due to the absence of direct observation of leadership dynamics, the study's conclusions are predominately supported by the perceptions of the participants. Ultimately, the research's purview might have been constrained by the potential neglect of other leadership approaches or dynamics that are equally influential in the governance structure of the university, due to the preoccupation with distributed leadership as a concept.

CHAPTER III ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED

3.1. Assessing the current state of leadership structures at Khazar University: needs and gaps

The information gathered from Khazar University about the current leadership structures illuminates a number of facets that provide insight into extant gaps and requirements. The survey findings revealed that participants placed great importance on collaboration, which was identified as a critical element of distributed leadership. However, evident inconsistencies in the implementation of collaboration practices across departments suggested a deficiency in standardised practices that could streamline leadership endeavours. An additional crucial element that surfaced was communication. Although its significance in nurturing effective leadership was acknowledged, the data indicated that communication breakdowns were common in some teams. This underscored the necessity for more resilient and transparent channels of communication to facilitate the exchange of information throughout the leadership structures of the university.

An additional crucial aspect that was identified was role clarity. The data emphasised that uncertainty regarding roles and responsibilities continues to be a substantial obstacle, which may result in perplexity and ineffectiveness in leadership processes. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a more precise definition of roles in order to guarantee that every member of the team is cognizant of their obligations within the framework of distributed leadership. The survey results also highlighted the fact that although decision-making processes were generally perceived as inclusive, concerns remained regarding the degree to which distributed leadership enables individuals in various roles to meaningfully participate in decision-making. This suggests that more structured and inclusive mechanisms are required to facilitate broader engagement.

Participants also conveyed confidence in the capacity of distributed leadership to foster innovative practices with regard to innovation. However, the data revealed that this potential remains untapped as obstacles impede the unrestricted exchange of ideas and the execution of novel methodologies, thereby highlighting a deficiency in leadership practices that impede innovation. The levels of engagement exhibited by various respondent groups namely students, faculty, and administrative staff were diverse in terms of their commitment and involvement with the leadership structures of the university. This suggests that in order to foster a greater sense of involvement and dedication among distinct groups, leadership engagement strategies may require customisation.

Participants identified a deficiency in the accountability structures of distributed leadership as a result of the absence of clear accountability measures, which made it difficult to hold leaders and team members accountable for their contributions. This identified accountability as an area that

required substantial improvement. Furthermore, the findings indicated that although distributed leadership was generally regarded favourably for its capacity to promote collaboration and innovation, a considerable number of participants highlighted difficulties in executing this style of leadership. This underscores the necessity for a more methodical and strategic approach towards its integration.

In addition, the factor analysis revealed that critical components such as adaptability, communication, and inclusiveness were interdependent and ought to be incorporated into leadership development initiatives in order to fill the existing voids in the distributed leadership framework. The results of the correlation analysis indicated that there are significant associations between variables such as engagement and collaboration. This suggests that by improving collaborative practices, it may be possible to enhance engagement levels. However, it is important to note that focusing solely on one factor would not be adequate; a comprehensive approach is required to address the interdependence of these leadership components.

The results were further supported by the regression analysis, which specifically underscored the substantial influence that collaboration, innovation, and decision-making exert on the overall effectiveness of leadership. This underscored the importance of developing strategies that fortify these domains in order to bridge the deficiencies in leadership methodologies. The thematic analysis underscored the significance of cultivating an environment that places a premium on collaboration and innovation. However, it also exposed the difficulties that may arise in the pursuit of such a culture, specifically in situations where communication and accountability deficiencies impede the implementation of distributed leadership.

The cluster analysis revealed distinct groups of participants who held varying opinions regarding distributed leadership. This highlighted the necessity for customised strategies to tackle the particular obstacles and requirements of each group, including the sceptics who were less persuaded of its efficacy. The results were additionally corroborated by the ANOVA tests, which revealed statistically significant variations in the perceptions of distributed leadership among positions. This further supports the notion that leadership approaches must be tailored to the specific attributes of each group.

The SEM analysis yielded an all-encompassing model that illustrated the intricate relationship between a multitude of determinants impacting distributed leadership. This highlighted the criticality of attending to all pivotal domains, including collaboration, communication, and engagement, in order to establish a unified leadership framework. In general, the research revealed notable deficiencies in the existing leadership frameworks at Khazar University. Specifically, these

deficiencies pertain to the promotion of accountability, collaboration, communication, and innovation. To rectify these issues, strategic leadership development programmes are required, taking into account the interrelatedness of these elements.

Evidently, a more structured approach is required to resolve these gaps and align leadership practices with the principles of distributed leadership in order for the university to fully benefit from distributed leadership. Through the strategic resolution of these requirements, Khazar University can bolster the efficiency of its leadership frameworks, thereby guaranteeing their alignment with the institution's objectives and cultivation of an environment that promotes cooperation, ingenuity, and responsibility.

3.2. Stakeholder perspectives on implementing distributed leadership at Khazar University: opportunities and resistances

3.2.1. Gathering insights from faculty, staff, and students on leadership dynamics

The examination of stakeholder viewpoints regarding the implementation of distributed leadership at Khazar University unveils a complex terrain replete with prospects and obstacles. The perspectives collected from faculty, staff, and students provide a comprehensive depiction of the present condition of leadership dynamics within the establishment. Faculty members have identified a substantial opportunity in the empowerment that distributed leadership could bestow, particularly through their active participation in decision-making processes that have a direct impact on academic and research endeavours. Such an approach would foster a sense of ownership and accountability among members, which in turn would stimulate innovation and elevate the standard of instruction. Nonetheless, a number of faculty members also highlighted a resistance that stems from the hierarchical systems that have historically dominated higher education. In such environments, where authority has been centralised and leaders are reluctant to cede control, established norms and practices may impede the transition to a more distributed model.

In contrast, administrative personnel emphasised the potential of distributed leadership to improve communication and operational efficiency between departments. They suggested that more explicit role definitions and shared responsibilities could facilitate streamlined workflows and more effective resource allocation, ultimately resulting in enhanced organisational performance. However, opposition was also recognised regarding the perceived increased intricacy of distributed leadership. Individuals were apprehensive that a change in leadership methodologies might introduce uncertainty and impede the speed of decision-making, which could ultimately result in operational bottlenecks and delays.

The viewpoints of students regarding distributed leadership were distinct, with an emphasis on the potential for increased participation and inclusiveness in university governance. This would empower students to express their thoughts and make contributions to determinations that have a direct impact on their academic trajectory. They acknowledged that distributed leadership could foster a more responsive and transparent institutional climate in which students feel valued and heard as stakeholders in their education. Nevertheless, opposition from students was observed in the shape of doubt regarding the significance of their involvement, apprehensions regarding tokenistic behaviour, and questions as to whether their suggestions would be authentically factored into leadership deliberations.

Opportunities for stakeholder group collaboration were also underscored by the study's data analysis, which revealed that distributed leadership could nurture a collaborative culture in which faculty, staff, and students address common challenges and align on institutional objectives. The establishment of a collaborative atmosphere has the potential to foster innovation and facilitate the utilisation of varied ideas and perspectives in order to enhance decision-making procedures and final results. Nevertheless, obstacles manifest as deeply ingrained compartmentalization within academic departments and faculties. In such environments, cooperation is impeded by a dearth of confidence or the perception of rivalry, resulting in disjointed endeavours and inconsistent objectives.

The analysis additionally unveiled prospects for utilising technology to bolster distributed leadership, wherein digital platforms might enable communication, optimise decision-making procedures, and augment transparency in leadership endeavours; in essence, this would simplify the involvement of all stakeholders in governance. However, it was observed that certain stakeholder groups exhibited resistance towards embracing novel technologies. This reluctance may stem from a lack of digital literacy or a dread of change, both of which have the potential to impede the efficacy of technological solutions.

In terms of instituting distributed leadership at Khazar University successfully, the perspectives of stakeholders underscore the significance of transparent communication, clearly defined roles, and efficient collaboration. Although there are numerous prospects for cultivating a leadership structure that is more innovative and inclusive, effectively tackling the identified obstacles will necessitate purposeful endeavours to alter perspectives, establish confidence, and guarantee that all parties are cognizant of the advantages associated with distributed leadership. Transparent communication strategies that effectively convey the vision for distributed leadership are imperative in this context. Additionally, well-organized training and support programmes are required to enable all stakeholders to readily adopt the emerging dynamics of leadership.

Based on the analysis, the successful implementation of distributed leadership at Khazar University necessitates a meticulously devised strategy that capitalises on favourable circumstances and tactfully confronts obstacles; this will guarantee a seamless progression towards a leadership framework that is more inclusive and collaborative.

3.2.2. Opportunities for implementing distributed leadership at Khazar University

Based on the examination of the gathered data, it is evident that the adoption of distributed leadership at Khazar University offers numerous prospects for substantial improvements in the institution's academic and operational prowess. By fostering an environment of shared decision-making and inclusiveness, this leadership approach could enable a more extensive array of stakeholders to actively engage in the governance of the university. Faculty members have the potential to significantly advantage from distributed leadership. By decentralising decision-making, departments may gain greater autonomy, which would empower them to implement innovative teaching methods and pursue research that corresponds with their areas of expertise and personal interests. This would cultivate an atmosphere of academic freedom and ingenuity, ultimately enriching the educational experience.

Based on the data, it appears that distributed leadership has the potential to improve interdepartmental communication by fostering an environment that promotes the unrestricted exchange of ideas and information. This, in turn, could enhance resource sharing and collaboration among departments, resulting in more unified strategic planning and more efficient resolution of problems. By involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making, this leadership model could foster a culture of trust and transparency. This is because such participation guarantees that decisions are informed and representative of the varied viewpoints present within the university community. Moreover, it instills a sense of ownership and responsibility among all participants.

Distributed leadership provides administrative staff with the opportunity to optimise operations through the allocation of tasks based on their respective areas of expertise and capabilities. This results in the elimination of workflow bottlenecks and guarantees that decision-making processes remain flexible and adaptable to the requirements of the university. Consequently, this approach enhances administrative efficiency and productivity. Additionally, by increasing staff responsibilities and participation in leadership activities, professional development opportunities could be created, which would not only benefit individual career advancement but also bolster the institution's overall leadership capacity.

Additionally, the analysis demonstrates that students' opinions might be magnified via distributed leadership, given that this framework promotes their proactive involvement in the governance of the university. Consequently, decisions would be more aligned with their desires and requirements, potentially bolstering student engagement and satisfaction with the institution. Enhanced student participation in decision-making processes may additionally cultivate a campus environment more dynamic, wherein student organisations and initiatives thrive under leadership structures that are supportive and acknowledge the significance of student input.

Distributed leadership has the potential to facilitate novel approaches to teaching and learning through the collaborative exchange of best practices and the development of collectively effective pedagogical strategies. Such advancements may result in improved student outcomes and enhanced teaching quality. Expanded collaboration enabled by distributed leadership may additionally fortify alliances with external stakeholders, including alumni and industry partners, who possess the capacity to contribute invaluable resources and perspectives to the endeavours of the university.

The adoption of distributed leadership at Khazar University presents an additional prospect for the development of a more robust and flexible establishment. This is due to the fact that the university can better address challenges and fluctuations in the higher education sector through the delegation of authority and shared responsibility inherent in this model, thereby guaranteeing the institution's enduring viability. Furthermore, by establishing unambiguous roles and responsibilities, the distributed leadership model has the potential to bolster accountability. This is because it guarantees that all stakeholders are cognizant of their respective contributions towards the achievement of the university's objectives, thereby cultivating an environment that promotes exceptional performance.

The adoption of distributed leadership may additionally bolster the university's endeavours to draw and retain exceptional personnel. This is due to the model's capacity to foster inclusivity and empowerment, which resonates with individuals in search of a vibrant and encouraging professional atmosphere. Consequently, this contributes to the institution's competitive edge within the higher education sector. Furthermore, by incorporating the perspectives and support of a wide array of stakeholders, distributed leadership may enhance the efficacy of the university's strategic endeavours. This is due to the fact that such plans are grounded in realism, comprehensiveness, and congruence with the establishment's mission and core values.

In essence, the prospects offered by distributed leadership at Khazar University are in perfect harmony with the establishment's objectives of cultivating scholarly distinction, ingenuity, and a

dynamic collegiate atmosphere. This renders it an alluring prototype for forthcoming endeavours in leadership development.

CONCLUSION

The thorough examination of dispersed leadership in higher education, especially at Khazar University, has shown how much it may improve academic efficacy and institutional governance. According to this research, dispersed leadership promotes an inclusive culture where the contributions of all stakeholders are recognised and used, in addition to creating an atmosphere that is more collaborative. It has been shown that including a variety of leaders in the decision-making process enhances strategic discussions and results, guaranteeing that conclusions are comprehensive and widely accepted. Furthermore, institutions can respond more quickly to shifts in the educational environment because to the flexibility that comes with dispersed leadership, which improves response to fresh possibilities and problems. The analysis of dispersed leadership at Khazar University shows that staff and student involvement and morale significantly increase when leadership tasks are shared, and this, in turn, leads to improved administrative and academic performance.

The study also emphasises how dispersed leadership contributes to the dismantling of academic and administrative silos inside universities and encourages a more integrated and collaborative approach to these tasks. The long-term durability of educational reforms and initiatives is contingent upon the cultivation of a feeling of community and common purpose, which is facilitated by this integration. By giving more university community members the authority to propose and spearhead change and by bringing a diversity of perspectives and creative methods to the classroom, dispersed leadership fosters creativity as well. By the time the research comes to an end, it is clear that dispersed leadership greatly adds to a more resilient and flexible organisational structure in addition to improving operational efficiency. The proactive and participatory environment that this kind of leadership fosters is crucial for the ongoing development and advancement of higher education establishments. Fundamentally, Khazar University's move to dispersed leadership has created a model that may spur comparable changes at other establishments, indicating a more forward-thinking and efficient education industry. Suggestions:

1. To improve decision-making and creativity, spread out the use of dispersed leadership at all organisational levels.

2. Create ongoing training initiatives for teachers and staff to support the shift to a dispersed leadership paradigm and cultivate leadership abilities.

3. Create unambiguous policies and routes of communication to guarantee efficient coordination and cooperation among dispersed leaders.

4. To find opportunities for improvement, evaluate dispersed leadership's effect on institutional performance on a regular basis.

5. Invite input and involvement from all parties involved in order to continually improve your leadership techniques.

6. Make use of technology to facilitate dispersed leadership techniques, particularly in the areas of teamwork and data-driven decision-making.

7. Encourage an environment of openness and trust, which are necessary for the effective implementation of dispersed leadership.

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