

The Impact of Leadership Style on MRSM Performance Moderated by Tacit Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

Leadership plays an important role in improving organizational performance, particularly in educational institutions where leadership practices influence institutional effectiveness and academic outcomes. Within the Malaysian education system, effective leadership is essential for achieving institutional goals and maintaining educational quality. This study examines the influence of distributed leadership on the performance of Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM) and investigates the moderating role of tacit knowledge. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to teachers from MRSM institutions across Malaysia, with 351 valid responses analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In addition, semi-structured interviews with MRSM principals were conducted to support the quantitative findings. The results indicate that distributed leadership significantly influences school performance through dimensions such as mission and vision alignment, shared responsibility, shared culture, and leadership practices. Furthermore, tacit knowledge strengthens leadership effectiveness by encouraging knowledge sharing and collaboration among educators. The findings provide insights for strengthening leadership development and improving institutional performance within MRSM institutions.

Keywords: *Distributed Leadership, School Performance, Tacit Knowledge, Educational Leadership*

ABSTRAK

Kepimpinan memainkan peranan penting dalam meningkatkan prestasi organisasi, terutamanya dalam institusi pendidikan di mana amalan kepimpinan mempengaruhi keberkesanan institusi dan pencapaian akademik. Dalam sistem pendidikan Malaysia, kepimpinan yang berkesan amat penting bagi memastikan matlamat institusi dapat dicapai serta mengekalkan kualiti pendidikan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti pengaruh kepimpinan teragih terhadap prestasi Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM) serta mengkaji peranan pengetahuan tersirat sebagai pemboleh ubah moderator. Data kajian dikumpulkan melalui soal selidik yang diedarkan kepada guru-guru MRSM di seluruh Malaysia, dengan 351 maklum balas sah dianalisis menggunakan perisian Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Selain itu, temu bual separa berstruktur bersama pengetua MRSM turut dijalankan bagi menyokong dapatan kuantitatif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kepimpinan teragih memberi kesan signifikan terhadap prestasi sekolah melalui dimensi misi dan visi, tanggungjawab bersama, budaya bersama, dan amalan kepimpinan. Pengetahuan tersirat juga didapati memperkukuh keberkesanan kepimpinan melalui perkongsian pengetahuan dan kerjasama dalam kalangan pendidik.

Kata kunci: *Kepimpinan Teragih, Prestasi Sekolah, Pengetahuan Tersirat, Kepimpinan Pendidikan*

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INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian education system aims to develop balanced human capital by integrating intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development in accordance with national educational aspirations. Educational institutions therefore function not only as centres for knowledge acquisition but also as organizational systems that require effective leadership and management to achieve institutional goals. Schools involve multiple stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, students, parents, and support staff, all of whom contribute to the overall educational environment. Within this context, leadership plays a crucial role in guiding institutional direction, managing organizational resources, and ensuring that educational objectives are successfully achieved. Effective leadership contributes to institutional sustainability and organizational performance by encouraging collaboration, improving decision-making processes, and strengthening institutional strategies. Previous studies have also demonstrated that effective management and transparency practices can significantly influence organizational performance and long-term institutional success (Azahari & Mohamed Suhaimi, 2023). Effective leadership contributes to institutional sustainability and organizational performance by encouraging collaboration, improving decision-making processes, and strengthening institutional strategies (Yusof et al., 2025).

Leadership within educational institutions is particularly important because school leaders are responsible for coordinating teaching activities, motivating teachers, and maintaining a positive learning environment. School administrators must possess strong leadership capabilities to ensure that educational policies are implemented effectively and that teachers are supported in delivering high-quality instruction. In the Malaysian education system, leadership effectiveness is closely associated with institutional performance and the ability of schools to achieve academic excellence. Educational leadership not only influences administrative processes but also shapes school culture and teacher engagement. Studies in organizational management have shown that leadership practices play an important role in enhancing institutional performance, particularly when leaders encourage collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning within organizations (Yusof et al., 2024). Therefore, leadership style becomes an important factor in determining how educational institutions respond to challenges and improve institutional outcomes. Studies in organizational management have shown that leadership practices play an important role in enhancing institutional performance, particularly when leaders encourage collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning within organizations (Yusof et al., 2024). Leadership practices play an important role in enhancing institutional performance and organizational effectiveness when leaders encourage participation, collaboration, and empowerment among organizational members (Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM) represents one of Malaysia's prominent educational institutions established under Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) to develop high-quality human capital and strengthen national educational development. Since its establishment in 1966, MRSM institutions have produced more than 170,000 graduates across Malaysia who contribute to various professional sectors and national development. The MRSM education system is guided by the MARA Education Transformation Framework, which emphasizes strategic improvement, innovation, and the development of competitive human capital. In order to sustain high academic standards and institutional effectiveness, MRSM institutions require leadership practices that are capable of adapting to changing educational environments. Leadership within MRSM institutions must therefore promote collaboration among educators, strengthen organizational culture, and support institutional development. Effective leadership practices are also associated with organizational resilience and institutional sustainability in complex organizational environments (Yusof et al., 2025).

In recent years, distributed leadership has emerged as an important leadership approach in educational institutions. Unlike traditional hierarchical leadership models that concentrate authority in a single leader, distributed leadership emphasizes

shared responsibilities among multiple members of the organization. This leadership approach encourages collaboration among teachers, administrators, and staff members in achieving institutional goals. Distributed leadership allows organizations to utilize the expertise and knowledge of various individuals, which contributes to improved decision-making and organizational effectiveness. Harris (2014) explains that distributed leadership practices are exercised through formal leadership roles, informal interactions, and collaborative organizational activities. By promoting shared leadership responsibilities, educational institutions are able to develop stronger professional relationships among teachers and enhance institutional learning processes.

Another important factor that may influence leadership effectiveness within educational institutions is tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge refers to the knowledge, skills, and professional experiences that individuals acquire through practice and social interaction. Unlike explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is often difficult to document because it is embedded within personal experiences and professional judgement. Within educational environments, tacit knowledge develops through teachers' classroom experiences, professional collaboration, and shared problem-solving activities. When tacit knowledge is effectively shared among educators, it can contribute to improved teaching practices and institutional development. Previous research suggests that organizational knowledge sharing plays a significant role in enhancing institutional innovation and performance (Yusof et al., 2025). Therefore, tacit knowledge may strengthen leadership practices by supporting collaborative learning and institutional improvement.

Despite the growing interest in distributed leadership within educational research, limited studies have specifically examined its influence on MRSM institutional performance. Furthermore, the moderating role of tacit knowledge in strengthening the relationship between distributed leadership and institutional performance remains underexplored within the MRSM educational context. Understanding how distributed leadership and tacit knowledge interact may provide valuable insights into improving leadership effectiveness within educational institutions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of distributed leadership on MRSM performance while also investigating the moderating role of tacit knowledge. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of effective leadership strategies that can enhance institutional performance and support sustainable educational excellence within MRSM institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership has long been recognized as an important concept in organizational behaviour because it influences organizational effectiveness, employee performance, and institutional development. In educational institutions, leadership plays a critical role in shaping school culture, guiding teachers, and supporting student achievement. Educational leaders are responsible for creating an environment that promotes collaboration, professional development, and continuous improvement among educators. Previous studies have emphasized that leadership practices contribute significantly to institutional performance when leaders encourage participation, transparency, and knowledge sharing within organizations (Yukl, 1989; Wan et al., 2011; Song et al., 2012). In addition, leadership strategies that promote accountability and effective governance have also been associated with improved organizational performance across various sectors (Azahari & Mohamed Suhaimi, 2023). These findings highlight the importance of leadership practices in ensuring that educational institutions operate effectively and achieve their long-term objectives. Previous studies have demonstrated that knowledge sharing within organizations contributes significantly to institutional innovation and performance (Yusof, 2025).

Within the Malaysian educational context, leadership practices have received increasing attention as schools and educational institutions seek to improve institutional effectiveness and academic outcomes. Educational leaders must possess the ability to manage institutional resources, coordinate teaching activities, and foster a positive learning environment for both teachers and students. Leadership in schools involves more than administrative management; it also requires the ability to motivate teachers, support innovation, and encourage collaboration within the institution. Research has shown that leadership approaches that emphasize strategic planning and organizational coordination can significantly improve institutional performance (Yusof et al., 2024). Effective leadership also encourages professional learning communities within schools, allowing teachers to share knowledge and experiences that improve teaching practices. Consequently, leadership style has become an important area of study in understanding how educational institutions can strengthen organizational performance and sustain academic excellence.

Over the past several decades, leadership theory has evolved significantly, introducing various leadership models that reflect changing organizational needs and management practices. Traditional leadership approaches often relied on hierarchical structures in which authority and decision-making were centralized within a single leader. However, contemporary leadership theories emphasize collaboration, participation, and shared responsibility among organizational members. Several leadership

styles have been widely discussed in educational research, including transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and distributed leadership. Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating employees to achieve organizational goals, while transactional leadership emphasizes structured supervision and performance management. In contrast, distributed leadership promotes shared leadership practices in which multiple members of the organization contribute to leadership activities. This collaborative leadership approach allows organizations to utilize the knowledge and expertise of various individuals in addressing institutional challenges.

Distributed leadership has gained significant attention in educational research because it emphasizes collaboration among teachers and administrators in the leadership process. Harris (2012) describes distributed leadership as a leadership approach that encourages leadership responsibilities to be shared among members of the organization rather than being concentrated in a single leadership role. This leadership model allows teachers and staff members to participate in decision-making processes and contribute their professional expertise to institutional development. Research suggests that distributed leadership practices improve organizational performance by strengthening teamwork, enhancing communication, and promoting collective responsibility within schools (Spillane et al., 2001; Muijs & Harris, 2003). When leadership responsibilities are shared among multiple individuals, schools become more adaptive and responsive to institutional challenges. As a result, distributed leadership can support the development of collaborative school cultures that contribute to improved teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

Another important concept related to leadership effectiveness is tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge refers to the personal experiences, skills, and insights that individuals acquire through professional practice and social interaction. Unlike explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is difficult to formalize or document because it is embedded in individual experiences and professional judgement. Within educational institutions, tacit knowledge is developed through teachers' classroom experiences, collaboration with colleagues, and participation in institutional activities. The sharing of tacit knowledge among educators allows institutions to benefit from collective professional expertise and improve instructional practices. Previous studies have demonstrated that knowledge sharing within organizations contributes significantly to institutional innovation and performance improvement (Yusof et al., 2025). Therefore, tacit knowledge plays an important role in strengthening leadership practices by facilitating collaboration and enhancing institutional learning within educational environments.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

This study examines the relationship between distributed leadership and school performance within MRSB institutions while also considering the moderating role of tacit knowledge. Distributed leadership is treated as the independent variable, school performance as the dependent variable, and tacit knowledge as the moderating variable. The conceptual framework of this study is adapted from Harris (2014), which emphasizes the importance of leadership practices distributed across organizational members rather than centralized within a single leader. In educational institutions, distributed leadership encourages collaboration among teachers, administrators, and staff members in decision-making processes. Such collaborative leadership structures allow schools to utilize the collective expertise of educators and improve institutional effectiveness. By encouraging shared responsibility and organizational cooperation, distributed leadership practices may significantly influence school performance and contribute to institutional development in MRSB institutions.

Distributed leadership within educational institutions is often reflected through several important dimensions, including mission and vision alignment, shared responsibility, shared organizational culture, and leadership practices. These dimensions emphasize collaboration among educators and encourage teachers to participate actively in institutional decision-making processes. When teachers are involved in leadership activities, they are more likely to develop stronger commitment to institutional goals and contribute to school improvement initiatives. Research in educational leadership suggests that distributed leadership strengthens institutional performance by enhancing communication, teamwork, and professional collaboration among teachers and administrators. Within MRSB institutions, distributed leadership practices may help school leaders coordinate academic programs, support teacher development, and promote a positive institutional culture that supports academic excellence and continuous organizational improvement.

Tacit knowledge is another important factor that may influence the relationship between leadership practices and organizational performance. Tacit knowledge refers to the knowledge, skills, and experiences that individuals acquire through practical experience and professional interaction. Within educational institutions, tacit knowledge is developed through classroom teaching experience, collaboration among teachers, and informal knowledge sharing within the school environment. When tacit knowledge is effectively shared among educators, it enhances professional learning and contributes to improved teaching practices. Educational leaders who encourage knowledge sharing among teachers create an environment where collective experience can be utilized to solve institutional challenges. Therefore, tacit knowledge may

strengthen the influence of distributed leadership by supporting collaboration, knowledge exchange, and collective learning within educational institutions.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous studies on educational leadership, this research proposes two main hypotheses. First, distributed leadership is expected to have a significant influence on school performance within MRSM institutions. Distributed leadership practices encourage collaboration, shared responsibility, and collective decision-making among teachers and administrators, which can enhance institutional performance. Second, distributed leadership is also expected to influence tacit knowledge within educational institutions. When leadership responsibilities are distributed among teachers and administrators, opportunities for knowledge sharing and professional collaboration increase. This collaborative environment encourages educators to share experiences and insights that contribute to institutional development. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this study:

H1: Distributed leadership has a significant effect on school performance.

H2: Distributed leadership has a significant effect on tacit knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the relationship between distributed leadership, tacit knowledge, and school performance. The quantitative approach was employed to analyse the relationship between variables using statistical techniques, while the qualitative approach was used to support and interpret the quantitative findings through interviews with MRSM principals. The use of mixed-method research allows researchers to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining numerical data with descriptive insights from participants. In this study, the quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to teachers in MRSM institutions throughout Malaysia. The responses obtained from the questionnaire were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships among the variables.

The questionnaire used in this study was designed based on established measurement instruments used in previous leadership studies. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire before the main data collection process. The questionnaire consisted of several sections that measured distributed leadership practices, tacit knowledge, and school performance. The distributed leadership construct included dimensions such as mission and vision alignment, shared responsibility, shared culture, and leadership practices. These dimensions were used to examine how leadership responsibilities are distributed among educators within MRSM institutions. Data collection was conducted through both online distribution and direct administration of questionnaires to teachers across 53 MRSM institutions in Malaysia. Respondents were informed that their responses would remain anonymous to ensure that they could provide honest and unbiased answers during the survey process.

A total of 351 valid responses were obtained and used for the final analysis. The respondents included teachers, heads of department, and vice principals who were actively involved in educational management within MRSM institutions. In addition to the questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several MRSM principals to obtain qualitative insights regarding leadership practices within their institutions. The interviews were conducted through online video calls due to the restrictions during the COVID-19 period. These interviews allowed the researchers to gain deeper understanding of how distributed leadership practices are implemented within MRSM institutions and how they influence institutional performance. The qualitative findings were used to support and interpret the quantitative results obtained from the statistical analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

As stated in the previous section, several preliminary tests were conducted before performing the main statistical analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of the dataset. Data screening procedures were performed to examine potential issues such as missing data, response bias, and the presence of outliers within the dataset. These tests are essential in quantitative research because they ensure that the collected data are appropriate for statistical analysis and that the results obtained are accurate and reliable. According to Hair et al. (2006), data screening is a crucial step that helps researchers detect possible irregularities that may influence statistical outcomes. In this study, the screening process involved evaluating the

completeness of the data, assessing potential response bias among respondents, and identifying extreme values that may distort statistical results. The following subsections describe the procedures and results of these preliminary analyses.

Missing Data

Hair et al. (2006) describe missing data as situations in which information for a particular variable is not available for a case despite other information being present in the dataset. Missing data can affect the reliability of statistical analysis if not properly addressed during the data preparation stage. In this study, missing data were minimized by carefully checking the questionnaire responses at the point of data collection. Respondents were encouraged to complete all items in the questionnaire, and any unanswered questions were clarified with respondents whenever possible. To further ensure the completeness of the dataset, frequency distribution analysis and missing value analysis were conducted for each variable. The results of the analysis indicated that there were no significant missing data within the dataset. Therefore, all responses were considered suitable for further statistical analysis without requiring additional data imputation procedures.

Response Bias

Non-response bias occurs in statistical surveys when the responses of participants differ from those who did not respond, which may affect the generalizability of research findings. In survey-based research, response bias may occur when respondents who participate in the study possess different characteristics from non-respondents. According to Ellis, Endo, and Armer (1970), non-response bias is influenced by two main factors: the proportion of non-respondents within the sample and the extent to which respondents differ systematically from non-respondents in variables relevant to the research topic. In this study, response bias was tested using independent sample t-test analysis to compare early and late responses. Respondents who returned the questionnaire within four weeks were categorized as early respondents, while those who returned the questionnaire after four weeks were categorized as late respondents. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of Independent Samples t-Tests for Response Bias between Early and Late Response Groups (N=483)

Variable	Mean		t	Sig.
	Early (N=250)	Late (N=233)		
Distributed Leadership	4.2977	4.2215	1.469	.458
Tacit Knowledge	4.4391	4.3796	1.081	.347
Performance	4.1781	4.1406	.739	.541

The results of the independent sample t-tests indicate that there was no statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between the early and late response groups across all variables. This suggests that the responses obtained in this study were not affected by response bias. Previous studies have also indicated that when no significant differences exist between early and late respondents, the dataset can be considered representative of the target population (Coakes & Steed, 2003; Pallant, 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that the responses obtained from the participants were consistent and reliable for further statistical analysis.

Outliers Identification

The next step in the data screening process involved identifying potential outliers within the dataset. Outliers are observations that differ substantially from the majority of data points and may distort the results of statistical analyses. Detecting and addressing outliers is important because extreme values can significantly influence regression results and statistical interpretations. In this study, the Mahalanobis distance (D^2) method was used to detect multivariate outliers. This statistical

technique measures the distance of each observation from the centroid of the dataset and helps identify cases that deviate significantly from the expected pattern. Observations that exceeded the recommended threshold values were considered potential outliers. After performing the analysis, several extreme cases were removed from the dataset to ensure the accuracy of the statistical analysis. As a result, the final dataset consisted of valid responses that met the assumptions required for multivariate statistical analysis.

Tests On Multivariate Assumptions

After completing the data screening procedures, several statistical tests were conducted to ensure that the dataset satisfied the assumptions required for multivariate analysis. These assumptions include normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2006). Ensuring that these assumptions are satisfied is important because violations may affect the accuracy of statistical results. In this study, the normality assumption was examined using both statistical and visual approaches. The statistical approach involved evaluating skewness and kurtosis values for each variable, while the visual approach involved examining histogram distributions for the variables. The results of these analyses confirmed that the dataset met the assumptions required for regression analysis.

Normality

Statistical Approach

The normality of data distribution was assessed by examining skewness and kurtosis values for each variable. Skewness measures the symmetry of a distribution, while kurtosis indicates the degree of peakedness or flatness of the distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). A normal distribution is generally indicated when skewness and kurtosis values are close to zero. In large sample sizes, slight deviations from zero are acceptable because large datasets tend to approximate normal distribution patterns. Hair et al. (2006) suggest that skewness and kurtosis values within ± 3.29 are acceptable for normality assumptions. The results of the analysis indicated that all variables were within the acceptable threshold range, confirming that the dataset did not violate the normality assumption. Table 2 presents the summary statistics for the variables examined in this study.

Table 2

Skewness and Kurtosis for the Variables

Construct	Mean	Std Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Distributed Leadership	4.2885	.51821	-.762	.357
Tacit Knowledge	4.4268	.56916	-.841	.221
Performance	4.1776	.53826	-.465	-.005

The results presented in Table 2 show that the skewness and kurtosis values for all variables fall within the acceptable range, indicating that the dataset is normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption required for regression analysis is satisfied.

Visual Approach

In addition to the statistical examination of normality using skewness and kurtosis values, a visual inspection of the data distribution was also conducted. The visual approach is widely used in statistical analysis to confirm whether the distribution of variables approximates a normal distribution. Histograms are particularly useful for visually examining the shape of a dataset. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), a histogram that demonstrates a bell-shaped curve centred around the mean value indicates that the data are approximately normally distributed. Visual inspection therefore complements statistical indicators of normality and provides additional confirmation that the assumptions required for regression analysis are satisfied. In this study, histograms were generated for each variable, including distributed leadership, tacit knowledge, and school performance. The results of the visual inspection confirm that the distributions of the variables closely resemble a normal curve, indicating that the dataset satisfies the assumption of normality required for multivariate statistical analysis.

Figure 1

Histogram of Distributed Leadership

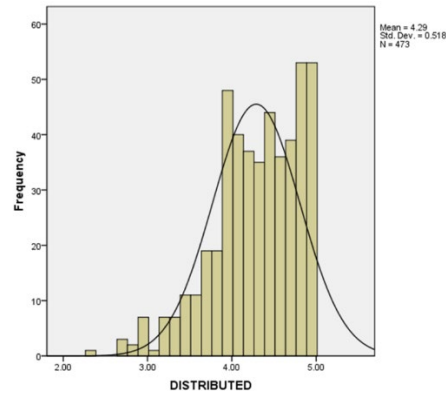


Figure 1 presents the histogram distribution for the distributed leadership variable. The distribution demonstrates a bell-shaped curve centred around the mean value of approximately 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.52. Most of the responses are concentrated around the central value, with fewer observations appearing at the lower and higher ends of the distribution. This pattern suggests that the distributed leadership variable follows a normal distribution pattern. The symmetrical shape of the histogram indicates that the dataset does not violate the assumption of normality. Therefore, the distributed leadership variable is considered suitable for further regression analysis.

Figure 2

Histogram of Tacit Knowledge

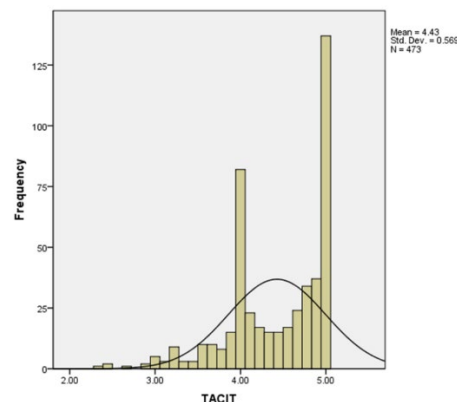


Figure 2 illustrates the histogram distribution for the tacit knowledge variable. The distribution appears relatively symmetrical and resembles the shape of a normal distribution curve. The mean value of the tacit knowledge variable is approximately 4.43 with a standard deviation of 0.57. The majority of responses are clustered around the mean value, indicating that most respondents reported relatively high levels of tacit knowledge within their institutions. This pattern suggests that tacit knowledge is widely present among educators in MRSM institutions. The normal distribution of the variable confirms that the data meet the assumptions required for further statistical analysis.

Figure 3

Histogram of Performance

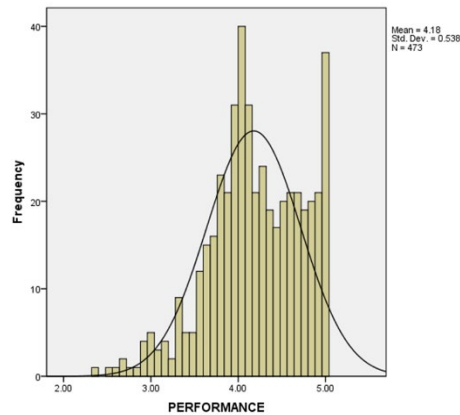


Figure 3 shows the histogram distribution for the school performance variable. The distribution demonstrates a relatively normal pattern centred around the mean value of approximately 4.18 with a standard deviation of 0.54. The histogram indicates that most responses are concentrated around the central value, suggesting a balanced distribution of responses among participants. The symmetrical distribution of the data confirms that the performance variable satisfies the normality assumption required for regression analysis. Therefore, the dataset is appropriate for further statistical analysis, including hypothesis testing and regression modelling.

DISCUSSION

EFFECT ON LEADERSHIP STYLE ON PERFORMANCE

This study examined the influence of distributed leadership on school performance within MRSM institutions. The findings indicate that distributed leadership plays an important role in improving institutional effectiveness. Distributed leadership encourages collaboration among teachers and administrators by distributing leadership responsibilities across different members of the organization. When teachers are actively involved in leadership activities, they become more committed to institutional goals and contribute more effectively to school improvement initiatives. Such collaborative leadership practices strengthen organizational coordination and improve institutional performance. The regression analysis results further support this argument by demonstrating that distributed leadership significantly contributes to the variance in school performance. The regression analysis results examining the relationship between distributed leadership and school performance are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Effect of Leadership Style on School Performance

	B	t	Sig.
(H _{1a}) Mission, Vision, Goal	.119	2.774	.006
(H _{1b}) Shared Responsibility	.240	3.962	.000
(H _{1c}) Shared Culture	.200	3.832	.000
(H _{1d}) Leadership Practices	.319	6.418	.000
R ²	0.695		
F	95.652		
Sig.	0.000		

As shown in Table 3, all dimensions of distributed leadership demonstrate statistically significant relationships with school performance. The regression model explains 69.5 percent of the variance in school performance ($R^2 = 0.695$), indicating that distributed leadership contributes substantially to institutional effectiveness within MRSM institutions. Among the leadership dimensions examined, leadership practices demonstrate the strongest influence on school performance ($B = 0.319$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that leadership behaviour, including communication, coordination, and strategic guidance provided by school leaders, plays a critical role in improving institutional outcomes.

In addition, shared responsibility also shows a strong positive relationship with school performance ($B = 0.240$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicates that when leadership responsibilities are shared among educators, teachers become more engaged in institutional decision-making processes and organizational development activities. Similarly, shared organizational culture demonstrates a significant influence on school performance ($B = 0.200$, $p < 0.01$). A strong organizational culture promotes collaboration and trust among educators, which enhances institutional coordination and strengthens school performance. Meanwhile, mission, vision, and goal alignment also contribute significantly to institutional performance ($B = 0.119$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that clearly defined institutional objectives help educators align their efforts toward achieving school goals.

Overall, the findings indicate that distributed leadership practices contribute significantly to the performance of MRSM institutions. When leadership responsibilities are distributed among educators, schools are able to utilize the collective expertise of teachers and administrators to improve institutional outcomes.

Effect of Leadership Style on Tacit Knowledge

This study also examined the relationship between leadership style and tacit knowledge within MRSM institutions. Tacit knowledge refers to the professional knowledge, practical experience, and insights that educators acquire through teaching practice and professional interaction. In educational environments, tacit knowledge often develops through informal collaboration among teachers, mentoring relationships, and professional discussions within the institution. Effective leadership practices may encourage knowledge sharing among educators and contribute to the development of tacit knowledge within schools. The regression analysis examining the relationship between leadership style and tacit knowledge is presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Effect of Leadership Style on Tacit Knowledge

	B	t	Sig.
(H ₂ b) Idealize Influence	-.076	-.981	.327
(H ₂ c) Inspirational Motivation	-.013	-.191	.848
(H ₂ d) Individual Consideration	-.060	-1.208	.228
R^2	0.583		
F	58.492		
Sig.	0.000		

As presented in Table 4, the overall regression model explains **58.3 percent of the variance in tacit knowledge ($R^2 = 0.583$)**, indicating that leadership practices contribute to the development of tacit knowledge within MRSM institutions. However, the individual leadership dimensions examined in this study do not demonstrate statistically significant relationships with tacit knowledge ($p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that tacit knowledge development within MRSM institutions may depend more strongly on professional interaction among educators rather than on formal leadership structures alone.

Tacit knowledge is often developed through practical teaching experience and informal knowledge sharing among educators. Teachers frequently exchange ideas, teaching strategies, and professional insights through collaboration with colleagues. Such interactions may occur during staff meetings, professional learning communities, or informal discussions among educators. Therefore, although distributed leadership may create an environment that encourages collaboration, tacit knowledge development may be more strongly influenced by informal professional relationships among teachers.

The findings suggest that leadership practices should not only focus on formal leadership structures but also encourage knowledge-sharing cultures within educational institutions. When educators are encouraged to collaborate and exchange professional experiences, tacit knowledge can be developed and shared more effectively. Such knowledge-sharing practices may contribute to institutional learning and support continuous improvement within MRSM institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of distributed leadership on school performance within MRSB institutions and explored the relationship between leadership practices and tacit knowledge among educators. The findings indicate that distributed leadership plays a significant role in improving school performance by encouraging collaboration, shared responsibility, and collective participation in leadership processes. The results demonstrate that leadership dimensions such as mission and vision alignment, shared responsibility, shared culture, and leadership practices contribute positively to institutional performance. Among these dimensions, leadership practices show the strongest influence, highlighting the importance of effective leadership behaviour in strengthening institutional outcomes.

The study also examined the relationship between distributed leadership and tacit knowledge. Although the overall regression model explains a considerable proportion of variance in tacit knowledge, the individual leadership dimensions do not demonstrate statistically significant effects. This suggests that tacit knowledge development within MRSB institutions may rely more on professional interaction, collaborative learning, and informal knowledge sharing among educators rather than formal leadership structures alone.

Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of collaborative leadership approaches in educational institutions. Distributed leadership allows educators to contribute their expertise to organizational decision-making, which strengthens institutional performance and promotes a more cooperative school environment. These findings provide useful insights for educational leaders and policy makers, particularly within MRSB institutions, in developing leadership strategies that support institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement in educational practices.

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