Empowering Teachers' Performance in Educational Institutions Under the Jurisdiction of The Ubon Ratchathani and Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to 1) examine teachers' performance empowerment 2) compare teachers' performance empowerment classified by position, work experience, and school size and 3) propose guidelines for enhancing teachers' performance empowerment. The sample consisted of 349 school administrators and teachers, determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table. The research instruments included a five-point Likert scale questionnaire with a reliability of .98 and structured interviews. Data were analyzed using percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and F-test, while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis.

The findings revealed that: 1) teachers' performance empowerment was overall at a high level (Mean = 4.48, S.D. = 0.50). The highest mean score was professional training and development (Mean = 4.51, S.D. = 0.55) followed by confidence and capacity building (Mean = 4.51, S.D. = 0.56). 2) Significant differences were found by position, work experience and school size. School administrators reported higher empowerment levels (Mean = 4.72, S.D. = 0.30) than teachers (Mean = 4.47, S.D. = 0.51) at the .05 level. Respondents with more than 10 years of experience (Mean = 4.57, S.D. = 0.44) and those from extra-large schools (Mean = 4.57, S.D. = 0.42) reported higher empowerment levels than other groups at the .01 level. 3) The guidelines consisted of professional development, confidence and capacity building, delegation and autonomy, morale and motivation and supportive working environment.

Keywords: Empowerment Teachers' Performance, Motivation, Professional Development, Educational Leadership, School Leadership, Secondary Education

Introduction

Education in the 21st century has undergone rapid economic, social and technological changes, significantly affecting the role of teachers as a key mechanism in improving educational quality. Teachers are no longer responsible only for transferring knowledge but are also expected to develop learners' competencies and essential skills necessary for living and competing in the modern world. Consequently, teachers must continuously adapt themselves to educational reforms, technological advancement and changing societal expectations. However, many teachers still encounter several limitations, including increasing workloads, insufficient supporting resources and limited opportunities for professional development. These challenges may reduce teachers' motivation, autonomy and empowerment in performing their duties, which can ultimately affect the effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as students' educational outcomes.

Thailand has established the 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) and the National Education Plan (2017-2036) both of which emphasize human resource development and educational quality improvement. The policies highlight the importance of developing teachers and educational personnel so that they are capable of organizing learning in accordance with social and technological changes. In this regard, teacher empowerment is considered an important mechanism for enhancing teachers' professional competencies, self-confidence and participation in organizational decision-making processes (Paengcharoen, 2019; Romsri et al., 2024).

Previous studies have consistently indicated that teacher empowerment positively influences teachers' work performance, organizational commitment and instructional effectiveness. Empowerment contributes to strengthening teachers' confidence, professional autonomy and participation in school administration processes, leading to improved educational outcomes (Sanukul, 2022). In addition, the promotion of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) has been recognized as an important approach for encouraging collaborative learning and professional development among teachers, while supportive leadership from school administrators plays a significant role in creating conducive working environments, delegating authority, providing motivation and ensuring adequate resource support (Kaewprom et al., 2023). Furthermore, Klinhom (2016) emphasized that limitations in professional development systems, particularly training programs that focus primarily on theoretical knowledge rather than practical application, together with insufficient supportive environments and limited professional resources, may hinder teachers' professional growth and empowerment.

Although the concept of teacher empowerment has been widely discussed, most previous studies have focused primarily on general educational contexts or national-level perspectives. There remains limited empirical evidence reflecting the specific context of the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen, which consists of schools located in both urban and rural areas with differences in school size, resources, opportunities for professional development and organizational support systems. In particular, schools in this educational area demonstrate substantial disparities in educational resources, technological accessibility, teacher workload and opportunities for professional development between urban and rural schools, especially among small- and medium-sized schools located in remote communities. Teachers in these schools are often required to perform multiple responsibilities beyond instructional duties due to limitations in personnel and institutional support systems, which may directly affect their motivation, autonomy and

professional effectiveness (Meerat, 2019). These contextual conditions may influence teachers' empowerment in different ways.

Moreover, previous studies have not clearly explained how factors such as position, work experience and school size contribute to differences in teacher empowerment levels within this specific educational context. Although teacher empowerment has been recognized as an important mechanism for improving teachers' professional competencies, confidence and instructional effectiveness (Paengcharoen, 2019; Sanukul, 2022; Romsri et al., 2024), empirical studies specifically examining teacher empowerment in schools under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen remain limited. Existing studies have largely emphasized general educational administration contexts without sufficiently addressing the unique organizational and socioeconomic characteristics of schools in Northeastern Thailand. Therefore, a research gap remains regarding the understanding of teacher empowerment in relation to contextual inequalities, organizational conditions and school environments within this educational service area.

In addition, the educational context of Ubon Ratchathani and Amnat Charoen is considered significant because the region contains schools with highly diverse contexts in terms of geography, community economy, school size and access to educational resources. Such diversity may lead to differences in teachers' professional experiences, participation in school administration and access to supportive environments for professional growth. Investigating teacher empowerment in this context is therefore essential for identifying key factors and effective approaches for enhancing teachers' professional capacity, strengthening supportive organizational environments and reducing educational inequality sustainably. The findings of this study may also provide useful empirical evidence for educational administrators and policymakers in formulating context-based strategies for teacher development and educational quality improvement at both regional and national levels.

Based on the problems and research gaps mentioned above, the objectives of this research were as follows:

1. To examine teachers' performance empowerment in schools under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen.
2. To compare teachers' performance empowerment classified by position, work experience and school size.
3. To propose guidelines for enhancing teachers' performance empowerment in schools under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen.

Literature Review

Concept of Teacher Empowerment

Teacher empowerment refers to the process of enhancing teachers' ability, authority and confidence in performing their professional roles effectively. Empowerment enables teachers to participate in decision-making, develop professional competence and improve their instructional practices. Empowered teachers are more motivated and committed to their work which leads to improved teaching performance and educational outcomes. Educational administrators play a crucial role in creating an environment that supports empowerment by providing opportunities for professional growth, collaboration and autonomy in instructional practices (Putra et al., 2020).

Teacher empowerment is also closely associated with leadership practices in schools. When school administrators adopt empowering leadership behaviors, teachers tend to

experience greater job satisfaction, professional commitment and work effectiveness. Empowerment allows teachers to take initiative, share responsibilities and actively contribute to school development (Özer & Çelikten, 2023).

Psychological Empowerment in Educational Organizations

Psychological empowerment is considered a key factor influencing teachers' motivation and performance in educational institutions. It reflects teachers' perceptions of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact in their work environment. When teachers feel psychologically empowered, they tend to demonstrate higher levels of creativity, engagement and commitment to teaching and learning processes (Ambad et al., 2021).

Previous studies have shown that psychological empowerment significantly contributes to teacher effectiveness and professional development. Teachers who perceive a strong sense of empowerment are more likely to engage in continuous learning and improve instructional quality in schools (Crispo, 2025).

Empowering Leadership in Educational Administration

Empowering leadership refers to leadership behaviors that delegate authority, encourage participation in decision-making and promote professional autonomy among teachers. School leaders who practice empowering leadership create an organizational climate that fosters trust, collaboration and professional growth among teachers (Kilag et al., 2024).

Research indicates that empowering leadership can improve teacher well-being and organizational commitment. It also reduces negative organizational behaviors and promotes a supportive working environment in schools (Okçu, Cemaloğlu, & Ay, 2025).

Motivation Theories Related to Teacher Empowerment

Several motivational theories provide a theoretical foundation for understanding teacher empowerment in educational organizations. Maslow's hierarchy of needs explains that individuals are motivated by the fulfillment of different levels of needs, ranging from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. In educational contexts, teachers who receive recognition, professional support and opportunities for self-development are more likely to achieve higher levels of job satisfaction and performance (Maslow, 1970).

Similarly, Herzberg's two-factor theory suggests that motivation in the workplace is influenced by both hygiene factors and motivational factors. Recognition, achievement and professional growth are key motivators that can enhance teachers' commitment and performance in educational institutions (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Teacher Professional Development and Empowerment

Professional development is another important element related to teacher empowerment. Continuous training and learning opportunities enable teachers to improve their knowledge, instructional skills and classroom management abilities. Effective professional development programs can strengthen teachers' professional capacity and promote lifelong learning (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020).

Furthermore, research indicates that teacher empowerment contributes significantly to school effectiveness and educational quality. Empowered teachers tend to collaborate more actively, share knowledge with colleagues and contribute to school improvement initiatives (Burhan & Khan, 2024).

Research Methodology

This study employed quantitative research with qualitative data collection to investigate teachers' performance empowerment under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office.

Population

The population used in this field research consisted of school administrators and teachers under the jurisdiction of the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen, covering 81 schools. The population included 211 school administrators and 3,494 teachers with a total of 3,705 participants.

Sample

The sample used in this study consisted of school administrators and teachers under the jurisdiction of the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen in the academic year 2025, totaling 349 participants. The sampling procedures were as follows

1.The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table (Srisawat, 2017). From the total population of 3,705 individuals, a sample of 349 participants was obtained.

2.Stratified random sampling was employed, using school size as the stratification criterion, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Population and Sample Distribution

School Size	Position				Total	
	Administrators		Teachers			
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
Small	9	1	54	6	63	7
Medium	83	8	912	86	995	94
Large	52	5	828	78	880	83
Extra-large	67	6	1,700	159	1,767	165
Total	**211**	**20**	**3,494**	**329**	**3,705**	**349**

3.The target group for structured interviews consisted of 8 participants, including 4 school administrators and 4 teachers. They were selected using purposive sampling. The selection criteria were as follows.

1. holding positions as school administrators or teachers and

2. having recognized and outstanding achievements that reflect teacher empowerment, including being acknowledged or awarded for excellence in school administration, teaching, or professional development.

The interview participants were sufficient to achieve data saturation and provide diverse perspectives from both administrators and teachers. The questionnaire demonstrated acceptable content validity with IOC values ranging from 0.80 to 1.00.

Research Instruments

The research instruments consisted of two types.

1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to examine the empowerment of teachers' performance. It consisted of three sections.

Part 1 General information of respondents including position, work experience and school size.

Part 2 A five-point Likert scale questionnaire measuring teachers' performance empowerment across five aspects.

1. delegation and autonomy,
2. confidence and capacity building,
3. morale and motivation,
4. supportive working environment, and
5. professional training and development.

The questionnaire contained 48 items. The questionnaire consisted of five aspects and was designed using a five-point Likert scale. The rating levels were defined as follows.

5 = The empowerment of teachers' performance was at the highest level.
4 = The empowerment of teachers' performance was at the high level.
3 = The empowerment of teachers' performance was at the moderate level.
2 = The empowerment of teachers' performance was at the low level.
1 = The empowerment of teachers' performance was at the lowest level

2. Structured Interview

A structured interview was used to gather additional qualitative data regarding guidelines for enhancing teachers' performance empowerment.

Instrument Quality

The questionnaire was examined for content validity by experts using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) with values ranging from 0.80 to 1.00. The instrument was then piloted with administrators and teachers outside the sample group. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient which yielded a reliability value of 0.98, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Data Collection

Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to the selected administrators and teachers in the sample schools. After collecting the completed questionnaires, the data were checked for completeness before proceeding to statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics including percentage, mean and standard deviation to describe the general characteristics of the data. Differences in teachers' performance empowerment were analyzed using t-tests and F-tests. Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed through content analysis to identify guidelines for enhancing teachers' empowerment in educational institutions.

Research Finding

Part 1 Results of Data Analysis.

The results of the data analysis regarding the demographic characteristics of the respondents, classified by position, work experience and school size were analyzed using frequency and percentage as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Number And Percentage of Respondents Classified by Position, Work Experience and School Size.

Category	Number	Percentage
1. Position		
School Administrators	20	5.73
Teachers	329	94.27
Total	**349**	**100**
2. Work Experience		
Less than 5 years	55	15.75
5-10 years	111	31.81
More than 10 years	183	52.44
Total	**349**	**100**
3. School Size		
Small schools (119 students or fewer)	7	2.01
Medium schools (120-719 students)	94	26.93
Large schools (720-1,679 students)	83	23.78
Extra-large schools (1,680 students or more)	165	47.28
Total	**349**	**100**

Results from Table 2 show that the total number of respondents was 349. When classified by position, the majority were teachers, accounting for 94.27 percent, while school administrators accounted for 5.73 percent, respectively.

In terms of work experience, most respondents had more than 10 years of experience, representing 52.44 percent, followed by those with 5-10 years of experience at 31.81 percent, and those with less than 5 years of experience at 15.75 percent, respectively.

Regarding school size, most respondents were from extra-large schools, accounting for 47.28 percent, followed by medium-sized schools at 26.93 percent, large schools at 23.78 percent, and small schools at 2.01 percent, respectively.

Part 2 Results of the Data Analysis on the Empowerment of Teachers' Performance under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office.

The results of the data analysis regarding the empowerment of teachers' performance under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office were classified into five aspects are delegation and autonomy, confidence and capacity building, morale and motivation, supportive working environment and professional training and development.

The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The analysis was conducted both overall and by each aspect, as presented in Tables 3.

Table 3: Mean And Standard Deviation of Teachers' Performance Empowerment Under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office (Overall).

Teachers' Performance Empowerment	Mean	S.D.	Level	Rank
Delegation and autonomy	4.46	0.53	High	3
Confidence and capacity building	4.51	0.56	Highest	2
Morale and motivation	4.45	0.67	High	4
Supportive working environment	4.42	0.62	High	5
Professional training and development	4.51	0.55	Highest	1
Overall	**4.48**	**0.50**	**High**	

Table 3 shows that school administrators and teachers perceived the overall level of teachers' performance empowerment as high (Mean = 4.48).

When considering each aspect individually, the aspect with the highest mean score was professional training and development (Mean = 4.51), followed by confidence and capacity building (Mean = 4.51), both at the highest level.

The aspect with the lowest mean score was supportive working environment (Mean = 4.42), which was still at the high level.

Part 3 Comparative Analysis of Teachers' Performance Empowerment under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office, classified by position, work experience and school size.

The comparison based on position was analyzed using the t-test. Meanwhile, the variables of work experience and school size were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) by calculating the F-statistic (F-test), as presented in Tables 4-8.

Table 4: Comparison Of Teachers' Performance Empowerment Under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office Classified by Position.

No.	Teachers' Performance Empowerment	School Administrators (n=20)		Teachers (n=329)		t	p
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
1	Delegation and autonomy	4.59	.42	4.45	.53	-1.18	.23
2	Confidence and capacity building	4.78	.35	4.50	.57	-2.30	.02*
3	Morale and motivation	4.80	.32	4.42	.68	-2.56	.01**
4	Supportive working environment	4.74	.31	4.39	.63	-2.54	.01**
5	Professional training and development	4.68	.33	4.50	.56	-1.50	.13
Overall		**4.72**	**.30**	**4.47**	**.51**	**-2.28**	**.02***

*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01

Table 4 indicates that school administrators and teachers with different positions had different opinions regarding the empowerment of teachers' performance under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office.

The overall results and individual aspects showed statistically significant differences at the .05 level.

When considering each aspect, Aspect 3: Morale and motivation and Aspect 4: Supportive working environment showed statistically significant differences at the .01 level.

In addition, Aspect 2: Confidence and capacity building showed a statistically significant difference at the .05 level.

However, Aspect 1: Delegation and autonomy and Aspect 5: Professional training and development showed no statistically significant differences.

Table 5: Comparison of the Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Performance Empowerment Under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office Classified by Work Experience.

No.	Teachers' Performance Empowerment	Less than 5 years (n=55)		5–10 years (n=111)		More than 10 yesrs (n=183)	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Delegation and autonomy	4.24	.51	4.34	.63	4.60	.42
2	Confidence and capacity building	4.52	.42	4.45	.70	4.55	.50
3	Morale and motivation	4.44	.48	4.38	.87	4.49	.56
4	Supportive working environment	4.47	.43	4.28	.76	4.48	.56
5	Professional training and development	4.58	.41	4.24	.63	4.66	.46
Overall		**4.45**	**.39**	**4.36**	**.61**	**4.57**	**.44**

Table 5 shows that school administrators and teachers with more than 10 years of work experience had the highest overall opinions regarding teachers' performance empowerment which was at the highest level (Mean = 4.57).

The second highest group was respondents with less than 5 years of work experience, whose opinions regarding teachers' performance empowerment were at the high level (Mean = 4.45).

The group with the lowest mean score was respondents with 5-10 years of work experience, whose opinions regarding teachers' performance empowerment were also at the high level (Mean = 4.36).

Table 6: Analysis of Variance of Teacher Empowerment Performance Under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen, Classified by Work Experience.

Aspects Of Teacher Empowerment	Source of Variance	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Delegation and Autonomy	Between Groups	2	7.68	3.84	14.80	.00**
	Within Groups	345	89.28	.26		
	Total	**347**	**96.96**			
Confidence and Capacity Building	Between Groups	2	.68	.34	1.08	.34
	Within Groups	344	108.47	.32		
	Total	**346**	**109.15**			
Morale and Motivation	Between Groups	2	.85	.43	.96	.38
	Within Groups	345	152.54	.44		
	Total	**347**	**153.39**			
Supportive Working Environment	Between Groups	2	3.01	1.51	3.96	.02*
	Within Groups	345	131.08	.38		
	Total	**347**	**134.09**			

Aspects Of Teacher Empowerment	Source of Variance	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Professional Training and Development	Between Groups	2	12.50	6.25	23.40	.00**
	Within Groups	346	92.30	.27		
	Total	**348**	**104.80**			
Overall	**Between Groups**	**2**	**3.20**	**1.60**	**6.59**	**.00****
	Within Groups	**342**	**83.09**	**.24**		
	Total	**346**	**86.29**			

*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01

From Table 6, it was found that the comparison of school administrators and teachers with different work experience revealed differences in their opinions regarding teacher empowerment performance under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani - Amnat Charoen. Overall and by individual aspects, the level of teacher empowerment performance showed statistically significant differences at the .01 level.

When considering each aspect, Aspect 1 (Delegation and Autonomy) and Aspect 5 (Professional Training and Development) showed statistically significant differences at the .01 level. Aspect 4 (Supportive Working Environment) showed a statistically significant difference at the .05 level. However, Aspect 2 (Confidence and Capacity Building) and Aspect 3 (Morale and Motivation) showed no significant differences.

Table 7: Comparison of Teachers' Performance Empowerment Under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office Classified by School Size.

Teachers' Performance Empowerment	Small School (n=7)		Medium School (n=94)		Large School (n=83)		Extra-Large School (n=165)	
	Mean	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**
Delegation and autonomy	4.57	.53	4.31	.64	4.38	.48	4.58	.46
Confidence and capacity building	4.64	.64	4.40	.67	4.51	.54	4.58	.49
Morale and motivation	4.66	.74	4.39	.76	4.40	.64	4.49	.62
Supportive working environment	4.64	.69	4.34	.67	4.35	.64	4.48	.58
Professional training and development	4.44	.72	4.36	.63	4.43	.51	4.64	.48
Overall	**4.59**	**.64**	**4.36**	**.60**	**4.43**	**.48**	**4.57**	**.42**

Table 7 indicates that school administrators and teachers in small schools had the highest overall opinions regarding teachers' performance empowerment which was at the highest level (Mean = 4.59).

The second highest group was extra-large schools, which also reported teachers' performance empowerment at the highest level (Mean = 4.57).

The group with the lowest mean score was medium-sized schools, whose level of teachers' performance empowerment was at the high level (Mean = 4.36).

Table 8: Analysis of Variance of Teacher Empowerment Performance Under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani - Amnat Charoen, Classified by School Size

Teacher Empowerment Performance	Source Of Variance	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Delegation and Autonomy	Between Groups	3	5.15	1.72	6.43	.00**
	Within Groups	344	91.82	.27		
	Total	**347**	**96.97**			
Confidence and Capacity Building	Between Groups	3	1.99	.66	2.12	.09
	Within Groups	343	101.17	.31		
	Total	**346**	**103.16**			
Morale and Motivation	Between Groups	3	1.15	.38	.87	.46
	Within Groups	344	152.24	.44		
	Total	**347**	**153.39**			
Supportive Working Environment	Between Groups	3	1.89	.63	1.64	.18
	Within Groups	344	132.20	.38		
	Total	**347**	**134.09**			
Professional Training and Development	Between Groups	3	5.56	1.86	6.45	.00**
	Within Groups	345	99.27	.29		
	Total	**348**	**104.83**			
Overall	**Between Groups**	**3**	**3.01**	**1.00**	**4.10**	**.00****
	Within Groups	**341**	**83.28**	**.24**		
	Total	**344**	**86.29**			

**$p \leq 0.01$

From Table 8, it was found that the comparison of school administrators and teachers from different school sizes revealed differences in their opinions regarding teacher empowerment performance under the Secondary Educational Service Area Office Ubon Ratchathani-Amnat Charoen. Overall and by individual aspects, the level of teacher empowerment performance showed statistically significant differences at the .01 level.

When considering each aspect, Aspect 1 (Delegation and Autonomy) and Aspect 5 (Professional Training and Development) showed statistically significant differences at the .01 level. However, Aspect 2 (Confidence and Capacity Building), Aspect 3 (Morale and Motivation), and Aspect 4 (Supportive Working Environment) showed no significant differences.

Part 4 Results of the Content Analysis from Open-Ended Questions and Structured Interviews.

Delegation and Autonomy. Schools applied decentralized management by assigning responsibilities according to teachers' roles and allowing participation in instructional decision-making. Administrators trusted teachers' professional judgment and encouraged innovation within educational regulations and standards.

Confidence and Capacity Building. Administrators strengthened teachers' confidence through important responsibilities, teamwork and mentoring systems. Schools also provided learning resources and technological support to enhance teachers' professional capabilities.

Morale and Motivation. Schools promoted recognition, positive communication and regular encouragement from administrators. These practices created a supportive climate that enhanced teachers' motivation, commitment and professional dedication.

Supportive Working Environment. Schools emphasized safe, clean and collaborative working environments. The use of technology, such as online documentation systems and virtual meetings, helped reduce administrative workload and supported teaching effectiveness.

Professional Training and Development. Schools supported continuous professional development through training, seminars, classroom research and learning innovation. Professional development was linked to the performance appraisal (PA) system and included the integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) to support sustainable professional growth.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that school administrators play an important role in promoting and systematically developing teachers' potential in schools under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office. Empowerment in this context reflects not only the delegation of responsibilities but also an organizational culture that values professional autonomy, participation in decision-making and continuous development. This finding supports Sangchoei (2015) who emphasized that empowerment enhances individuals' confidence, abilities and autonomy in organizational performance.

Delegation and autonomy were found at a high level, suggesting that administrators increasingly adopt participative and decentralized leadership approaches in response to educational reforms and the complexity of instructional management. Teachers who participate in planning and decision-making are more likely to develop responsibility and commitment toward organizational goals. This finding is consistent with Sangchoei (2015) and Yao and Ma (2024) who found that distributed leadership positively influences teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. From Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), delegation and autonomy can also be interpreted as motivational factors that strengthen intrinsic motivation and professional engagement.

Confidence and capacity building received the highest mean score among all dimensions. This may indicate that teachers perceive strong administrative support through trust, encouragement and opportunities for professional learning. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1970), professional recognition and development may fulfill esteem and self-actualization needs, encouraging teachers to achieve their professional potential. This finding is consistent with Chonlawit (2015) and Bamrungrat (2020) who emphasized that empowerment and administrative support contribute to teachers' competence and work performance. However, although statistical differences were found, the effect size was moderate, suggesting that teacher empowerment is influenced by multiple contextual and individual factors.

Morale, motivation and supportive working environments were also rated at a high level. According to Herzberg's theory (Herzberg et al., 1959) supportive working conditions primarily function as hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction rather than directly increase intrinsic motivation. This may imply that supportive environments alone are insufficient to sustain long-term teacher motivation unless teachers genuinely experience autonomy, recognition and meaningful participation in organizational processes. This finding is consistent with Phuengphop et al. (2021) and Bussaro (2018) who highlighted the importance of supportive environments and adequate resources in enhancing teachers' performance and motivation.

However, supportive working environment received the lowest mean score among all dimensions. This may reflect structural limitations in rural and medium-sized schools where educational resources, staffing and technological support remain insufficient. Teachers often experience heavy workloads, including administrative documentation, policy-driven tasks and student support responsibilities in addition to classroom instruction. Such conditions may reduce opportunities for collaboration, innovation and professional learning. Therefore, although empowerment policies may formally exist, their implementation may not fully

respond to teachers' actual working conditions. The relatively lower mean score and modest effect size suggest that improving working environments requires long-term structural support and resource allocation rather than short-term administrative interventions alone.

Professional training and development were rated at a very high level, indicating that schools strongly emphasize continuous professional learning through training, seminars and educational innovation. According to Maslow's theory (Maslow, 1970) continuous professional development may support teachers' self-actualization and professional growth. This finding is consistent with Donjantrakot (2020) who stated that continuous professional development enhances professional competence and work quality.

Furthermore, administrators reported higher levels of empowerment than teachers. This difference may result from differences in organizational roles and daily experiences. Administrators may perceive that empowerment systems are sufficiently implemented, whereas teachers may still encounter practical limitations related to workload, time constraints and resource availability. This reflects a gap between policy expectations and operational realities. The finding is consistent with Panyasit (2018), who emphasized that empowerment can only be fully achieved when individuals genuinely perceive autonomy and participation in organizational processes.

Conclusion

This study investigated the level of teacher performance empowerment in schools under the Ubon Ratchathani Amnat Charoen Secondary Educational Service Area Office and examined differences based on position, work experience and school size. The results indicated that teacher empowerment was overall at a high level with professional training and development ranked as the highest dimension, followed by confidence and capacity building, delegation and autonomy, morale and motivation and supportive working environment.

Comparative analysis showed significant differences in certain aspects of empowerment according to position, work experience and school size. In addition, qualitative findings revealed that effective empowerment practices include delegating responsibilities, promoting teamwork, recognizing teachers' achievements, providing supportive working conditions and encouraging continuous professional development. These practices contribute to improving teachers' performance, strengthening professional commitment and enhancing the overall effectiveness and sustainability of educational institutions.and sustainable development within educational institutions.

Suggestion

Recommendations for Implementation

The findings revealed that morale and motivation as well as supportive working environments had lower mean scores than other aspects. Therefore, school administrators should implement clear and practical policies to enhance teachers' morale through fair recognition systems, performance-based rewards and continuous feedback.

Administrators should also foster supportive working environments by promoting open communication, reducing unnecessary hierarchical barriers and encouraging collaboration through Professional Learning Communities (PLC). In addition, concrete measures should be taken to support teachers' work–life balance, such as reducing non-teaching workloads.

In line with the interview findings, schools should adopt artificial intelligence (AI) and digital systems to manage administrative tasks, such as document preparation, data management and reporting, in order to reduce workload and "return teachers to the classroom."

Furthermore, schools, especially medium-sized and rural schools, should be provided with sufficient resources and technological support to create safe, well-equipped, and effective working environments.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should employ in-depth qualitative approaches, such as case studies or phenomenological studies, focusing on schools that demonstrate best practices in enhancing teachers' morale and motivation. These schools can serve as model cases to develop practical frameworks or guidelines that can be adapted and applied in other educational contexts.

Additionally, future studies may examine the impact of digital technologies and AI implementation on teacher empowerment and work efficiency to further expand knowledge in this area.

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