

Designing a Teacher Empowerment Model in the Educational System of Iraq

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Abstract

This research was conducted with the aim of designing a teacher empowerment model for Iraq, relying on a thematic analysis approach. The present study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews and credible texts as data collection tools. The statistical population includes education experts in Iraq and specialists related to the topic from the faculties of educational sciences and educational management at universities in Iraq, selected through purposeful sampling and theoretical saturation, totaling twenty individuals. The software used in this research was the qualitative software MAXQDA-2020. The approach utilized was based on thematic analysis as per the method of Attride-Stirling (2011). The findings indicated that the teacher empowerment model consists of six dimensions: self-efficacy (covering components of mastery experiences, self-regulation, self-reflection, and vicarious learning), participatory decision-making (covering components of group decision-making, team building, and delegation of authority), instructional design (covering components of multimedia production, educational assessment, lesson planning, content analysis, and content development), psychological empowerment (covering components of competency development, autonomy, influence, and trust), professional development (covering components of future studies, improvement of teaching methods and classroom management, creative thinking, and professional knowledge development), and smart education (covering components of artificial intelligence, digital content, and media literacy), encompassing 23 components. The validity of the identified components was examined and confirmed using Guba and Lincoln's four-part criteria. The credibility of the model was also examined and confirmed through a focus group. Based on the findings, it can be said that the attention of education stakeholders to the identified indicators in this research is instrumental in improving teacher effectiveness. Designing a teacher empowerment model within the Iraqi educational system necessitates a comprehensive approach, considering the unique socio-political context and existing infrastructure. This model should prioritize professional development, decentralized decision-making, and enhanced resource allocation to foster a supportive environment for educators. Ultimately, successful implementation of such a model will contribute to improved teacher morale, retention, and pedagogical effectiveness, leading to enhanced student outcomes.

Key Words: Teacher Empowerment, Educational System, Thematic Analysis

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Introduction

One of the keys to success in today's schools is having capable and qualified teachers who possess the ability to influence and impact classroom processes, thereby creating a competitive advantage and distinguishing a school from others. With the dawn of the knowledge-based economy, a new paradigm has emerged regarding the role of human resources, particularly knowledge-based or knowledge-driven human resources. The education organization needs an approach that not only assists them in areas such as recruitment and hiring, salaries and wages, benefits, and rewards but also guides them at higher levels of human resources, such as career pathways, skill development, training, job enrichment, integrated performance management, teacher empowerment, teacher relationships, psychological well-being, and more, to cultivate exceptional human resources.

Today, empowering teachers plays a vital and challenging role in education because they are responsible for guiding and managing the operational level of the educational system, namely the classroom. Given the rapid and continuous changes in the fields of technology, social networks, artificial intelligence, and virtual education, empowering teachers has become highly significant to cope with these changes and transformations. Teacher empowerment is a transformative approach that emphasizes independence, collaboration, and innovation within teamwork and group participation. It creates an environment where team members are encouraged to take responsibility for their work, feel committed to others, and strive for collective success. This, in turn, enhances autonomy and self-confidence and fosters innovative solutions to problems, as individuals feel a greater sense of responsibility for their contributions. This working style leads to open communication and collaboration among teachers, improving their efficiency and innovation. Teacher empowerment transforms the school culture from a traditional hierarchical model to a collaborative model that values cooperation and participation among teachers. In this context, risks are viewed as opportunities for learning and growth, thereby fostering a culture of innovation. Research also indicates that empowering teachers positively impacts their innovation through mediating factors such as team processes and participation. Leaders who adopt this style can significantly enhance the innovative capabilities of their teams. In this framework, leaders act as facilitators rather than decision-makers. They create an environment where team members can experiment with their creativity and express new ideas without fear of management or its consequences, leading to significant achievements and greater satisfaction. To effectively implement a teacher empowerment program, administrators should focus on clear communication, set achievable goals, provide necessary resources, and encourage a culture where risk-taking is supported and failures are seen as learning opportunities (Van et al., 2023).

Empowered teachers are recognized as a crucial factor in enhancing teamwork and innovation in the classroom. They engage students through participation and team activities, sharing power with students in the classroom, which increases intrinsic motivation and engagement in work. Component theory indicates that teacher empowerment can strengthen skills related to creativity and innovation, leading to increased motivation and innovation in the classroom. Studies consistently show a

positive relationship between teacher empowerment and their innovation, creativity, and performance. It has also been demonstrated that teacher empowerment is positively related to innovation, creative performance, and creativity in the classroom. Other studies have shown that teacher empowerment has an indirect relationship with team creative performance through coordinated enthusiasm and obsessive enthusiasm. Another study discovered a positive relationship between teacher empowerment and their innovation (Hsu et al., 2023).

Teachers in schools exhibit varying levels of management empowerment influenced by administrative structures, policies, and external pressures. Teacher empowerment leads to transformative behaviors that result in increased job satisfaction, higher commitment, and improved effectiveness. Empowered teachers align school goals with regional educational objectives, leading to a focused and coherent approach to improving teaching and learning processes in the school. A positive school culture nurtures teacher participation through teacher empowerment, resulting in higher levels of organizational commitment, improved academic progress, and enhanced collaboration among teachers. Stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes increases the overall effectiveness of the school by instilling a sense of ownership and support for school initiatives. This study emphasizes the importance of educational teacher empowerment and urges policymakers to create supportive structures and policies that grant teachers greater autonomy. Professional development programs focusing on transformative teacher behaviors can enhance empowerment and ultimately foster a positive work environment, guiding teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Kilag et al., 2023).

Empowering teachers means strengthening and developing their skills, knowledge, and capabilities within the school and classroom so that they can effectively face the challenges and issues ahead and improve the educational system. One of the main reasons for empowering teachers in education is the emphasis on new needs and changes in the field of education. Teacher empowerment can have significant positive impacts on the quality of education. Some of the main effects of teacher empowerment on educational quality include: designing better and more suitable educational programs; improving teaching and learning methods; conducting accurate and comprehensive evaluations of schools and their members; professional development for teachers and educational staff; and creating an effective organizational culture for learning, improvement, and growth within schools. Overall, empowering teachers in education can lead to improved educational program design, enhanced teaching methods, better evaluation and oversight, human resource development, and the establishment of an effective organizational culture in schools. These impacts promote the improvement of educational quality and will have a positive outcome on student and school performance.

Previous research findings in this area indicate that the average level of teacher empowerment is at a medium to low level, which requires further examination and attention (Safari, 2019). In this regard, many studies have targeted teacher empowerment from various perspectives. For example, the management of teacher empowerment (Arbabian et al., 2020), empowering teachers' managerial skills

(Barzegar et al., 2020), and empowering educational teachers (Bagheri et al., 2020; Kargar et al., 2020). Karami et al. (2023) demonstrated in a study that productivity is one of the indicators of educational management performance. According to the findings, 74 indicators within 18 components influenced the productivity of education, and the components were structured at six levels. The components of teacher training and education, structural factors, teacher empowerment, and organizational knowledge management were placed at the sixth level (foundational level). Providing the environment and opportunities for the growth and flourishing of teachers, decentralization, and organizational incentives facilitate teacher empowerment and will lead towards a productive organization.

Brown et al (2025) emerging frameworks propose leveraging digital technologies and data-driven strategies to tailor empowerment initiatives, thereby promoting adaptive and resilient educational communities.

Lee et al. (2025) explores the incorporation of technology-driven pedagogical tools within empowerment frameworks, which significantly enhance teachers' instructional capacity and engagement.

Smith and Johnson (2024) underscore that teacher empowerment progressively correlates with increased job satisfaction and pedagogical innovation, fostering an environment conducive to continuous improvement

Martínez and Choi (2024) investigate systemic barriers to teacher empowerment, suggesting policy reforms at both institutional and governmental levels to create sustainable empowerment structures. These scholarly contributions collectively inform the design of innovative teacher empowerment models, underscoring the necessity of contextualized approaches tailored to contemporary educational challenges.

Esmaeili-Ahendani et al (2023) demonstrated in a study that the career development and promotion of teachers require the adoption of strategies aligned with the mission of education. Teachers are recognized as the main factor in the success and development of an educational system. Educational systems that can act intelligently in the development of their human resources ensure their survival and take significant steps toward fulfilling their mission.

Van et al (2023) showed in their research that empowering teachers can lead to work engagement. However, this process may be influenced by the cultural values and beliefs of teachers. The findings indicated that teacher empowerment has a positive correlation with work commitment and psychological empowerment partially explains the relationship between teacher empowerment and work engagement.

Hsu et al (2023) found in a study that team processes fully mediated the positive relationship between empowering teachers and team innovation, while team participation completely mediated the positive relationship between teacher empowerment and team innovation. The positive covariance of team processes and team participation helped stimulate the positive effect of teacher empowerment on team innovation.

Supriyanto et al (2023) revealed in their research that teacher empowerment includes delegation of authority, participation in decision-making, informing teachers

about regulations, becoming a role model, expressing concern, and interacting with team members. Organizational innovation is the ability to create and adopt new ideas or behaviors; therefore, leaders tend to promote knowledge sharing by generating useful new ideas and thoughts. The results showed that teacher empowerment directly impacts organizational innovation, while knowledge sharing mediates the effect of teacher empowerment on individual creativity, but it could not mediate the effect of teacher empowerment on organizational innovation.

Kilag et al (2023) state that transformative teacher behaviors endorsed by school leaders positively impact teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness. A positive school culture, fostered through empowering management, significantly contributes to higher levels of organizational commitment and academic progress. Furthermore, stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes enhances the overall effectiveness of the school, as it instills a sense of ownership and support for school initiatives. This research emphasizes the importance of empowering educational teachers and urges policymakers to create supportive structures and policies that grant school leaders greater autonomy. Professional development programs tailored to focus on transformative teacher behaviors can further strengthen management empowerment and ultimately foster a positive work environment, enhancing teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Ahmad et al (2022) demonstrated in a study that the positive impact of empowered teacher behaviors on goal clarity, self-efficacy, and job performance is evident. Additionally, the 2019 bootstrap analysis showed that goal clarity and self-efficacy mediate the effect of empowered teacher behaviors on their job performance. Therefore, existing study results indicate that empowering teachers is significantly related to their job performance, with goal clarity and self-efficacy serving as mediators at the academic level of higher education institutions in Sindh, Pakistan. Their main research question evaluates the impacts of teacher empowerment on their job performance through the mediation of goal clarity and self-efficacy.

In line with the aforementioned points, it can be said that empowering teachers in education can lead to improvements in curriculum design, enhancement of educational methods, advancement of assessment and monitoring, development of human resources, and the establishment of an effective organizational culture. These impacts promote the quality of education and will have a positive outcome on student and school performance. Therefore, this research seeks to find answers to the question of what dimensions and components the model of teacher empowerment in the education system of Iraq encompasses?

Research Methodology

This research falls under the category of fundamental research in terms of its objectives, and it is classified as qualitative research, specifically a thematic analysis based on the method of Attride-Stirling (2011). To collect data, semi-structured interviews were utilized to obtain in-depth information. The participants in the study included five academic experts in the field of education and fifteen managers and teachers from the education sector in Iraq. The criteria for their inclusion were familiarity with the teaching profession and having at least 15 years of experience in

this field. Theoretical sampling, in the context of designing a Teacher Empowerment Model for the Iraqi educational system, involves iteratively selecting participants and data sources based on emerging theoretical constructs to refine and develop the model. The sampling method for this section was theoretical, and a total of 20 interviews were conducted until theoretical saturation was reached. To ensure the credibility of the findings, both the concepts and the coding methods were reviewed, and all stages of coding were shared with some participants of the study (5 individuals) and several external professors (6 professors) in the field of teacher empowerment. The suggestions and critiques they provided were taken into account.

As mentioned, semi-structured interviews were used for the research, with the guiding question being, "What factors can play a role in empowering teachers and improving their capabilities?" The interviews were conducted in person and individually. Initially, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants, and in line with ethical considerations, they were asked to indicate their consent if they wished for their interview recordings to be made. The interviewer listened attentively to the participants' statements and experiences, noting important points and other details at that moment, and whenever there was an unclear point, a sincere request for clarification was made. Each interview lasted approximately between 25 to 40 minutes ($M: 31.75 \pm 5.67$). After each interview, the texts were analyzed and reviewed.

Data analysis was conducted at three levels: basic themes, organizing themes, and overarching themes. In the basic themes, all words or sentences were taken into account. This stage concluded with the elimination of similar themes, resulting in 60 categories (Table 1). In the stage of developing organizing themes, all basic themes were organized into 23 core categories, and the final stage, which involved constructing overarching themes, was shaped based on the core theme of the main research, namely "empowering teachers," which has a more abstract aspect. The stages of the coding process are mentioned in Table 2, and the final model is illustrated and described in Figure 1. The software used in this research was the qualitative software MAXQDA-2020.

Findings

An examination of the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study revealed that the participants were aged between 36 and 58, with a mean age of 45.20 ± 7.17 . There were 17 married individuals and 3 single individuals. In terms of educational level, 15 participants had a bachelor's degree, 3 had a master's degree, and 2 had a doctoral degree.

Table 1. Identified basic themes

Identified Codes		
- Reducing Apathy in the Classroom	- Appropriate Interaction	-Failure or Successful Experiences
- Increasing Decision-Making Effectiveness	- Strategic Thinking	- Expanding Experiences
- Gaining Trust of Subordinates	- SOWT Analysis	- Setting Goals
	- Creating Change in School	- Efforts to Expand Capabilities
	- Implementing New Teaching Models	- Ability to Recognize Success
	- Creative Teaching	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilizing Experiences and Expertise - Enhancing Communication Among Individuals - Creating Synergy - Building Trust with Subordinates - Utilizing Everyone's Abilities - Increasing Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanding Creativity - Institutionalizing Creativity - Broadening and Expanding Professional Knowledge - Creating New Knowledge - Applying New Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believing in One's Own Abilities - Individual's Understanding of Their Own Abilities - Social Comparison Regarding One's Own Abilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilizing Artificial Intelligence - Expanding Experiences with the Help of Artificial Intelligence - Designing Digital Content - Implementing Digital Content - Editing Digital Content - Understanding Media - Analyzing Media - Utilizing Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respecting Competence - Expanding the Scope of Competence - Maintaining Teacher Autonomy - Teacher Professional Independence - Preserving Teacher Authority - Maintaining Teacher Influence - Modeling After Teachers - Strengthening Trust - Collaborative Decision-Making - Honesty and Integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using Various Media in Education - Analyzing Various Media in Education - Encouraging Multimedia Teaching - Assessing Educational Impacts - Recognizing Educational Deficiencies - Revising and Improving Programs - Appropriately Using Teaching Models - Multimedia Teaching - Recognizing Positive and Negative Aspects of Content - Content Continuity - Decision-Making Regarding Content - Unity of Purpose in Content - Adjusting Content for Education - Unity Between Content Implementation and Education

Table 2. Identified basic, organizing, and comprehensive themes

Core	Comprehensive Themes	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Empowering Teachers	Self-efficacy	Experiences at the level of mastery, self-regulation, self-reflection, vicarious learning	Failure or successful experiences, expanding experiences, setting goals, striving to enhance abilities, ability to recognize success, believing in one's own abilities, self-perception regarding one's abilities, social comparison about one's abilities
	Professional Development	Foresight, improving classroom methods and practices, creative thinking, professional development	Appropriate interaction, strategic thinking, SWOT analysis, implementing change through new patterns, creative teaching, expanding creativity, institutionalizing creativity, broadening and expanding professional knowledge, creating new knowledge, applying new knowledge

	Participatory Decision-Making	Group decision-making, team building, delegation of authority	Reducing the scope of indifference in the classroom, increasing decision-making effectiveness, gaining the trust of subordinates, utilizing experiences and expertise, enhancing interpersonal communications, creating synergy, building trust with subordinates, leveraging everyone's abilities, increasing accountability
	Educational Design	Multimedia production, educational assessment, lesson planning, content analysis, content development	Using various media in education, analyzing different media in education, encouraging multimedia teaching, determining the extent of educational impacts, recognizing educational deficiencies, revising and improving programs, appropriately using teaching patterns, multimedia teaching, recognizing the positive and negative aspects of content, content continuity, decision-making regarding content, unity of purpose in content, adjusting content for education, coherence between content execution and teaching
	Psychological Empowerment	Competence development, autonomy, influence, trust	Respecting competence, expanding the scope of competence, maintaining teacher autonomy, professional independence of teachers, preserving teacher authority, maintaining teacher influence, modeling after teachers, strengthening trust, participatory decision-making, honesty and integrity
	Smartification	Artificial intelligence, digital content, media literacy	Using artificial intelligence, expanding experiences with the help of artificial intelligence, designing digital content, utilizing digital content, editing digital content, recognizing media, analyzing media, employing media

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is one of the most important factors in human success across various areas of life. This concept refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve goals. In fact, self-efficacy determines how much motivation and perseverance a person has when facing challenges and problems. According to Table (1), the organizing themes of experiences at the mastery level, self-regulation, self-reflection, vicarious learning, and foundational themes of failure or successful experiences, expanding experiences, goal setting, striving to enhance abilities, the ability to recognize success, believing in one's abilities, self-perception of capability, and social comparison regarding one's abilities play a role in the self-efficacy of teachers. This is illustrated as follows:

- Mastery Experiences: Experiences in which an individual achieves success contribute to increasing their self-efficacy. Teachers are no exception to this rule. When a teacher succeeds in their duties and observes positive outcomes, their belief in their abilities increases.

- **Self-Regulation:** Self-regulation refers to an individual's ability to control and manage their behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. Teachers with high self-regulation can better cope with their professional challenges and achieve their goals. This, in turn, enhances their self-efficacy.

- **Self-Reflection:** Self-reflection refers to an individual's ability to think about and evaluate their performance. Teachers who regularly reflect on their performance and identify their strengths and weaknesses can continuously improve their abilities. This contributes to increasing their self-efficacy.

Substitutive Learning: Substitutive learning refers to learning through observing the behavior of others. Teachers can learn new skills and strategies by observing the successful behaviors of other teachers, thereby increasing their self-efficacy.

- **Successful and Failed Experiences:** Successful experiences lead to an increase in self-efficacy, while failed experiences result in a decrease. Like others, teachers use their successful experiences to bolster their belief in their abilities and strive to compensate when faced with failure.

- **Expanding Experiences:** The more experiences teachers have in various fields, the greater their self-efficacy becomes. New experiences help teachers learn new skills and confront new challenges.

- **Goal Setting:** Setting specific and achievable goals helps teachers maintain greater motivation for effort and endeavor. When teachers achieve their goals, their self-efficacy increases.

- **Efforts to Expand Abilities:** Teachers who consistently strive to expand their abilities have higher self-efficacy. These teachers are always seeking to learn and improve their skills.

- **Ability to Recognize Success:** Teachers who can identify and evaluate their successes have greater self-efficacy. These teachers trust themselves and their abilities, using their successes to enhance motivation and further effort.

- **Believing in One's Abilities:** Belief in one's abilities is one of the most important factors in self-efficacy. Teachers who have faith in their capabilities are more likely to demonstrate resilience and perseverance when facing challenges and problems.

- **Individual's understanding of their abilities:** A precise understanding of one's own abilities helps teachers set realistic goals and avoid striving for unattainable objectives.

- **Social comparison regarding one's abilities:** Comparing oneself to others can lead to an increase or decrease in self-efficacy. If teachers compare themselves to other successful teachers and take them as role models, their self-efficacy increases. However, if they compare themselves to others and feel inadequate, their self-efficacy decreases.

Overall, self-efficacy is a key factor in teachers' success. Organizing themes of experiences at the level of mastery, self-regulation, self-reflection, vicarious learning, and foundational themes of failure or successful experiences, expanding experiences, setting goals, striving to enhance abilities, recognizing success, believing in one's own abilities, individual understanding of abilities, and social comparison regarding abilities all play a role in shaping and strengthening self-efficacy in teachers.

Professional Development

Professional development for teachers is a continuous and dynamic process aimed at enhancing their knowledge, skills, and abilities to improve their performance in the classroom and educational environment. This process includes a range of activities and experiences that enable teachers to face daily challenges, utilize the latest scientific and educational findings, and continuously elevate the quality of their teaching. According to Table (1), the organizing themes of futures studies, improving classroom methods and practices, creative thinking, professional knowledge development, and foundational themes such as appropriate interaction, strategic thinking, SWOT analysis, employing new models, creative teaching, expanding creativity, institutionalizing creativity, broadening and extending professional knowledge, creating new knowledge, and applying modern knowledge play a role in the professional development of teachers. This is achieved through:

- Futures Studies: Futures studies help teachers identify future trends in education and prepare themselves for changes. This assists them in aligning their teaching methods and practices with future needs and leveraging the latest technologies and educational approaches.
- Improving Classroom Methods and Practices: Teachers must continuously enhance their classroom methods and practices. This includes using active teaching methods, creating an engaging and dynamic learning environment, and utilizing educational technologies.
- Creative Thinking: Creative thinking helps teachers find new and innovative solutions to educational problems and develop creative teaching methods.
- Professional Development: Teachers should continuously develop their professional knowledge. This includes participating in training courses, studying scientific articles and books, and attending conferences and seminars.
- Appropriate Interaction: Teachers should interact appropriately with students, colleagues, and parents. This involves respecting the rights of others, showing empathy and collaboration, and resolving issues peacefully.
- Strategic Thinking: Strategic thinking helps teachers clearly define their educational goals and develop plans to achieve them.
- SWOT Analysis: SWOT analysis assists teachers in identifying their strengths and weaknesses and becoming aware of the opportunities and threats present in the educational environment.
- Implementing New Models: Teachers should familiarize themselves with new teaching models and apply them in their classrooms.
- Creative Teaching: Creative teaching helps teachers engage students in learning through innovative and appealing methods.
- Expanding Creativity: Teachers should continuously expand their creativity and invent new methods for teaching and learning.
- Institutionalizing Creativity: Teachers should institutionalize creativity in their educational environment and create a space for students to express their creativity.

- Broadening and Expanding Professional Knowledge: Teachers should continuously broaden and expand their professional knowledge and stay informed about the latest scientific and educational findings.
- Creating new knowledge: Teachers can contribute to the creation of new knowledge in the field of education by conducting educational research.
- Applying modern knowledge: Teachers should utilize modern knowledge in their classrooms and take advantage of the latest technologies and educational approaches.

Overall, the professional development of teachers is an essential process for improving the quality of education. The organizing themes of future studies, improving classroom methods and practices, creative thinking, professional knowledge development, and foundational themes such as appropriate interaction, strategic thinking, SWOT analysis, employing new models, creative teaching, expanding creativity, institutionalizing creativity, broadening and extending professional knowledge, creating new knowledge, and applying modern knowledge all play a role in the professional development of teachers and help them become more effective and efficient educators.

Collaborative decision-making

Collaborative decision-making in empowering teachers means involving them in the decision-making processes related to the school and classroom. This approach, by creating a space for active participation of teachers, not only leads to improved quality of decisions but also enhances their sense of belonging, accountability, and self-efficacy. The organizing themes of group decision-making, team building, delegation of authority, and foundational themes such as reducing apathy in the classroom, increasing decision effectiveness, gaining the trust of subordinates, utilizing experiences and expertise, enhancing communication among individuals, creating synergy, building trust with subordinates, leveraging everyone's abilities, and increasing accountability all play a role in empowering teachers.

- Group decision-making: Group decision-making gives teachers the opportunity to exchange ideas and engage in discussions to make the best decisions for their school and classroom. This leads to decisions that are more comprehensive and effective.
- Team building: Team building helps teachers collaborate with one another and participate in decision-making as a team. This increases coordination and cohesion among teachers.
- Delegation of authority: Delegating authority gives teachers a greater sense of responsibility and ownership over the decisions made. This enhances their motivation and commitment to implementing those decisions.
- Reducing apathy in the classroom: When teachers participate in decision-making, they feel that their voices are heard and their opinions matter. This reduces their apathy towards issues related to the classroom.
- Increasing decision effectiveness: Decisions made collaboratively are generally more effective than those made individually, as this type of decision-making utilizes the experiences and expertise of all individuals involved.

- Building trust among subordinates: When teachers participate in decision-making, they develop greater trust in their administrators and colleagues. This improves working relationships and increases collaboration among them.

- Utilizing experiences and expertise: Collaborative decision-making allows teachers to benefit from each other's experiences and expertise. This enhances the quality of the decisions made.

- Increased communication among individuals: Participatory decision-making enhances communication between teachers and other members of the school. This contributes to improving the work environment and increasing intimacy among them.

- Creation of synergy: Participatory decision-making fosters synergy among teachers. This means that a group of individuals collaborating together can achieve better results than the sum of their individual outcomes.

- Building trust in subordinates: When managers trust their teachers and involve them in decision-making, the teachers' trust in them increases.

- Utilizing everyone's abilities: Participatory decision-making provides teachers with the opportunity to leverage all their abilities in the decision-making process.

- Increased accountability: When teachers participate in decision-making, they feel a greater sense of responsibility for implementing those decisions.

Overall, participatory decision-making plays a very important role in empowering teachers. This approach, by creating a space for active participation of teachers, not only leads to improved decision quality but also helps increase their sense of belonging, accountability, and self-efficacy.

Educational Design

Educational design in empowering teachers refers to a systematic and purposeful process through which teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effectively designing and implementing learning experiences. This process includes various stages such as needs analysis, setting objectives, selecting teaching methods, designing educational materials, and assessing learning. The organizing themes include multimedia production, educational assessment, lesson planning, content analysis, content development, and foundational themes for using various media in education, analyzing different media in education, promoting multimedia teaching, determining educational impacts, recognizing educational deficiencies, revising and improving programs, appropriately using teaching models, multimedia teaching, understanding the positive and negative aspects of content, content coherence, decision-making regarding content, unity of purpose in content, content adjustment for teaching, and the unity of content execution and education, all of which play a role in empowering teachers. Specifically:

- Multimedia production: Teachers should be able to use various media to create engaging and effective educational materials. This includes the use of images, videos, audio, and multimedia software.

- Educational assessment: Teachers should be able to accurately and effectively assess student learning. This involves using various assessment methods such as tests, assignments, projects, and observing student behavior.

- Lesson planning: Teachers should be able to develop comprehensive and effective lesson plans for their classes. This includes setting educational objectives, selecting teaching methods, and designing learning activities.
- Content analysis: Teachers should be able to analyze educational content accurately and thoroughly. This involves identifying key concepts, determining the difficulty level of the content, and relating the content to other subjects.
- Content Development: Teachers should be able to develop suitable and engaging educational content for their students. This includes writing text, preparing images, and designing learning activities.
- Use of Various Media in Education: Teachers should be able to utilize various media such as books, films, audio, and software in their teaching.
- Analysis of Different Media in Education: Teachers should be able to analyze different media in terms of quality, content, and their impact on student learning.
- Encouraging Multimedia Teaching: Teachers should be encouraged to use multimedia teaching methods. This can help increase the appeal and effectiveness of education.
- Assessing Educational Impact: Teachers should be able to determine the impact of their teaching on student learning. This can assist them in improving their teaching methods.
- Identifying Educational Deficiencies: Teachers should be able to identify their educational deficiencies and strive to address them.
- Revising and Improving Programs: Teachers should be able to revise and improve their educational programs based on evaluation results.
- Appropriate Use of Teaching Models: Teachers should be able to appropriately use various teaching models.
- Multimedia Teaching: Teachers should be able to employ multimedia teaching methods in their classrooms.
- Recognizing Positive and Negative Aspects of Content: Teachers should be able to identify the positive and negative aspects of educational content.
- Content Continuity: Teachers should be able to establish continuity between different educational contents.
- Decision-Making Regarding Content: Teachers should be able to make decisions about educational content.
- Unity of Purpose in Content: Teachers should ensure that educational content aligns with educational objectives.
- Adjusting Content for Teaching: Teachers should be able to adjust educational content according to the needs of their students.
- Unity of Content Delivery and Teaching: Teachers must ensure that educational content and teaching methods are aligned with each other. Overall, instructional design plays a very important role in empowering teachers. This process helps teachers design and implement effective and engaging learning experiences for their students by providing the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment of teachers is a multifaceted concept that refers to teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about their own abilities, the level of control they have over their work environment, and the impact they can have on students and the school. This type of empowerment emphasizes enhancing feelings of self-efficacy, autonomy, influence, and trust among teachers. The organizing themes of competency development, autonomy, influence, and trust, along with foundational themes such as respect for competence, expanding the context of competence, maintaining teachers' freedom of action, professional independence, preserving teachers' influence, modeling by teachers, strengthening trust, participatory decision-making, honesty, and integrity, play a role in the psychological empowerment of teachers. This is achieved through:

- Competency Development: Teachers should feel that they possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their duties. This is facilitated through in-service training, specialized workshops, and continuous learning opportunities.

- Autonomy: Teachers should have the freedom and professional independence in making decisions related to their classrooms and teaching methods. This allows them to make the best decisions based on the needs of their students and classroom conditions.

- Influence: Teachers should feel that they can have a positive impact on their students and their school. This is reinforced through participation in school decision-making, providing constructive feedback to students, and observing their progress.

- Confidence: Teachers must have confidence in themselves and their abilities. This is reinforced through successful experiences, support from colleagues and administrators, and receiving positive feedback.

- Respect for Competence: Administrators and colleagues should respect the competence and abilities of teachers and provide them with opportunities for growth and advancement.

- Expanding Areas of Competence: Opportunities should be provided for teachers to demonstrate and develop their competencies in various fields.

- Preserving Teacher Autonomy: Teachers should be free to choose their teaching methods and make decisions related to their classrooms.

- Professional Independence of Teachers: Teachers should have professional independence in decision-making related to their work.

- Maintaining Teacher Influence: Conditions should be created for teachers to maintain their influence over students and the school.

- Modeling Successful Teachers: Teachers should be able to model successful practices from other teachers and benefit from their experiences.

- Strengthening Confidence: Teachers' confidence in themselves and their abilities should be strengthened.

- Participatory Decision-Making: Teachers should participate in decision-making related to their school and classrooms.

- Honesty and Transparency: Honesty and transparency in relationships between teachers, administrators, and colleagues help strengthen trust and enhance the psychological empowerment of teachers.

Overall, the psychological empowerment of teachers plays a very important role in improving their performance and increasing their job satisfaction. By enhancing feelings of self-efficacy, autonomy, influence, and confidence among teachers, we can contribute to improving the quality of education and increasing student success.

Smart Education

Smart education in empowering teachers means using modern technologies, especially artificial intelligence, digital content, and media literacy, to improve the teaching and learning process and enhance teachers' effectiveness. This approach helps teachers face the challenges of today's world by providing the necessary tools and resources to prepare students for life in the digital age. The organizing themes of artificial intelligence, digital content, media literacy, and the foundational themes of using artificial intelligence, expanding experiences with the help of artificial intelligence, designing digital content, utilizing digital content, editing digital content, understanding media, analyzing media, and employing media play a role in empowering teachers. This is done in the following ways:

- Artificial Intelligence: Artificial intelligence assists teachers in personalizing the learning process, providing effective feedback, and automating tasks by offering tools such as intelligent educational systems, virtual assistants, and adaptive learning platforms.

- Digital Content: Digital content includes a variety of educational resources such as videos, images, podcasts, e-books, and educational software that teachers can use to enrich their teaching and create engaging learning experiences for students.

- Media Literacy: Media literacy helps teachers critically analyze media content and use it effectively in their teaching. Additionally, media literacy aids teachers in protecting students from misinformation and misleading information.

- Use of Artificial Intelligence: Teachers can use artificial intelligence to automate their tasks, such as grading assignments and providing feedback to students. This allows them to dedicate more time to teaching and engaging with their students.

- Expanding experiences with the help of artificial intelligence: Artificial intelligence can provide new and diverse learning experiences for students. For example, intelligent educational systems can assist students in learning complex concepts in an engaging and interactive way.

- Designing digital content: Teachers should be able to design engaging and effective digital content for their students. This includes using various tools to create videos, images, podcasts, and other educational resources.

- Utilizing digital content: Teachers should be able to effectively use digital content in their teaching. This involves selecting appropriate resources, integrating them into lesson plans, and presenting them to students in an engaging and comprehensible manner.

- Editing digital content: Teachers should be able to edit and modify existing digital content to align with the needs of students and their educational goals.
- Understanding media: Teachers should be familiar with various media, including social media, and be able to use them effectively in their teaching.
- Analyzing media: Teachers should be able to critically analyze media content and use it effectively in their teaching.
- Utilizing media: Teachers should be able to use various media to communicate with students, parents, and other members of the educational community.

Overall, the role of smart technology in empowering teachers is very important for improving the quality of education. By using modern technologies, teachers can provide more engaging and effective learning experiences for their students and prepare them for life in the digital age.

Final research model:

After completing the analysis and assessment of various data, the final research model is presented as follows.

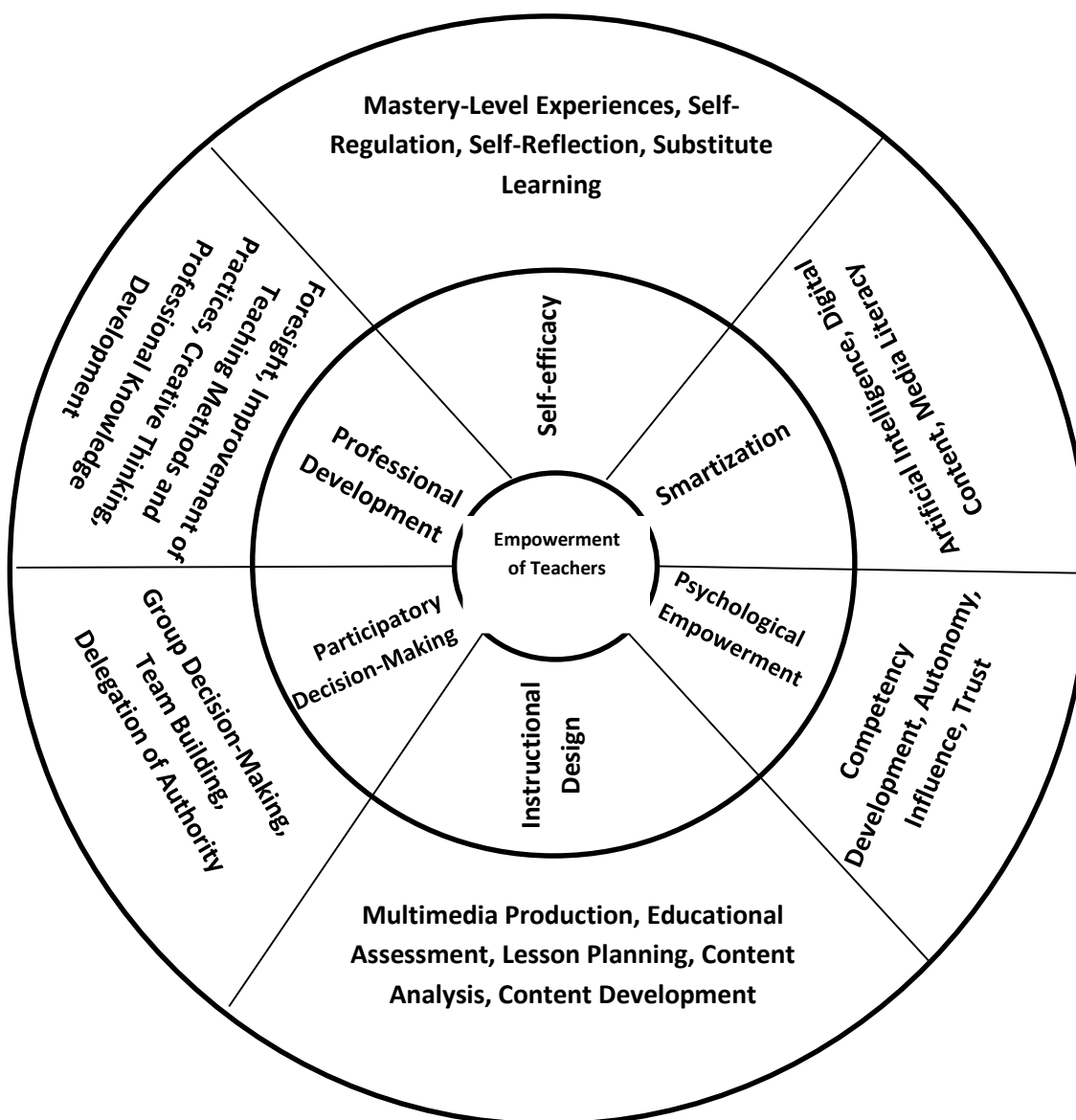


Figure 1: The Final Model of Teacher Empowerment

After outlining the algorithm, experts were invited to assess the validity of the developed model by responding to a Delphi technique questionnaire. As a result, out of a total of 20 experts, 16 fully participated in this section. Most experts agreed with the proposed model during the validation phase, and their feedback did not lead to significant or fundamental changes in the model. Therefore, after ensuring a relative consensus among the experts, the researcher-constructed scale with a 5-point Likert response range was provided to them to rank the model on a 5-point scale. Consequently, the percentage of agreement among experts for all listed items was above 75%, with a total agreement of 100%. Additionally, the average agreement fluctuated around a value of 4. Given that the response range for the experts was from 1 to 5, the maximum agreement for each indicator could be a score of 5. Thus, obtaining

an average of 4 is very favorable and indicates a desirable consensus among the experts. Therefore, the validity of the developed model was confirmed.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to design a model for teacher empowerment based on a thematic analysis approach. This approach allows the researcher to identify patterns and themes related to teacher empowerment through an in-depth examination of texts and interviews. The findings of this research indicated that the model of teacher empowerment includes six dimensions: self-efficacy, participatory decision-making, instructional design, psychological empowerment, professional development, and smart education. Each of these dimensions also had specific components, covering a total of 23 components. In fact, the findings of the present study showed that the model of teacher empowerment encompasses various dimensions and components, each of which plays a role in improving performance and increasing job satisfaction among teachers.

In explaining the dimensions and components of the teacher empowerment model, it can be said that the dimension of self-efficacy refers to teachers' belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes. Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to trust their abilities more and are more motivated to strive and persist when facing challenges. The components of this dimension include self-confidence, self-belief, and motivation. The dimension of participatory decision-making refers to the extent of teachers' involvement in decisions related to the school and classroom. Teachers who participate in decision-making feel a greater sense of belonging to the school and classroom and have more motivation to implement the decisions made. The components of this dimension include participation in school decision-making, participation in classroom decision-making, and a sense of belonging to the school. The dimension of instructional design refers to teachers' ability to design and implement effective educational programs. Teachers who possess high instructional design skills can create engaging and effective educational programs for their students. The components of this dimension include mastery of educational content, mastery of teaching methods, and the ability to create an active learning environment. The dimension of psychological empowerment refers to teachers' feelings of control over their work environment and their ability to influence it. Teachers with high psychological empowerment feel more autonomy and competence and have greater motivation to strive and progress. The components of this dimension include a sense of autonomy, a sense of competence, and a sense of belonging. The dimension of professional development refers to teachers' efforts to improve their knowledge and skills. Teachers who are continuously engaged in their professional development can enhance the quality of their teaching with new knowledge and skills. The components of this dimension include participation in training courses, studying scientific resources, and exchanging experiences with colleagues. The dimension of smart education also refers to teachers' use of modern technologies in teaching. Teachers who utilize modern technologies in education can make the teaching-learning process more

engaging and effective. The components of this dimension include the use of educational software, the use of the internet, and the use of smart tools in the classroom.

Previous research has also emphasized the importance of empowering teachers in various dimensions (Karami et al., 2023; Esmaeili-Ahandani et al., 2023; Arbabian et al., 2020; Barzegar et al., 2020; Bagheri et al., 2020; Kargar et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2023; Hsu et al., 2023; Supriyanto et al., 2023; Kilag et al., 2023; Ahmad et al., 2022). For example, Safari (2019) showed that the average empowerment of teachers is at a low to moderate level and requires more attention. This finding indicates that teacher empowerment in Iran has not yet reached an acceptable level and that further actions need to be taken in this area. Karami et al. (2023) also demonstrated in their research that teacher empowerment is one of the effective components on the productivity of education. This finding suggests that empowering teachers can help improve performance and increase the productivity of the education system. Additionally, other studies have examined the impact of teacher empowerment on job performance, work engagement, and team innovation. For instance, Wen et al. (2023) showed that teacher empowerment can lead to work engagement, but this process may be influenced by the cultural values and beliefs of teachers. Hsu et al. (2023) also indicated in their research that team processes and team engagement fully mediate the positive relationship between teacher empowerment and team innovation. Finally, the research by Kilag et al. (2023) showed that school leaders who empower management can have a positive impact on job satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness of teachers. Furthermore, the study by Ahmad et al. (2022) revealed that empowered teachers' behaviors positively affect goal clarity, self-efficacy, and job performance of teachers. Additionally, goal clarity and self-efficacy mediate the impact of empowered teachers' behaviors on the job performance of workers. Therefore, based on the results of existing studies, teacher empowerment is significantly related to teachers' job performance in the presence of mediators of goal clarity and self-efficacy at the academic level of higher education institutions.

Practical Suggestions from the Research

Considering the findings of the research and the importance of empowering teachers to improve their performance and increase their job satisfaction, the following practical suggestions are offered for education stakeholders:

- Strengthening the self-efficacy of teachers through the organization of training workshops: Conducting training workshops aimed at increasing teachers' self-confidence, self-belief, and motivation.
- Enhancing the participatory decision-making aspect of teachers by forming teacher councils, providing platforms for teachers to participate in decision-making, and valuing teachers' opinions.
- Strengthening the instructional design aspect of teachers by organizing training courses, preparing and providing diverse and engaging educational resources for teachers, and supporting teachers' creativity in designing and implementing educational programs.

- Enhancing the psychological empowerment of teachers by creating a supportive work environment where they feel safe, respected, and a sense of belonging; providing growth and advancement opportunities for teachers, and paying attention to teachers' needs and striving to address them.

- Strengthening the professional development aspect of teachers, creating experience exchange networks among teachers to share their knowledge and experiences, and supporting teachers' research in the field of education.

- Enhancing the smart technology aspect for teachers, conducting training courses for teachers on the use of modern technologies in education, and supporting teachers' innovations in the use of modern technologies in teaching.

- Continuously evaluating teacher empowerment programs and providing feedback to them, as well as adjusting teacher empowerment programs based on evaluation results and feedback.

Innovation

The study "Designing a Teacher Empowerment Model in the Educational System of Iraq" introduces a novel framework for enhancing teacher agency and effectiveness within a context characterized by systemic challenges. Its innovation lies in the development of a context-specific empowerment model tailored to the unique needs and constraints of the Iraqi educational landscape and potentially fostering improved teacher motivation, performance, and overall educational outcomes. This model moves beyond generic empowerment strategies by incorporating elements such as culturally relevant professional development, participatory decision-making processes, and mechanisms for fostering collaboration among educators. By addressing the specific socio-political and educational realities of Iraq, the study offers a practical and potentially transformative approach to improving teacher motivation, performance, and ultimately, student outcomes.

By implementing these proposals, it is possible to empower teachers and consequently improve their performance and enhance the quality of education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study and previous research, it can be concluded that teacher empowerment is a multidimensional construct and is of great importance in improving performance and increasing job satisfaction among teachers, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching. Therefore, the attention of education stakeholders to the dimensions and components identified in this research can be effective in improving teacher efficiency and enhancing the quality of education.

Limitations

The study "Designing a Teacher Empowerment Model in the Educational System of Iraq" likely faces several limitations. Generalizability may be restricted due to the specific cultural and educational context of Iraq, potentially hindering the applicability of the model in other regions. Furthermore, the study's reliance on particular data collection methods, such as surveys or interviews, could introduce biases or limit the depth of understanding. The rapidly evolving socio-political landscape in Iraq might also pose a challenge, as the model's effectiveness could be

impacted by unforeseen changes in the educational system or broader societal dynamics. Finally, the study's scope may be limited by resource constraints, affecting the sample size, the duration of the study, or the comprehensiveness of the data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Adherence to research ethics principles :In the present study, informed consent forms were completed by all participants.

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Authors' Contribution

All three authors contributed equally to the writing of the article.

Conflict of Interest

According to the authors' statement, the present article has no conflicts of interest.

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