How to Create a Resistance-Free Environment for Successful Distributed Leadership in Education

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Abstract

Distributed leadership in the education system is considered a part of education reform. The concept depends on integration of teachers' collaboration to be successful; creating these collaborations among teachers will maintain horizontal distribution of tasks and objectives. The cornerstone for successful application of distributed leadership in schools depends on several elements, mainly trust and commitment of participating teachers. The major obstacle against successful distributed leadership is resistance. This research reviewed the published literature and studied the development of the distributed leadership concept and its application in the educational system. The effects of resistance on the work environment and the role of teachers' commitment in implementing a successful distributed leadership model in education were also studied.

Keywords: distributed leadership, collaborative leadership, organizational resistance, resistance management, organization commitment.

The concept of distributed leadership in educational systems is considered a part of education reform. Although not new, the concept has re-emerged in recent years as one highly promising response to the complex challenges currently facing schools (Leithwood, 2009). Amongst the main reasons for distributing leadership are the limitations of relying on the single, "heroic" leader. Responding productively to the challenges facing schools far exceeds the capacities of any individual leader (Leithwood & Janzi, 2009). Moreover, Gronn (2002) added that sharing ideas, creativity, skills and initiatives will unleash a greater capacity for organizational change, responsiveness, and improvement (p. 430). If schools are to flourish in the future, they will need to incorporate the collective expertise of more of their stakeholders than they previously have.

The distributed leadership concept depends on many elements to be successful, including teachers' commitment, teamwork, and collaboration (Woods, 2004). Many researchers who recommend the application of distributed leadership in educational systems, such as Harris (2004), Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001), Spillane and Diamond (2007), as well as Leithwood (2009) and others believe in its positive effects on education. Many more studies were concerned with the elements that can promote the distributed leadership application. However, few studies were concerned with the forces and obstacles that can prevent distributed leadership models from being successfully applied (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006).

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to explore the concept of distributed leadership and its influence on educational effectiveness in schools. Elements of successful distributed leadership models and obstacles that can affect implementation are thoroughly examined in this research study.

Research Questions

Based on these understandings, I constructed the following research questions:

1. What are the elements of distributed leadership practice in schools that are effective in promoting educational achievement?

2. What are the obstacles and barriers that inhibit a successful distributed leadership, with specific emphasis on the resistance development against change?

3. What is the role of trust and commitment among team-members that guards against failure of a distributed leadership experience?

4. What is the future of distributed leadership in educational systems?

Methodology

This study endeavours to answer the presented questions through interpretation, synthesis and critical analysis of published work on the topic of distributed leadership in education. Data was synthesized by consulting the electronic resources of University of Saskatchewan Library Webpage as well as Google Scholar Search Engine. Databases included JSTOR Archival Journals, Directory of Open Access Journals, ERIC (US Department of Education), and EBSCO database. The literature search was filtered to include only peer-reviewed articles from 1990 to present. Search keywords included distributed leadership, resistance, and resistance management. Other terms synonymous to distributed leadership such as democratic leadership, shared leadership, or collaborative leadership were also used.

Articles were retrieved from several key educational journals namely Management in Education, Teaching and Teacher Education, Journal of Educational Change, Educational Management Administration and Leadership Journal.

While most of the retrieved articles support the application of distributed leadership in education, few articles studied the obstacles and barriers challenging success of distributed leadership. The elements of trust and commitment were identified as critical for a successful work environment but their relationship to a resistance-free environment needed further study; these ideas were examined further in this study.

Ethical academic integrity guidelines were followed during the literature review and writing processes. This study avoids any kind of academic dishonesty or plagiarism. No further ethical approval is required.

Distributed Leadership

Development of Distributed Leadership

The concept of distributed leadership was developed early in the 1980s. Murgatroyd and Reynolds (1984) first proposed the idea and stated "leadership can occur at a variety of levels in response to a variety of situations and is not necessarily tied to possession of a formal organizational role" (p. 23). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of distributed leadership was taking shape. The practice of developing teachers' leadership was explored and promoted by many authors (see Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2004).

The work of Gronn (2000) outlined the concept of distributed leadership as a potential solution to the tendency of leadership thinking to be distributed hierarchically rather than distributed horizontally. According to Bennett, Wise, Woods and Harvey (2003), distributed leadership is not something done by an individual to another, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group

or organization, but it is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action.

Debates over Distributed Leadership in Education

The concept of distributed leadership or the democratization of school, was studied by many researchers. Studies by Spillane and his associates (2001, 2003, 2007, 2008) and Duignan (2007) were very informative. Both authors viewed distributed leadership from opposing angles, but both agreed that distributed leadership is central to the teaching and learning process in schools and agreed that leadership involves all members of the school community, not just the principal.

Spillane's studies on distributed leadership. Spillane et al. (2001) argued that leadership happens in a variety of ways throughout the school and is centered in the interactions between people. Spillane et al. stated that depending on the particular leadership task, school leaders' knowledge and expertise might be best explored at the group or collective level rather than at the individual leader's level.

In what they named "the leader plus" aspect, Spillane and Diamond (2007) recognized that multiple individuals play leadership roles, whether in formal or informal positions. Therefore, the distributed leadership perspective -as the authors viewed it- is neither a top-down nor a bottom-up approach but recognizes that different people play leadership roles at different times in a horizontal approach.

Spillane (2008) explained the concept further by detailing three types of co-leadership practice: collaborative, collective, and coordinated. Multiple leaders working together simultaneously carry out "collaborative leadership" distribution. Collective leadership distribution occurs when the work of leaders is performed separately but is interdependent. Coordinated leadership distribution refers to leadership activities that are carried out sequentially. The use of a combination of such three types would be essential during a distributed leadership application.

Organizational routines, artifacts and tools are all part of the process that links the interactions of multiple leaders to their situation or context. Spillane et al. (2001) described organizational routines as repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors, and they include: grade level meetings, faculty meetings, teacher evaluations, school assemblies and literacy committee meetings.

In a practical context, Spillane (2008) postulated that implementing the distributed perspective into practice requires focusing on the elements of leading and managing, looking at the formal and informal aspects of the organization simultaneously. Another key feature described by Spillane and his associates (2001, 2003) is that leadership is foundational in improving teaching and learning. Spillane argued that a distributed perspective is not a step by step plan but a framework for improving practice that involves the twin processes of diagnosis and design. A distributed perspective will provide a framework for diagnosis and work design. School staffs are key agents for the success of the work (Spillane, 2008).

Duignan's studies on distributed leadership. On the opposite side, Duignan's (2007) work presented an interesting critique of distributed leadership; he claimed that distributed leadership was more evident in the rhetoric rather than reality of many schools. However, he acknowledged that the idea of sharing leadership responsibilities is desirable because leadership of contemporary schools is too complex and overwhelming for one leader.

Duignan (2007) questioned whether what is being distributed is more important than who takes the responsibility. He challenged distributed leadership as being "the way to do it", which seems to be the accepted practice in education today. He stated, "the language of distributed leadership may actually provide practitioners with the comfortable and comforting sense that if they distribute duties, tasks and some responsibilities, the leadership density, capacity and quality of their organization will be greatly strengthened" (p. 16).

Contrary to Spillane and associates (2001, 2003), Duignan (2007) suggested that distributed leadership cannot be practiced in schools, which operate within a hierarchical paradigm. He placed a strong

emphasis on "trust" and highlighted the need to identify a "moral purpose for sharing leadership practices around maximizing opportunities and outcomes for students" (Duignan, 2007, p. 162).

Duignan's (2007) approach rejected the idea of distributed leadership if it is operated in either a hierarchical or control paradigm. He argued that the value and necessity of sharing leadership was evident, particularly in the area of decision-making where decisions affect the lives of those involved. In difficult ethical situations he considered it particularly important to share leadership. He concluded that shared leadership is "a product of the on-going processes of interaction and negotiation among all school members as they construct and reconstruct a reality of working productively and compassionately together each day" (Duignan, 2007, p. 107).

Barriers to Distributed Leadership

The distributed leadership movement is considered a call for leadership to be shared throughout the organization in a more democratic way. Some barriers and questions have been raised. Questions include whether all distributions are intended to enhance teaching and learning and whether there is a possibility that distributed leadership could lead to the abuse of power (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006).

Teachers can become overstressed by shared decision-making. The benefits of participation may not necessarily lead to better teaching practice or to the benefit of the school as a whole (Mayrowetz, 2008).

Harris (2004) outlined some additional difficulties. She recognized that structural and cultural barriers operate within schools. Conflict and tensions over control of power in a school can create a climate, which is not conducive to young teachers expressing their opinions, especially those that could upset the status quo.

Most researchers agree that the elements of trust and commitment are essential for a successful work environment and especially for distributed leadership success, which depends on teachers' cooperation (Woods, 2004). Few authors studied the sources of conflicts and resistance that might face distributed leadership in education. According to Fisher (2000), the essential causes of resistance within organizations are different points of view regarding the priority of objectives, or methods used. Competition and lack of communication are among the major sources that would contribute to conflicts and ultimately resistance within educational organizations.

Power Management in Distributed Leadership

It is obvious that leadership is often associated with power and authority. A teacher may think of themselves as having too much of power. Weiss and Cambone (1994) argued that applying the model, maintaining the concept of distributed leadership and trying to develop practices that enhance it will raise the issue of power and perceived power. This critical and sensitive issue shows the cautious relationship of teachers with their colleagues when placed in a position of leadership (Weiss & Cambone).

Duignan (2007) supported the assumptions that leadership would be subjected to underpinnings of power, authority, influence, position, status, responsibility, and accountability. He concluded that the distributed leadership concept needs to be articulated, critiqued and adjusted if necessary as the quality of relationships greatly influences everything else in the organization. In contrast, Spillane (2008) stated that "leaders don't have to see eye to eye or even get along with one another to co-perform leadership routines and tasks" (p. 16).

Both Spillane (2008) and Duignan (2007) recognized that leadership is not solely the remit of one person at the top of the organization and advocated that leadership and leadership development are essential to the core purpose of school, improving student outcomes. However, Duignan rejected the term "distributed leadership" as it does not necessarily create a sense of community within a school. Many of the practices described by Spillane (2008) could be practice without the formal and hierarchical design (Mayrowetz, 2008).

Distributed Leadership and Teamwork

Teamwork is a key element of distributed leadership (Harris, 2004; Woods, 2004); the nature and purpose of distributed leadership is the ability of school personnel to work together, constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively.

Woods, Bennett, Harvey, and Wise, (2004) found that distributed leadership requires an openness of boundaries. Other stakeholders could be part of this framework including students, parents, and those involved in governance and management. It also raises the question of whether all teachers could be leaders or potential leaders (Woods et al.).

Moreover, Harris and Lambert (2003) suggested that all teachers can lead. The authors postulated that all teachers harbor leadership capabilities waiting to be unlocked and engaged for the good of the school. The authors developed this point further emphasizing the need for professional development aimed at creating communities of learning; thereby linking professional development and leading (Harris et al., 2003).

Building Trust for Distributed Leadership

The concept of trust was significant determinant for successful application of distributed leadership (Duignan, 2007; Ritchie & Woods, 2007). The authors agreed that teachers need to feel trusted and supported by their principals and their colleagues. Trust is essential if teachers are to feel motivated in their work; they need to be allowed initiate an activity and to take responsibility for decision-making.

Similarly, Wheatley (1996) added that people also need support along with being trusted in their work. People want to talk about what they are doing and achieving; listening to their voices is an essential task of the leader. Trust, allied with support, is a foundational value of distributed leadership. (Wheatley, 1996).

Distributed Leadership and Teachers' Commitment

Employees' commitment is crucial for the success and development of any organization. Among the various forms of work-related attitudes, commitment is of special interest in organizational research. This focus is grounded in the belief that committed employees demonstrate more positive organizational and individual outcomes, such as: decreased employee turnover, increased performance, and a firmer intention to stay in an organization (Park, 2005).

A similar situation occurs in educational settings, where teachers' commitment is believed to be one of the critical factors influencing school effectiveness and the success of education systems (Huberman, 1993). In addition, teachers' commitment has been argued to be closely related to teachers' job performance and teacher quality (Tsui & Cheng, 1999). Consequently, a positive teachers' performance will ultimately be reflected in students' educational achievements.

Challenges to effective commitment. Schools desperately need very high quality and committed teachers. High quality education cannot be achieved without the sincere efforts of dedicated and committed teachers. Park (2005) advanced two reasons why teacher commitment should be emphasized. First, commitment is an internal force coming from within teachers themselves who have needs for greater responsibility, variety, and challenge in their work as their level of initial education grows. The author added a second reason as there are external forces coming from the educational reform movements. These movements are seeking higher standards and greater accountability that require teachers' sustained efforts and their commitment to their students, their schools and their work as well as willingness to be a part of a work team (Park, 2005). Additionally, in his research, Barker (2001) emphasized the importance of commitment of teachers as they develop their own professional career and build their own identity. The author concluded that he is not surprised that politicians, media, policy-makers, employers and parents expose teachers to scrutiny and criticism. Policy-makers and society have high expectations of teachers as professionals, role models, and community leaders.

Characteristics of teachers' commitment. The characteristics of a highly committed teacher have been identified by Reyes (1990) who compared characteristics of a highly committed teacher and un-

committed teacher. According to Reyes (1990), committed teachers are less tardy, hard workers and less inclined to leave the workplace. They spend more time than uncommitted teachers on extra-curricular activities in order to help the organization to reach its goals. Committed teachers perform the assigned work well and they influence students' achievement. Additionally, they believe and act upon the goals of the school; they also exert efforts beyond personal interest. Lastly, they intend to remain active members of the school system.

In addition, Firestone and Pennell (1993) asserted that having highly committed teachers is regarded as an asset in any school. Committed teachers are more likely to have strong psychological ties to their school, to their students, and to their subject areas.

Teachers' commitment dimensions. A lot of different dimensions and forms influence the level and shape of teachers' commitment. Louis (1998) studied different forms and dimensions of teachers' commitment, such as commitment to the school, to student learning, to the work of teaching and to professionalism. The author categorized the dimension as follows:

Teachers' commitment to school. Teachers who are highly committed to their school are more likely to engage in behaviors that help the school to achieve its goals, to exert considerable effort beyond minimal expectations and to remain working within the organization (Louis, 1998).

Teachers' commitment to students. According to Kushman (1992) who agreed with Louis (1998) commitment to students, including student learning, was grounded in the ideas of high teacher efficiency and high expectations and was combined with teacher willingness to exert effort on behalf of low achieving students.

Teachers' commitment to work. Louis (1998) defined work commitment as the extent to which a person identifies psychologically with his or her work, and wants to engage in the work of teaching.

Teachers' commitment to the profession. Somech and Bogler (2002) stated that teacher commitment to the profession is related to a deep attachment to the profession itself; this affinity was associated with personal identification and satisfaction in working as a teacher. The authors found that a commitment forms are intertwined and difficult to be measured separately. However, treating them as separate entities was of value because teachers' views, values and behaviour might vary, depending on the type of commitment involved. For that reason, each new teacher varies in the level of commitment and in their response to challenges and work stress (Somech & Bogler, 2002).

Rationale for Distributed Leadership in Education

The educational system is a dynamic body and needs to adapt to many challenges in order to remain relevant and effective. Duke (2011) argued that schools are not static organizations, but continuously change in response to various forces coming from both inside and outside the school (Duke, 2011). The work of Fullan (2011) and Hargreaves (2011) on educational change categorized the demand for change into two main categories of factors, external and internal, that contribute to the need for the educational system change.

External forces. The external forces for any change originate from the school's environment. They include the marketplace, provincial and government legislations and regulations, technology, labor markets, and financial demands.

Marketplace. The marketplace, in recent years, has influenced schools because of competition both from within a school district in the form of regional learning choices programs (RLCP) and from outside the school district including private schools and home schooling (Ludvigsen, 2011).

Provincial and government legislations and regulations. Changes in governmental laws and regulations are a frequent impetus for change. For example, "The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001" has had a significant impact on the operation of public schools throughout the United States (Alexander & Alexander, 2009).

Technology. Technological innovations have created the need for change in schools (D'Agustino, 2011). On-line learning, open source referencing, remote teaching, virtual labs as well as social communication have created the need for new perspectives.

Labor markets. The fluctuations of labor markets also force schools to initiate change. For instance, recruitment of potential teachers is affected by the education, talents and attitudes of the existing pool. Changes in the labor force may not match changes in expected programming and can lead to a shortage or a surplus of qualified teachers.

Financial demands. Brimley and Garfield (2009) agree on the importance of financial demand when economic changes affect schools. Periods of economic downturns can negatively affect the attitudes and morale of some staff members which, in turn, can affect school performance (Brimley & Garfield, 2009).

Internal forces. Pressures in the internal environment of the school district or school can also stimulate change. Administrative processes, and human relations issues are two sources of internal pressure (Duke, 2011).

Administrative processes. Processes that can act as pressures for change include issues or changes in communications requirements, decision making, leadership policy and expectations, and the continuously increasing work load which was described by Gronn (2002) as a growing greedy work.

People problems. Examples of people problems are poor performance levels or high absenteeism of teachers and students, high student dropout rates, high teacher turnover, poor school-community or management-union relations, low levels of morale and job satisfaction (Bulach, Lunenburg, & Potter, 2008). Employee complaints and union unrest are signs of problems in the internal environment and indicate to school leaders that a change in work environment is needed (Alexander & Alexander, 2009).

Distributed Leadership Impacts on Teaching Effectiveness

The key characteristics of distributed leadership outlined highlight the centrality of teaching and learning. Both Spillane (2008) and Duignan (2007) saw the underlying purpose of distributing leadership as improving student outcomes. Distributed leadership is connected to the procedures and practices that combine to make the school a learning organization. Spillane (2008) argued that the principal has a powerful impact on the improvement of teaching and learning because of his or her influence on staff motivation and commitment as well as the school environment.

Similarly, Day, Gronn, and Salas (2006) agreed that leadership will have a greater influence on schools and students' achievements, when leadership is widely distributed and brought closer to the site of learning. These studies highlight the importance of distributed leadership application for teaching effectiveness.

Distributed Leadership Impacts on Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an important factor in educational organizations. Locke (1976) viewed job satisfaction as the pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling or allowing the fulfilment of one's important values, providing these values are compatible with one's need. Accordingly, Dormann and Zapf (2001) studied effects of job satisfaction on one's performance and found that there is an indirect relationship between one's job satisfaction and his or her absenteeism, turn over, organizational inefficiency, and counterproductive behaviour. However, job satisfaction of school working teams should receive more research since there is a close relationship between job satisfaction and job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001).

In a study on group dynamics, Holtz (2004) found that a cooperative leadership team is defined as a leadership team characterized by group cohesion, which includes openness of team members, mutual trust and effective communication. The group cohesion of the leadership team is an important predictor of school leaders' job satisfaction. However, the author added that research concerning the relation between group cohesion of the leadership team and job satisfaction of school leaders is still limited in

the literature. Possibly, since most researchers had focused on single-person leadership, group cohesion of the leadership team was not considered to be an important predictor of school leaders' job satisfaction (Holtz, 2004).

A consensus on school vision and goals is an important determinants of cooperative leadership team (Harris et al., 2003). The shared goals are assumed to be crucial for the job satisfaction of the members of the leadership team. Goal orientedness, shared focus and vision among team members are sources of great satisfaction. Conversely, uncertainty about roles of teachers or role ambiguity is an important predictor of job dissatisfaction (Harris et al., 2003).

Organizational Resistance

Theoretical Framework

The term "resistance" has gained a lot of attention among researchers. Understanding the role of resistance in organizations is critical for any leader in order to successfully manage any task or objective (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). In their insightful analysis of the range of uses and conceptualizations of the term "resistance" in the extant literature, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) identified a diversity of modes, scales, levels of coordination, targets, and goals that have, in turn, been characterized by scholars as resistance. Some forms of resistance are clearly oppositional, but intentionally concealed, while others types of actions are overt, but may not be universally recognized as resistance (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004).

Considerable research had emphasized the formal, overt, organized, and intermittent strategies that workers employ to transform organizational structure. At the same time, other research work has emphasized the significance of ambiguous, less coordinated, and typically less dramatic practices employed by individuals enduring oppressive circumstances (Scott, 1986). Almost universally, these actions are referred to by the same term: resistance. A consequence of this ambiguity, as Weitz (2001) observed, is that some scholars see resistance nowhere, while others see it everywhere. The author made it clear that accommodation and resistance need to be understood as coexisting and occurring together. Mumby (2005) on the other hand, advocated for a dialectical approach to workplace resistance.

The logical approach by Mumby (2005) describes the managerial control and workers' resistance as mutually constitutive, he stated that:

> I argue that both organizational control and employee's resistance are problematic as ways of understanding the dynamics of organizational power. Instead, by adopting a more dialectical approach to control and resistance we can better understand the ways in which the two are mutually implicative and co-productive. (p.21)

Such a framework would allow scholars to move beyond the lists of observed resistive strategies that Mumby cited as popular, and to focus more instead on the tensions and contradictions that open up possibilities for organizational change and transformation (Mumby, 2005). Accordingly, it is evident that the concept of resistance didn't change much from the old researches where resistance is still considered an interaction that, much like class, must be examined in its process and in its own context (Thompson, 1964).

On the other hand, Scott (1986) took an opposing position, focusing on what he termed everyday or routine resistance. The author drew a direct contrast to more formal, organized, and conventionally political forms of collective resistance, which are far less common. Routine resistance, as viewed by the author, is inherently ambiguous, in addition to usually being necessarily covert and often spontaneous (Scott, 1986).

The Logic Behind Resistance

Why might resistance develop? The logic behind resistance to change that might be implemented in educational organizations was studied by Hambrick and Cannella (1989). The authors collectively grouped the logical reasons for the development of resistance into three groups:

Blind resistance. Some people in organizations are afraid and intolerant of change regardless of what it may be. The authors beautifully described it as "having knee-jerk reaction to change" (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989, p. 279). In educational organizations, school members can react defensively at first; they may not try to get used to the idea of change because the unknown is discomforting. Such a kind of resistance, as suggested by the authors, is useful in that it allows time to provide reassurance to these individuals and also to let time to pass without putting more pressure on them. Therefore, school members need time to adapt and get used tooo the new idea of change in the school organization (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989).

Political resistance. Organization members engaged in political resistance think that they will lose something of value when the change is implemented. They might lose their power base, position and role in the organization, status, size of budget, or even personal compensation (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989). In these instances, the change agent becomes a negotiator, trying to trade something of value with something else that is valuable (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989).

Ideological resistance. Intellectually honest people can sometimes disagree on the need for organizational change, by analyzing the proposed change and genuinely believing that the proposed change is ill-timed, will simply not work, and/or will cause more damage than improvement. That is to say, resistance to change can result from intellectual differences in genuine beliefs, feelings or philosophies (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989). Teachers may feel that the proposed changes are the wrong thing to do or the changes contradict their deeply held values. When they feel that the planned change is poorly conceived, they provide their logical reasons why they feel like that and resist change. In these cases, the change agent's strategy is to gather more data, more facts to support the case for change and to try again to persuade those resisting the change (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989). In this category of resistance, a change agent can influence intellectually honest people by building one's case with further documentation, data, and sound reasoning.

Resistance to Change in Education

As mentioned earlier in the first section, the forces supporting the distribution of leadership originates from the high demands which is caused by the high dynamic school work environment. Many forces for change are a recurring feature of school life. Fullan (2009) found that it is inevitable that there will be some level of resistance to change from both school leaders and staff. People tend to resist change because they are forced to adopt new ways of doing things. Team leaders must understand why people resist change. The most powerful barriers to change include uncertainty, concern over personal loss, group resistance, dependence, misplaced trust in administration, and awareness of potential issues with the proposed change (Fullan, 2009; Spector, 2011).

Uncertainty. Any change creates some potential uncertainties and teachers may resist the change because they are unsure of how this proposed change will affect their work and personal lives (Spector, 2011).

Concern over personal loss. Appropriate change should benefit the school district and school as a whole. However, some staff members may perceive the cost of change in terms of lost power, prestige, salary, quality of work, or other benefits as being greater than the rewards of change (Spector, 2011). Organizational members may feel change will negatively affect their decision-making authority, accessibility to information, and autonomy (Fullan, 2009).

Group resistance. Groups establish norms of behavior and performance; these norms that are communicated to members establish the boundaries of expected behaviors (Fullan, 2009). Group members who do not comply with the norms experience sanctions imposed by the whole group (Fullan, 2009). If

school leaders initiate changes that threaten the staffs' norms, they are likely to meet with resistance. So, the degree of resistance is proportionate to the cohesiveness of the group. The more cohesive the staff is, the greater their resistance to change will be (Spector, 2011).

Dependence. Dependency is not all bad. However, dependency on others can lead to resistance to change. Dependent staff members who rely heavily on the leader for guidance and feedback may not adopt any new methods unless they know that the leaders favors the change (Spector, 2011).

Trust in administration. Fullan (2009) argued that the level of trust organizational members have in their leaders can vary substantially among schools. Where trust is low, a natural first reaction is to resist a proposed change. On the other hand, when trust is high, organization members are more likely to support a proposed change. Where there is deep distrust staff members often resist changes, even when they are understood and they can benefit from them (Fullan, 2009).

Awareness of weaknesses in the proposed change. Members may resist change if they are aware of potential problems in the proposed change (Fullan, 2009). If staff articulate their reasons for resistance to the leader and back up their case with clear data and information, this form of resistance can be beneficial to the school district and to the school. Leaders can use this information to improve their change proposals (Fullan, 2009).

Management Strategies for Resistance

Mullins (2005) studied the human responses to change and how to manage resistance. The author argued that it is critical to understand human behaviour in the organization. Individuals may react to the challenge of change with some emotions like uncertainty, frustration or fear and may feel threatened and disoriented. Therefore, people often exhibit a defensive and negative attitude and resist change initiatives (Mullins, 2005). Because change is a complex and psychological event, the author advised that the power of change needs to be managed effectively. In order to be successful, both dedicated workforce and effective management of change are necessary in organizations (Mullins, 2005). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the psychological perceptions of teachers towards change, because neglecting these perceptions will negatively affect any change attempts.

Fisher (2000) postulated three management strategic approaches that can be taken towards dealing with resistance; win-lose, lose-lose, and win-win approaches (Fisher, 2000). The win-lose approach, is used to force the resisting group to capitulate. It is done through either a socially acceptable mechanism such as a majority vote, or could be done through secret strategies as threatening the resisting group (Fisher, 2000). The author believed that there will be a victor whose valued outcome is achieved but there is also the vanquished who may prepare very carefully for the next round. Fisher concluded that in the long run, everyone loses. The lose-lose approach is used when disagreement is inevitable (Fisher, 2000). This strategy is exemplified by smoothing over conflict or by reaching a form of compromise. The costs are less for a compromise because each party gets some of what it wants, and accepts partial satisfaction (Fisher, 2000).

The win-win approach, on the other hand, is a conscious and systematic attempt by using collaborative problem-solving to maximize the outcomes of both parties (Fisher, 2000). This strategy sees the conflict as a problem to be solved rather than a war to be won. The author believed that the management concept should look for both parties versus the problem, rather than looking for one party versus the other. Fisher (2000) contended that his approach could be conducted through full problem definition, analysis and development of alternatives which will lead to a consensus decision on mutually agreeable solutions. This approach is in agreement with the manipulation and co-optation approach postulated by Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) to manage resistance.

The win-win approach emphasizes on the quality of the long term relationships based on trust and acceptance between parties, rather than short term accommodations based on suspicion and hostility (Fisher, 2000). The author concluded that win-win approach requires a very high degree of patience and skill in human relations and problem solving.

In school settings, school members might display defensive and negative attitudes because of their uncertainty, fear and frustration about change initiatives. Change may affect individuals in educational organizations differently (Fullan, 2009). Therefore, the successful implementation of change demands positive action from school principals. Additionally, administrators are advised to consider the situational factors and respond appropriately using a contingency approach. (Fullan, 2009).

Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) postulated six specific methods for a team leader that can be used to overcome resistance to change and can be summarized in the following points:

First, engage in education and communication. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) contended that individuals in the school organization prefer to be informed about the nature of and need for change before attempting to implement the change. The logic of change needs to be explained. When resistance is based on inaccurate or lack of information, the authors recommended this strategy.

Second, encourage participation and involvement, by allowing people to collaborate in planning, designing and implementing the changes (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). This approach provides school members opportunities to contribute ideas and advice that support the change. Change initiators can use this strategy when they do not have all the information they need to design the changes but other members have important information and considerable power to resist.

Third, provide facilitation and support to staff subjected to the change. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) suggested to deal with resistance by providing emotional and material help; people who are experiencing hardships because of the change should be actively listened to by school administrators about their ideas, problems and complaints, with leaders using any of their ideas that have merit. Supportive principals ease the transition process. This strategy is used when school members are frustrated by work constraints and difficulties that are encountered in the change process and need support during the adjustment.

Fourth, utilize negotiation and agreement. This approach will provide incentives to actual or potential change-resistors in schools (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). This approach is preferred when someone in school organization clearly loses something of value in the change process and has power to resist.

Fifth, engage in manipulation and co-optation when necessary. In order to reach the desired change, influencing other people in the organization is attempted, by providing the necessary information and setting up the required events. The authors added that this approach better be postponed till the aforementioned tactics do not work or are seen as expensive (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

Sixth, implement explicit and implicit coercion. Change initiators employ the force of their authority for acceptance of the change by people in the organization (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Resistors are threatened with undesirable consequences if they do not comply. Change agents with considerable power might resort to this method, especially when speed is essential like in crisis situations. However, this coercive method might have negative effects such as frustration, fear, revenge and alienation which in turn may result in poor performance, dissatisfaction and employee turnover (Woodman & Pasmore, 1988).

Talmaciu and Maracine (2010) described other management approaches to resistance. One of these approaches is withdrawal, especially when management is not interested in solving problems. The authors stressed that this strategy is dangerous because it can lead to blockage of communication both horizontally and vertically in the organization. Reconcilement, is another strategy used by managers who seek the others' approval, rather than seeking to get the organizational objectives achieved (Talmaciu & Maracine, 2010). Compromise is often achieved through negotiations. Force, on the other hand, is the approach used in order to achieve the objectives of productivity. Confrontation is defined by Talmaciu and Maracine as the only approach that leads to the final settlement.

In summary, it is clear that the research findings of the main reasons behind resistance to change within educational organizations include interference with need fulfilment, selective perception, habit, inconvenience or loss of freedom, economic implications, fear of the unknown, threats to power or influence, organizational structure and limited resources. It is crucial to add that effective management

of change in school organizations is based on understanding of human behaviours and psychological perceptions of organization members such as teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to manage psychological transition of organization members effectively in order to attain successful change.

Future of Distributed Leadership

Distributed Leadership is Currently at a Cross-Roads

The future of distributed leadership has become critical since the debate over its effectiveness remains active. Youngs (2009) argued that distributed leadership has currently reached a critical point in its development, it is at the "crossroads" of where it could predominantly be situated in the field of school leadership.

Youngs (2009) suggested that the field of distributed leadership is drifting towards a somewhat un-critical position and highlighted four key areas of concern: a lack of critique against policy, an under-emphasis of historical precedents, ignorance of parallel developments, and a lack of attention to power relations. He called for the development of a critical perspective to complement and challenge the descriptive and normative approaches which dominate the literature (Youngs, 2009).

It is true that the current researches on the future of distributed leadership in educational system highlight the complexity of the concept development. For that reason, most of the current researches refer to Peter Gronn's suggestion for a more "hybrid approach" or a mixed leadership pattern instead of a distributed approach to leadership (Gronn, 2009a, 2009b).

Hybrid Leadership

The concept of "hybridity" is one which emphasizes the complementarity of differing or even seemingly opposed concepts. In his work, Gronn (2009b) paid tribute to the knowledge and insight that the recent interest in a distributed leadership perspective has generated. Gronn proposed that theorists should now engage in the beginning of thinking of what would be next or what could be a post-distributed leadership development period. While distributed leadership will continue to assist in understanding school-level decision making practice, Gronn (2009b) articulated the need to move beyond distributed leadership and have argued a case for hybridity as a more accurate model of the patterns of practice which include emergent activities that cut across the organization vertically and horizontally. As the concept of hybrid leadership is still emerging, Gronn (2009b) agrees that whatever the future might hold for this particular idea, the opportunity to reflect on its career history and scholarly uptake has reinforced the claim that distributed leadership's contribution to better understanding and appraising the work of organizations, especially schools, has so far been both insightful and productive.

The future of distributed leadership may be promising but the literature may use different terms to conceptualize some alternative theoretical approaches for example "team leadership" or what is currently known as "team-based leadership".

Team-Based Leadership

The team-based leadership concept was developed several years ago and was met with great interest. In an editorial article by Day et al. (2006), the authors stressed that the field of team-based leadership is on the cusp of some very significant advances. The team-based leadership concept involves the social context that is associated with individuals working in teams in addition to the context associated with teams working with other teams in a broader organizational context (Day et al., 2006).

Literature studying leadership in team-based organizations provides a fairly diverse set of frames for understanding team leadership. Some studies adopt a collective level in examining the specific type of leadership in a team, whether a vertical, share or distributed form of leadership (Pearce & SimsJr., 2002) and the relative effects on team-level outcomes (Moregeson & DeRue, 2006). Others adopted a more relational focus by examining the types of exchange in teams and in individual exchanges with their leader or the team as a whole (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999). In their conclusion, the authors

asked, which of these approaches is the "real" team-based leadership model? They answered the real model could be a mixture of all of the above (Day et al., 2006). Using this mixture of approaches, one can depict the elements and processes of distributed leadership as shown in the following model.
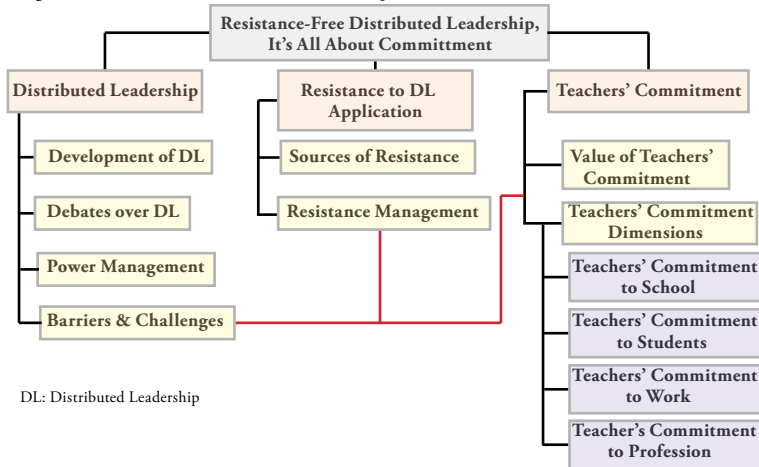
Figure 1. Resistance-Free Distributed Leadership

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of distributed leadership and its relation to the sources of resistance; and the role of teachers' commitment in building a resistance-free environment. The connection between barriers and challenges to distributed leadership (red line) and resistance shows how closely related they are to teachers' commitment, which is crucial to create a suitable environment for distributed leadership success.

Conclusion

The concept of distributed leadership has emerged as a highly promising response to the complex challenges currently facing schools. Challenges include the increasing work-load, rapid technological development, and external pressure for educational effectiveness. These complex issues far exceed the capacities of any individual leader. Based on the literature review, trust and teachers' commitment are both valuable and crucial elements for a successful application of distributed leadership as well as a guard against resistance. If schools are to flourish in the future, they will need to effectively apply distributed leadership in a resistance-free environment which will be beneficial not only for students' educational achievements and teaching effectiveness but also for enhancing teachers' job satisfaction.

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