

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPAL'S DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between principal's distributed leadership and teachers' organizational commitment at Basic Education High Schools in Sarlingyi Township. The sample schools were selected using the criterion that the principal has been at the current school for at least two years in this study. Two research instruments, Distributed Leadership School Survey (DLSS) and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), were used to measure the relationship between the variables. A total of 255 teachers (78 senior teachers, 143 junior teachers and 34 primary teachers) from the sample schools participated in this study. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation were used to analyze the collected data. There was also found that the level of teachers' organizational commitment was high with the mean value of 4.16. When studying the correlation between principal's distributed leadership and teachers' organizational commitment, there was a positive relationship ($r=0.494$, $p<.001$) in selected schools. Qualitative findings also suggested that principal's distributed leadership is positively related to teachers' organizational commitment. According to the result of the findings, it can be concluded that there has been a high level of teacher organizational commitment where their principals practiced distributed leadership in their schools.

Keywords: distributed leadership, organizational commitment

Introduction

Distributed leadership can turn schools into learning organizations (Bennett, 2003); it is the inevitable in an organization wishing to prosper in a world of increasing challenges (Harris 2007). Increasingly, organizations across the globe are embracing more to have a greater level of influence and a broader voice across the organization (Jacobs, 2010). Distributed leadership allows the teachers with expertise in specific areas of need to have input in the decision-making processes of the school. By allowing teachers and other school leaders to contribute in the decision-making processes, principals are able to provide the future leaders of the school with valuable leadership experiences (Jacobs, 2010).

In addition, organizational commitment is an attitude which includes: strong belief in and acceptance of an organization's goals and values, willingness to exert significant effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. Teachers' organizational commitment is crucial for organizational effectiveness (Yukl, 2010). Therefore, in this study, the relationship between distributed leadership and organizational commitment of teachers in selected basic education high schools was explored.

Significance of the Study

Distributed leadership may prove to be a key ingredient in the aforementioned management issues. Smith (2007) suggested organizational commitment is positively related to the successful implementation of a distributed leadership governance model. The organizational commitment of teachers tends to align with the staff morale and retention (Jacobs, 2010). Teachers' commitment is the significant factors in efforts to improve schools outcomes,

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especially student academic achievement. It also provide greater results to administrative supports, teacher collegiality, professional influence, and positive student behaviors (Smith, 2009).

Moreover, obtaining a more thorough understanding of distributed leadership, its application can have contributive results to school governance and the impact of teachers' organizational commitment provides positive outcomes to school leaders, administrators and teachers. If distributed leadership practices can engage the informal leaders and formal leaders in the school decision-making process and increase their commitment to the organization, then the leaders need to support the deeper development of distributed leadership practices effectively (Yukl, 2010).

Therefore, this study aimed to provide evidence whether there is the relationship between distributed leadership and teachers' organizational commitment in their schools.

Research Objectives

The general purpose of this study is to examine teachers' perception on the relationship between principal's distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment at selected Basic Education High Schools in Sarlingyi Township.

The specific purposes of this study are;

- To investigate teachers' perception of principal's distributed leadership,
- To determine the teachers' perception of their organizational commitment, and
- To analyze the relationship between principal's distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers perceive their principal's distributed leadership in selected high schools in Sarlingyi Township?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions on their organizational commitment in selected Basic Education High Schools?
3. Is there any relationship between principal's distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment in selected Basic Education High Schools?

Definition of Key Terms

This study was guided by the following definitions of key terms.

- **Leadership:** Leadership has been defined as interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specialized goal or goals (Sahni & Vayunandan, 2012).
- **Distributed Leadership:** Distributed leadership is a leadership phenomenon in which leadership activities should not be handled by one individual but should be shared among several people in an organization or team (Storey, 2004).
- **Commitment:** Commitment is seen to be one of the more desirable attributes of a teacher. The term "Commitment" can be used in a variety of ways to describe a number of teacher behaviors and attitudes (Crosswell, 2004).

- **Organizational Commitment:** Organizational commitment is the employees' state of being committed to assist in the achievement of the organization's goals, and involves the employees' levels of identification, involvement, and loyalty (Drucker, 2000).

Review of Related Literature

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action. It emerges from a variety of sources depending on the issue and who has the relevant expertise or creativity. For Spillance, Halverson, & Diamond (2004), the appropriate unit of analysis is not leaders or what they do but the activity in which they engage. Leadership activity is constructed in the interaction of leaders, followers, and their situation in the execution of particular leadership tasks. As illustrated as follows. In this view, leadership activity involves three essential constituting elements – leaders, followers, and situation. It does not reside in any one of these elements, and each is a prerequisite for leadership activity. Our perspective shifts the unit and analysis from the individual actor or group of actors to the web of leaders, followers and situations that give activity its form. This suggests that, depending on the prevailing situation, leadership may be distributed so that, dependent on context, a leader may become a follower.

(a) Five Aspects of Distributed Leadership

The sources of initiative cannot be marked out precisely in practice. In 2004, the Hay Group Education (UK) (as cited in Harrison, Duif, & Dartel, 2013) developed a continuum consisting of five aspects of distributed leadership. Their sliding scale shows accents in initiatives and scope of decision making as follows:

- Instruct – where initiatives and ideas come only from leaders at or near the top of a hierarchical organizational structure;
- Consult – where staff have the opportunity for input but decisions are still made at a distance from them by others near or at the top;
- Delegate – where staff take initiative and make decisions within predetermined boundaries of responsibility and accountability;
- Facilitate – where staff at all levels are able to initiate and champion ideas
- Neglect – where staff are forced to take initiative and responsibility due to a lack of direction at the top.

In conclusion, defining distributed leadership was an essential task due to its close affiliation with other leadership models. Democratic leadership, dispersed leadership, collaborative leadership, and shared leadership were proximate terms linked to distributed leadership (Oduro, 2004). A summary report by the National College for School Leadership (2003, cited in Jacobs, 2010) echoed the essential characteristics found in the preceding definitions. (i) Distributed leadership is a group activity working through and within relationships. (ii) Many people are involved in the leadership activity than might traditionally be assumed. (iii) Distributed leadership draws on the variety of expertise in the organization to complete ongoing, diverse organizational tasks.

(b) Importance of Distributed Leadership

Administrators and teachers worked together on committees, often the school's improvement committee or related efforts. In the latter case, they worked together as equals-planning next steps, sharing and reaction to ideas, and making decisions.

Educational leadership has a two folds component. Distributed leadership comfortably coexists in a pool of multiple theories. Distributed leadership developed through empirical enquiry and exploration. Student outcomes are more likely to improve when leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and when teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them. Student and teacher morale levels improved where teachers felt more included and involved in decision- making related to the school development and change. Many schools are actively trying to create distributed leadership by reallocating responsibility and authority more broadly within the workforce of the school. The goal of distributed cognition is to describe how distributed units are coordinated by analyzing the interactions between individuals, the representational media used, and the environment within which the activity takes place (Harris, 2007).

Harris (2002, cited in Smith, 2007) also provided several implications that are important to the practice of distributed leadership. First, the principal must be committed to distributed leadership among many individuals. Second, a collaborative culture must be in placer for distributed leadership to occur. Third, the distributed leadership team must work toward the same vision and goals. Fourth, in order for distributed leadership to be successful, the goals must be tied to student achievement. Fifth, distributed leadership practice must be embedded, in faculty meetings, committee meetings and grade level meetings, within the school culture. In order for distributed leadership to take place a principal must give up some power and control. If numerous leadership tasks are to be distributed among multiple leaders, then a clear, well defined vision and mission need to be in place. This is necessary for the entire organization to work collectively in an effort to demonstrate growth and improve instructionally and organizationally as a whole.

In short, distributive leadership in schools is purported by some to help schools run more efficiently and effectively (Grant, 2011). Effective distributed leadership is anchored in a constructivist approach. School leadership, for example, provides teachers the resources, support, and authority needed to succeed in initiatives that are aligned with the school's mission. Therefore, school leaders function to equip and serve rather than monopolize school governance decisions. Effective distributed leadership recognizes teachers as the group primarily responsible for implementing programs and turning vision into reality (Trammell, 2016).

Organizational Commitment

Allen and Meyer (1990) defined organizational commitment as a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization. On the other hand, commitment can be characterized by a strong personal belief in and acceptance of the organizational goals and values, a desire to exert oneself for the betterment of the organization, and a strong will to remain with the organization (Murphy, 2013). Organizational commitment is a powerful tool that can be applied as an aid to achieved higher level of performance and to developed and maintain discipline in an organization. The construct has been found to be related to many important outcome variable such as; performance, absenteeism, employees' turnover, tardiness etc.

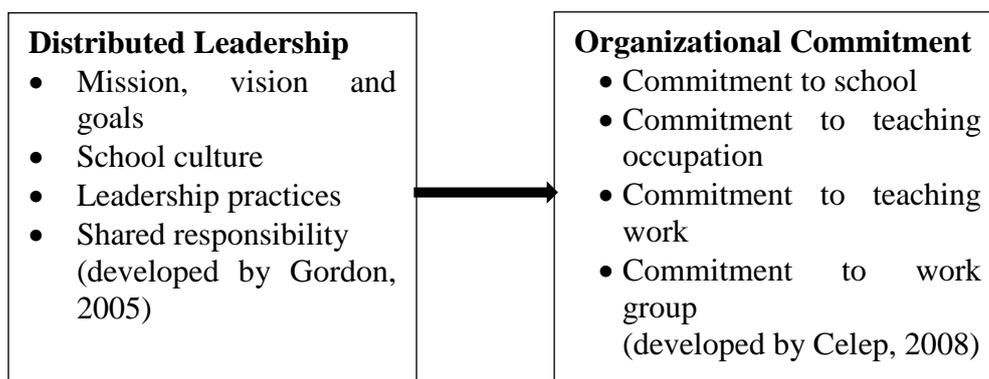
The strength of any profession depends upon the degree of commitment of its members. Teacher is no exception. Its stature depends upon the degree of commitment of its members to the goals and purposes of Education. Raymond (1964) asserted that even though committed teachers differ from each other in many ways:

- (i) Desire to be a good teacher.
- (ii) Be more than a purveyor of facts.
- (iii) Recognizes and accepts the worth of each individual.
- (iv) Fulfills his professional responsibilities.

The effectiveness level of an organization necessitates adequate organizational formation, satisfactory sources, consistent policies based on scientific and technological developments and qualified employee with healthy working conditions, and also its aim should be directive for social needs. To form the appropriate attitudinal alteration for the goal of educational organizations, to create satisfactory conditions for getting students to be voluntary for this attitudinal alternation and to determine the demand for getting students to acquire the stated knowledge and ability are the most important tasks. In that position, the teachers who are responsible for arranging this task need to be efficient; and on the other hand, the existence of the conditions that motivate the teachers for performing this task is the main principal. In one way, one of the concepts that determine the employee’s interests towards the objects in working environment is the employee’s level of organizational commitment (Celep, 2008).

Drucker (2000) argued that certain characteristics, attitudes, and relationships may play key roles in environments with high levels of organizational commitment: personal characteristics, job attitudes, job characteristics and relationships with co-workers and supervisors.

Theoretical Framework



Methodology

Research Method

Quantitative research method was used in this study.

Population and sample

The target population of this study is principals and 277 teachers from 11 Basic Education High Schools (BEHS) in Sarlingyi Township. Out of these schools, eight schools were selected

by using the criterion that principals had at least two years services in the current schools. Therefore, 255 teachers from selected BEHS were participated in this study.

Research Instruments

Two research instruments: Distributed Leadership School Survey (DLSS) by Buttram and Pizzini (2009) and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) were utilized in this study to collect quantitative data. There are 31 items which represented four dimensions in each instrument, therefore, totally 62 items with the five points Likert-scales from strongly disagree to strongly agree were used in this study. Cronbach's alpha (α) was 0.937 for Distributed Leadership Scale and 0.925 for Organizational Commitment Scale.

Data Collection

After requesting permission from the responsible person, questionnaires for teachers were distributed to the selected BEHSs in Sarlingyi Township on 5 and 6 December, 2016 and it took one week to collect the data back. Data were collected from all teachers at different positions in the selected schools by using two questionnaires.

Analysis of the Data

The collected data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software in order to investigate the differences among selected schools. The responses to each dimension were calculated using mean and standard deviation scores. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was utilized to know the relationship between principal's distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment.

Findings

Based on the analysis of the data, means scores of distributed leadership and teachers' organizational commitment were analyzed and interpreted and then the relationship between these two scores were calculated. They were illustrated in Table (1), (2) and (3).

Table 1 Mean Scores of Principal's Distributed Leadership Perceived by Teachers in Selected Schools

Dimensions	Schools								Total (N=255)
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	
MVG	4.27	3.89	4.56	3.76	4.12	4.20	3.94	4.01	4.13
SC	4.24	3.90	4.59	3.76	4.13	3.97	3.90	4.01	4.10
LP	4.24	3.87	4.36	3.74	4.08	3.85	3.90	4.00	4.04
SR	4.24	3.81	4.24	3.76	4.18	3.74	3.72	4.07	4.00
DL	4.25	3.87	4.44	3.75	4.13	3.91	3.87	4.02	4.07

Score: Low = 1.00-2.49

Moderate=2.50-3.49

High = 3.50-5.00

Note: MVG = Mission, vision and goals SR = Shared responsibilities SC = School culture
DL = Distributed leadership LP = Leadership practice

According to Table 1, based on the teachers' responses, it was found that teachers perceived that principals from selected schools implement distributed leadership in their school leadership. Teachers strongly agreed that although principals from schools (S1, S3, S5 and S8)

utilize distributed leadership, in schools (S2, S4, S6 and S7), it was found that teachers agreed that distributed leadership is implemented sometimes by their principals. Since the overall mean value of distributed leadership was 4.07, it could be concluded that teachers perceived that principals from selected schools implement distributed leadership in school.

Table 2 Mean Scores of Teacher Organizational Commitment Perceived by Teachers in Selected Schools

Dimensions	Schools								Total (N=255)
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	
CS	4.27	4.16	4.62	4.16	4.04	3.55	3.86	3.98	4.15
CWG	3.74	3.41	3.90	3.59	3.71	3.48	3.33	3.45	3.62
CTW	4.3	4.37	4.51	4.39	4.36	4.26	4.14	4.20	4.34
CTO	4.52	4.65	4.70	4.68	4.47	4.39	4.33	4.46	4.55
OC	4.21	4.15	4.43	4.20	4.14	3.92	3.91	4.02	4.17

Score: Low=1.00-2.49 Moderate=2.50-3.49 High=3.50-5.00

Note: CS = Commitment to School CWG = Commitment to Work group
 CTW = Commitment to Teaching work OC = Organizational Commitment
 CTO = Commitment to Teaching occupation

According to Table 2, teachers from selected schools highly committed to their organization. With regard to the dimensions of organizational commitment, teachers perceived that teachers strongly and highly committed in all dimensions of organizational commitment except that teachers from schools (S2, S6 and S7) moderately commit to the dimension of “Commitment to Work Group”. Since the overall mean value of organizational commitment was 4.17, it can be concluded that teachers from selected schools highly commit to their organization.

To find out the relationship between principal’s distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment in the sample schools, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted.

The relationship between principals distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment in the sample schools can clearly be seen in the following Table 3. In Table 3, principal’s distributed leadership was significantly related to teacher organizational commitment, ($r= 0.494, p<.01$). The correlation is positive which means that the principal with strong distributed leadership tended to enhance the organizational commitment of teachers. According to Cohen guideline, the effect size is moderate.

Table 3 Correlations between Principal’s Distributed Leadership and Teacher Organizational Commitment in Selected Schools

Variables	Distributed Leadership	Organizational Commitment
Distributed Leadership	1	.494**
Sig (2-tailed)		.000
N	255	255
Organizational Commitment	.494**	1
Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
N	255	255

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In conclusion, it can be concluded that the principal's distributed leadership tended to enhance the levels of teachers' organizational commitment.

Open-ended Responses

Among the total of 255 teachers, 84 (32.94%) teachers participated in qualitative study. They responded open-ended questions with regard to (1) teachers' perception on principal's distributed leadership and (2) their level of organizational commitment. The following opinions and suggestions were the responses of teachers from the two open-ended questions included in the questionnaires.

With regard to teachers' perception on principal's distributed leadership, the participant teachers responded as follows:

- Most of the teachers (N=71, 84 %) said that the principal should be well-disciplined and should set clear objectives and goals for their school improvement. Some teachers (N=52, 63%) asserted that the principal must be on the same page in their school management. Some teachers (N=42, 50%) said that both principal and teachers should be responsible for their duties. A few teachers (N=26, 31%) suggested that as a good leader, the principal should be knowledgeable and qualified about school management. Mutual trust and respect between the administrator and teachers is one of the important facets for the organizational development (N=66, 78%). Few teachers (N=37, 45%) suggested that regularly meetings can improve teaching and learning. The principal always needs guide and help teachers in teaching and to direct teachers to participate in school activities (N=44, 53%). Collaboration of the administrator and teachers positively affect students (N=60, 72%). A few teachers (N=16, 20%) said that principal plays an important role to improve teaching and learning.

Relating to their level of organizational commitment, the participant teachers responded as follows:

- Almost all teachers (N=78, 93%) suggested that in order to develop their organization, the teachers should participate and collaborate actively in school activities. Some teachers (N=52, 63%) said that teachers should teach their students with good-will. Only a few teachers (N=11, 12%) said that principal and teachers must discuss and suggest their difficulties and help each other. Teachers need to accomplish their duties and responsibilities (N=31, 37%). Most of the teachers (N=67, 80%) said that they feel proud for their profession. Unity of teachers makes positive all-round development of the school (N=68, 82%). A few teachers (N=33, 40%) suggested that the development of a school depends upon the commitment of its principal and teachers.

Conclusion and Discussion

The level of principal's distributed leadership perceived by teachers was high in most of the schools. Specifically, the high level for each dimension of principal's distributed leadership such as mission, vision and goals and school culture was found in these schools. The dimensions of leadership practices and shared responsibilities were good in all of the schools.

The positive and good situation for the dimensions of commitment to school and commitment to work group was found. There was a significant difference in principal's distributed leadership perceived by teachers among the schools. There was a significant difference in teacher organizational commitment among the schools. There was a significant and

strong relationship between principal's distributed leadership and teachers' organizational commitment. There was a significant and positive relationship between all dimensions of principal's distributed leadership and teachers' organizational commitment as perceived by teachers.

In conclusion, according to the both qualitative research findings and quantitative research findings, it can be concluded that principal's distributed leadership positively related to teacher organizational commitment. Moreover, teacher organizational commitment depends on principal's distributed leadership.

The findings of this study indicated that most of the teachers strongly agreed that the principals implemented distributed leadership in their school setting. It is found that the level of mission, vision and goals dimension was high in most of the schools in this study. The results showed that teachers in most of the schools perceived that teachers and administrators collectively establish school mission, vision and goal statements.

With regard to school culture, most of the teachers agreed that there is a high level of mutual trust and respect among the administrator and teachers. The results indicated that teachers perceived that collaboration between administrators and teachers has positively affected students.

With regard to leadership practices, most of the teachers perceived that the principals give teachers leadership responsibilities to fill some school leadership roles. Teachers strongly agreed that opportunities for teachers to play actively in decision-makings given by the administrators make the schools improve. Moreover, most of the teachers agreed that teachers play an active role in the school beyond their classroom teaching responsibilities. Concerning to shared responsibilities, most of the teachers strongly agreed that both the principal and teachers are responsible for their duties.

Findings suggested that there was a significant difference in teacher organizational commitment among the schools. According to the results, it was found that most of the teachers strongly agreed that teachers commit to their organization. The result showed that most of the teachers perceived that the commitment to the work group is lowest among the dimensions of teachers' organizational commitment. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers to collaborate and cooperate within their work group.

Concerning to commitment to school, most of the teachers strongly agreed that teachers perceived to put work in a great deal of efforts in order to help their schools to be successful. It was also found that teachers agreed that they feel emotionally attached to their schools.

The result showed that most of the teachers strongly agreed that in order to develop the organization, the teachers need to participate and collaborate actively in school activities. Among the factors that decide teachers' commitment and dedication degree are: interaction between teachers, teacher-student relationship, the quality of the work teachers do at school, the compatibility of school administration. Thus, it was consistent with Mart (2013).

Relating commitment to teaching work, the result indicated that teachers strongly agreed that teachers enjoy teaching and accomplish the job with enthusiasm. According to the finding, it was found that teachers perceived to accept any type of job assigned in order keep working for their school. Besides, it was found that teachers strongly agreed that they do not want to leave their current job. It was consistent with the description of Muhammand & Mohammad (2012).

Recommendation for Further Research

In this study, principal's distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment at Basic Education High Schools in Sarlingyi Township was investigated. Like this research, more researches concerned with principal's distributed leadership and teacher organizational commitment in elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools should be further conducted in Townships, States or Regions in Myanmar.

Further work needs to be done to investigate the relationship between the variables in this study in elementary and secondary school. Based on those data, the improvement of the schools can be done and the needs of the schools can be fulfilled. Besides, it is hoped that the principals, the parents, the teachers, the students and the community will carry out educational activities and accomplish the educational mission, vision and goals cooperatively with their great effort.

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