

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER
AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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J. Matthew Trammell

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Dissertation Approval

Student Name: J. Matthew Trammell

Dissertation Title: The Relationship Between Distributed Leadership and Teacher Affective Commitment in Public and Private Schools

This dissertation has been approved and accepted by the faculty of the Education Department, Carson-Newman University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Education.

Dissertation Committee:

Signatures: (Print and Sign)

Deborah Hayes

Dr. Deborah Hayes
Dissertation Chair

P. Mark Taylor

Dr. P. Mark Taylor
Methodologist Member

Marilyn Moreno

Dr. Marilyn Moreno
Content Member

Approved by the Dissertation Committee Date: April 12, 2016

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Date: May 2016

Abstract

Relationship Between Distributed Leadership and Affective Commitment

John Matthew Trammell

School of Education, Carson Newman University

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in public and private schools. The challenges facing educators in the modern school climate are unprecedented. Consequently, school leaders must be effective in harnessing the talents of each teacher in addressing complex challenges throughout the school community. The researcher conducted a correlational study while sampling a public school system and a private school. Participants completed a survey that assessed their perceptions of distributed leadership within, and affective commitment to, their school. Distributed leadership was measured utilizing Smith, Ross, and Robichaux's (2004) Leadership Density Inventory (LDI). Additionally, teacher affective commitment was measured by the revised, Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), designed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993).

Three Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficients were calculated to investigate the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among teachers in public and private schools. Data revealed a moderate and positive correlation between distributed leadership and affective teacher commitment. Specifically, the total sample of both public and private school teachers reported, $r_s(134) = .53, p < .001$. Public school teachers similarly reported $r_s(65) = .53, p < .001$, while private school teachers reported a slightly higher correlation, $r_s(69) = .59, p < .001$. The findings of this study support a distributed leadership model of school leadership as a means of increasing affective commitment among teachers.

Keywords: *Distributed leadership, shared leadership, organizational commitment, affective commitment*

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to several people. First, my beautiful wife, Sarah Raymond Trammell, who makes me smile every day. God blessed me beyond measure when he brought us together. Thank you for your tireless encouragement, patience, and inspiration.

I also want to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Michael L. Trammell and Pamela G. Trammell. To my Dad, you always instilled confidence in me and told me the only difference between a Mr. and a Dr. was perseverance. You were right. To my Mom, you have modeled the true essence of an educator and life-long learner. I could never have succeeded in this endeavor without you.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my brother, Mark E. Trammell, who inspires me with his tenacity, work ethic, and exceptional talent. I share this achievement with you, brother.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Increasingly, organizations across the globe are embracing a more democratic approach to corporate leadership. As a result, the expectation is for employees to have a greater level of influence and a broader voice across the organization. The 21st century employee brings a vast wealth of knowledge, as well as expectations and progressive views regarding organizational governance. Consequently, organizations are flattening the leadership structure.

Positional leadership is the exertion of influence onto employees due to organizational seniority as opposed to human capital. Positional leadership is insufficient to catalyze dynamic action. K-12 schools are certainly not immune to this change. As a result, school administrators must adapt to the shift in workplace governance and accommodate the strengths of the organization's faculty and staff.

Distributed leadership models and their impact on K-12 schools is a topic of significant interest to school administrators, teachers, and policy makers. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge applying the principles of distributed leadership to school leadership while investigating its impact on teachers' organizational commitment. In addressing the challenges facing school leaders, the principles of shared leadership provide a critical tool in maximizing the contributions of faculty.

The results of such inquiry need to be disseminated across all levels of the educational community. The principles of distributed leadership apply at all levels of the education community. First, school leaders must consider how this research impacts their

practice and administrative duties. Second, current teachers have the opportunity to consider their potential leadership role and future success. When given additional influence and responsibility, the investment in professional development and growth expands significantly. As a result, teacher preparatory programs must revisit established curriculum to ensure educators are trained both in pedagogy and content knowledge, as well as leadership. Leadership training, pedagogical training, and content area training become interwoven elements of a successful teacher-training program. Without the leadership component, teachers lack sufficient training to leverage the increased opportunity for democratic leadership present within a distributed leadership model. As professional educators become more prominently viewed as leaders, both within classrooms and the greater school community, increased attention is devoted to leadership development. Therefore, the teacher education program outcomes produce a more, well-rounded professional, not only proficient in the traditional teacher roles, but, also, in leadership.

Statement of the Problem

The merits of shared leadership have received significant attention. As a result of the increased burden on educators and the complexity of the school business, many school leaders arrive at the realization that alone, the job of leadership is massive and complex. The principal position, for example, acutely resembles this description. Standardized testing and other achievement measures create a set of constraints competing for instructional time. Instead, a more collaborative and inclusive approach is needed (Angelle, 2010). According to Kilts (2007), the process of leadership matters greatly. A well-defined process allows team members to know why their role matters

and how it contributes to the greater context of the organization. This knowledge serves to increase motivation and satisfaction. Effective leadership aligns actions with the organization's brand, while focusing on the customer's experience. In educational settings, effective leadership of motivated and professionally satisfied faculty and staff members aligns the school's identity and mission with student experience. For this to occur, team members must be empowered with information.

Significance of the Study

Obtaining a more thorough understanding of distributed leadership, its application to school governance, and its impact on teacher job satisfaction provides school leaders and administrators with valuable tools. The challenges facing school leaders are extraordinary. In order to succeed in school leadership, the talents and abilities of each faculty member must be leveraged. School leaders can achieve this by consistently investing in, empowering, and supporting each faculty member.

School principals have significant influence over school culture. According to Turan and Bektas (2013), a strong relationship between teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership practices of administrators exists. Effective school administrators seek to develop an atmosphere defined by trust, collaboration, and transparency. The result is a culture grounded in these values. Schools must invest towards this type of culture, however.

Distributed leadership is a form of leadership inclusive of all team members (Bostanci, 2013). Within a distributed leadership model faculty, staff, and administrators share equal responsibility and status as it relates to school governance and instructional decisions. Consequently, they also share in the successes and setbacks within the school.

This level of interdependence requires constant nurturing. As a result, distributed leadership is an outgrowth of consistent, empowered interactions between team members. In fact, Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, and Cagatay (2012) investigated the relationship between principal instructional leadership and teacher self-efficacy. They found principals' instructional leadership carried a significant influence on the degree to which teachers believed in their own impact. Principals embrace their responsibility for student achievement by engaging in instructional leadership. In support, Soehner and Ryan (2011) emphasized the importance of principals modeling a democratic leadership approach.

Theoretical Framework

Modern management literature demonstrates the importance and power of a distributed approach. Collins and Porras (1994) discussed the difference between clock building and time telling. Time telling occurs when a leader serves as the charismatic, primary driver of organizational progress. Here, organizations have potential for high degrees of success. However, the results are not sustainable. Under this leadership model, results are too dependent on the leader and thus contingent upon the leader's tenure. Conversely, clock building occurs when a leader distributes energy and authority throughout the entire organization. Even after the leader is gone, the organization can prosper (Collins & Porras, 1994). The key notion being considered pertains to the human level benefits of leadership equity. When teachers are free to contribute and meaningfully included in the governance of the school, they assume an elevated level of ownership, engagement, and commitment to the school. The results of this engagement

transcend the talent and charisma of the leader, both in results delivered and sustainability.

The conceptual framework for this research was based upon the application of this theory. Although a well-established concept, distributed leadership is gaining momentum in organizations across many sectors, including educational settings. Generationally, this change is also gaining momentum as younger employees view themselves and their relationship with their respective organizations differently. More than ever, employees desire a flat organization, absent of the rigorous hierarchy that defined much of the 20th century model. The 21st century employee desires a voice within the organization not limited to the parameters of role or job description. This expectation is certainly true for teachers as well. As a result, K-12 schools must adapt accordingly.

Research Question

The study is grounded in the following research question: What is the relationship between teachers' perceptions of distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in public and private schools? The researcher has established the following null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the correlation between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment of private school teachers in comparison to public school teachers.

Limitations and Delimitations

First, the volume of teachers surveyed is insufficient to draw a macro conclusion. The responses gleaned cannot be superimposed on the greater population of teachers. Nonetheless, it can serve as an indicator with strong application for school leaders. Also, teacher responses are limited by their imperfections. Events could impact teacher

responses and misrepresent feelings and conclusions. Additionally, the researcher conducted action research, and consequently examined a school of affiliation by current employment and a school system of affiliation by previous employment. The response rate and total number of participants also represent limitations for the study. Replication with a larger and more representative sample is discussed in the recommendations for further research section in Chapter five.

The researcher can control for some areas of potential error. The first delimitation is the quality of instruments used in surveying teachers. The researcher utilized existing instruments, with established validity and reliability. The Leadership Density Inventory (LDI) of Smith, Ross, and Robichaux (2004) has been proven to be a reliable measure of distributed leadership in schools from the perspective of teachers. Approval to utilize the LDI can be found in Appendix B. Also, the revised, Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), designed by Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993) has enjoyed accepted validity and reliability in assessing teacher's affective commitment levels. The researcher has included approval to utilize the ACS in Appendix C. Furthermore, the instruments were distributed by email utilizing a reputable company and platform, SurveyMonkey. Thus, teachers were afforded the opportunity to complete the questions in privacy and with confidence that other teachers and administrators would not have access to their responses.

Definition of Terms

Affective Commitment. Affective commitment refers to the emotional commitment and alignment of values that connects individuals to the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Distributed leadership. Distributed leadership refers to a collective and interactive approach to leading where leadership is “stretched over multiple leaders”

(Spillane, 2006, p.15).

Empowerment. Empowerment occurs as principals and other formal school leaders distribute leadership to teachers, allowing for a collaborative effort towards school improvement to occur (Lumpkin, Claxton, & Wilson, 2014).

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to the degree to which a teacher believes classroom instruction and experience can impact student achievement (Calik et al., 2012).

Shared leadership. Shared leadership equips team members to lead through social interaction and consists of four components: social process, multiple leaders, expertise, and context (Liang and Sandmann (2015).

Sustainable leadership. Sustainable leadership embraces a participatory culture by leveraging the talents of all stakeholders within the school community in making governance and policy decisions.

CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

The traditional, top-down role of the principal as sole leader is no longer viable in 21st century, K-12 schools (Kilinc, 2014). Defined by authority and hierarchy, this model of leadership proves insufficient in meeting the challenges facing schools. According to Beachum and Dentith (2004), a more relational model of leadership is needed to successfully meet the challenges facing K-12 schools. A more democratic model of leadership restructures school governance in addressing the needs of an increasingly diverse student body while developing and utilizing the talents of teachers as leaders. Lambert (2006) described the highest level of primary and secondary leadership as a distributed model. Here, all stakeholders are skillful leaders with a unified focus on student achievement. Within a distributed leadership model, leadership has been shared and willingly embraced. A shared vision is complimented by an evidence-based culture of improvement and student achievement. Use of data and evidence-based practices promote a collaborative and reflective faculty where roles are embraced and representative of a broader collaboration and collective responsibility (Lambert, 2006). In fact, Lazaridou and Fris (2008) asserted distributed leadership occurs when faculty members recognize the need for change and utilize their unique gifts to address these concerns. Faculty members are encouraged to take initiative. By taking individual initiative, it expands the locus of control from a small group of administrators to that of

all team members. Actions are followed by ongoing reflection, permeating all levels within the school community.

Effective distributed leadership is anchored in a constructivist approach. Leaders facilitate team member action (Womack & Loyd, 2004). 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. In this model, the principal not only allows autonomy but also prepares the way for it (Womack & Loyd, 2004). According to Lambert (2006), the pursuit of school improvement is highly related to leadership capacity. Leadership capacity involves developing areas of strength, nurturing a sense of unity, and adhering to the virtue of equal involvement in the process of each team member. Additionally, Fullan (2011) connected the building of both individual capacity and collective capacity as key elements of successful collaboration. As a result, school improvement becomes everyone's business and inclusive discussions are ongoing throughout the school in problem solving.

Sustainable Leadership

Distributed leadership within primary and secondary schools is essential in establishing sustainable leadership (Cook, 2014). Effective distributed leadership recognizes teachers as the group primarily responsible for implementing programs and turning vision into reality. In a study of 83 elementary, middle, and high school teachers, Cook reported the practice of distributing leadership as essential in creating a leadership sustainable structure able to solve the complexities facing schools. With this study, collaboration, shared vision, trust between administration and teachers, and two-way

communication resulted from the professional learning communities facilitated by sustainable leadership. Here, all stakeholders were given a voice and the opportunity to develop leadership abilities across the school community (Cook, 2014).

Elaborating on the conditions facilitative towards sustainable leadership, Cherkowski (2011) emphasized the importance of human emotion. In order to connect with teachers on a sustainable and passionate level, school leaders must encourage and foster an environment where the heart is valued in addition to the mind. Further, citing Mitchell and Sackney's (2009) sustainable learning community theory, Cherkowski asserted sustainability is accomplished through the nourishment of learning communities valuing wholeness and mutual commitment, among others. In addition, effective school leaders must seek to build a community of trust, transparency, learning, and shared leadership. When school leaders attend to the whole person, faculty members are more likely to remain committed to the school community and operate more effectively within it (Cherkowski, 2011).

A vital aspect of sustainability is the ability to handle change. Specifically, Harris (2008) described the leadership transformation of a high-poverty, primary school where throughout the 1990's students performed below grade level in reading and numeracy levels. In 2000, the deputy head teacher became head teacher and soon after the faculty submitted a strategic plan to turn the school around. At its core was building leadership depth throughout all levels of the school. All members of the school community were considered critical partners in successfully achieving a school turnaround of this proportion. Teachers were empowered to deal with situations as they arose instead of asking permission from formal leadership. Furthermore, teachers enjoyed leadership

development, were valued for expertise, and welcomed into a culture of mutual accountability in which each member's voice and perspective was valued. The school's transformation proved to be both dramatic and sustaining, enduring multiple leaders. Within seven years the school boasted significant value-added gains, in fact ranking in the top 1 percent in terms of contextual value-added scores. Responsibility, accountability, and understanding were all shared values.

Harris (2008) further described distributed leadership as extending into the student body, including student council meetings with the school Senior Leadership Team. Reflecting on the transformation, the head teacher credited the change in leadership structure as essential. Perhaps the greatest evidence in support of distributed leadership serving as the change agent can be found in the school's continued success in light of the head teacher's temporary reassignment (Harris, 2008).

Additionally, Wagner (2012) emphasized the importance of a distributed leadership model in sustaining an innovative and responsive organization. Interviewing a senior level executive, Wagner reported the need for information to freely flow throughout all levels of the organization rather than information sharing occurring in a traditional, top-down model. "Broken" and "relic" are terms used to describe the top-down models still utilized by many organizations (Wagner, 2012, p. 229). In contrast, organizations must embrace a democratized leadership model, capturing the ideas of all team members (Wagner, 2012). According to Fullan (2005), sustainable change is not dependent upon a specific leader. It is not leader-centric. In assessing the state of school leadership, Fullan revisited Collins' (2001) research of Level 5 leaders. As suggested by Collins, Level 5 leaders are the most effective leaders. These leaders build enduring and

excellent teams based on organizational principles, values, and processes. Unlike Level 4 leaders, Level 5 leaders create sustainable excellence precisely because the organization does not depend on a single leader (Collins, 2001). While Collins referred to research involving corporations, Fullan suggested the tendency of schools to find charismatic, Level 4 leaders is perhaps similarly prominent.

A Synergistic Practice

Distributed leadership, often also referred to as shared leadership, encapsulates more than the allocation of power. In fact, distributed leadership requires leaders cast a compelling vision. Gregerman (2007) described the role leaders play in an organization as story creators. Leaders share the vision, establish context, and equip team members to take an active role towards the fulfillment of the organization's vision. Organizational focus is on delivering exceptional results for customers and in order to succeed in that endeavor, each team member's strengths must be leveraged. Liang and Sandmann (2015) further asserted effective shared leadership requires leaders to engage in authentic social interaction, attained, in part, through the social capital leveraged from casting a compelling vision.

Distributed leadership leverages vision and molds it into a meaningful narrative. Gregerman (2007) suggested leadership inspires employees to view the organization and their contribution to it within the context of a larger story. Each team member plays an important role in the story, contributing unique skills, perspectives, and abilities. Consequently, leaders understand the need for each team member to be allocated an opportunity to play a leading role in the organizational story (Gregerman, 2007). In a study of aspiring California principals, Barton and Cox (2012) identified six essential

competencies effective instructional leaders possess. Half of the competencies directly relate to leading through shared vision, faculty growth, and collaboration with all stakeholders. Sharing a vision that engages faculty members facilitates a collaborative school (Barton & Cox, 2012).

Distributed leadership not only facilitates a collaborative school, but it does so strategically. Liang and Sandmann (2015) asserted team members must be provided the opportunity to lead within areas of expertise. Thus, school leaders must foster not only a strong sense of community, but must also place each team member in a role aligned with expertise and gifts. Compared to traditional, top-down leadership models, shared leadership has been found to result in higher levels of individual and organization performance while facilitative of teacher development. Dinham, Aubusson, and Brady (2008), further stressed the need for school leaders to focus not only on traditional administrative duties, but also on teaching and learning. When applied well, distributed leadership creates a shared synergy, activating the talents of all team members and exponentially allows improved educational instruction. This view is more holistic in application and denounces the notion that leadership in schools is zero-sum (2008).

Furthermore, distributed leadership activates the talents of all team members by embracing a relational focus. As stated by Baloglu (2012), distributed leadership possesses a relational, value-based component within organizational norms. In fact, the values of respect, teamwork, and inclusiveness lend themselves naturally to a distributed approach. Distributed leadership is grounded upon what Gronn (2002) asserted as a synergistic relationship between team members. Distributed leadership is not the action of a single leader bestowing authority to others. It is the result of team members across

the organization applying skills, ideas, and interests towards a shared objective. Moreover, distributed leadership decentralizes decision-making and influence, thus creating democracy across the school community. Teachers are empowered to make meaningful decisions impacting school governance. For example, Angelle (2010) described the experiences of teachers at Autumn Lake Middle School (ALMS). At ALMS, teachers met daily to discuss school governance issues, including class schedules, planning times, and discipline policies. The school principal served to equip and facilitate successful planning and implementation. Teachers and principal alike reported a culture marked by trust and teamwork. Here, a distributed leadership model was successfully implemented, evidenced by a focus on students shared amongst faculty and administration (Angelle, 2010).

In 2008, Sherer described a four-year case study of an Illinois-based middle school. Over a period of four years, teachers and school leaders were interviewed and observed. Formal leaders within the school intentionally created and supported authentic opportunities for teachers to lead. Consequently, throughout the school, teachers had the opportunity to lead from a platform of formal roles. For example, teachers led grade-level meeting while embracing the role of follower in a content-area meeting. The distribution of leadership resulted in the development of trust between teachers and principals. In practice, leadership roles of principals and teachers are sometimes interchangeable (Viviano, 2012; Spillane, 2006). The positional authority of the principal does not transfer to every meeting, committee, or task force. In school leadership structures such as committees, teachers have the opportunity to assume leadership (Spillane, 2006; Viviano, 2012). As suggested by Dinham et al. (2008), distributed

leadership allows the abilities of all team members to be applied towards improving teaching and learning.

Transformational Leadership

Distributed leadership facilitates transformational leadership. Organizations where leadership is distributed create a culture conducive to transformation. As stated by Wahab, Fuad, Ismail, and Majid (2014), transformational leadership occurs when school leaders demonstrate personal interest in teachers, provide meaningful opportunities for professional development, and include teachers in school governance. Transformational leadership can be described as a change process where team members are motivated and equipped to achieve higher levels of growth and organizational contribution. Further, Noland and Richards (2014) described transformational leadership as an outcome. In contrast to transactional leadership, which focuses more on setting goals, creating incentives, and providing feedback, transformational leadership seeks to move beyond defined metrics. It seeks to influence at an emotional level, inspiring team members to go beyond the established goals. In addition to empowerment, other positively correlated outcomes include motivation, innovation, and morality. Transformational leadership seeks to develop team members who can think critically and thrive in autonomy (Noland & Richards, 2014).

Transformational leadership continues to be more prominent in the 21st century. This change has been steadily occurring. Notably, Naisbitt (1982) projected ten significant trends impacting the world in the decades to come. Three trends strongly related to a distributed leadership model, including a move to decentralized organizations, participatory democracy, and a movement away from hierarchies towards

networking. The result of transformational leadership is empowerment. Empowerment then, is the result of the right kind of leadership. It is an outcome, not an input (Naisbitt, 1982).

The Practice of Empowerment

According to Nanus (1996), empowerment is a necessary response to the rise of the knowledge worker. Knowledge workers are highly educated and skilled in their industry and thus have their own ideas on the most effective direction to go in response to challenges and tasks. When provided the freedom to utilize their expertise with a level of autonomy, the results are often incredible. If leaders attempt to micro-manage these workers, however, the quality of the product will decrease. Leaders need to instead cast a vision, equip the team, and step back. In essence, the leader at this point moves to a role of service. The leader must focus on providing the team with any and all needed resources, while providing guiding feedback and encouragement. Such an approach engenders trust, communicates respect, and energizes (Byham & Cox, 1988; Nanus, 1996). Leaders are either providing team members with a dose of energy or sapping energy from them. The structure of leadership and governance has an enormous impact on whether or not energy is created or destroyed. The guiding factor, in fact, is the degree to which the organization is flattened. Flatter organizations empower team members and thus create energy. Conversely, organizations with multiple layers of bureaucracy enervate team members (Byham & Cox, 1988).

Organizations must empower team members and avoid policies that serve to decrease participation, morale, and energy. Describing the impetus for empowered team members, McLagan (2001) emphasized the changes in markets, technologies, and the

global economy requires a flattened organizational structure, on where hierarchies are dissembled and influence freely moves across job functions. Organizations are interdependent. All employees must also be continually learning. These changes are constant and create a dynamic requirement for new knowledge and process expertise. Thus, organizational competence cannot be achieved through a small cadre of formal leaders. It must result from the sum of each team member's knowledge and skill set. In terms of relationship between employee and organization, a fluid partnership results.

The new relationship between employee and organization represents a significant shift towards democratization. In fact, Nanus (1996) suggested the very fabric of leadership in the organization has changed. Leading is no longer telling. A top-down, instruct and manage approach is no longer valid and is insufficient in meeting the needs of organizations. Instead, leaders must empower those they lead. Blanchard, Carew, and Parisi-Carew (1990) emphasized the importance of empowerment and its role in facilitating the best work of all team members. It is empowerment that allows those holding positional leadership to relinquish authority so that others in the organization can claim such influence and harness it to boldly take action. This transfer of power fuels action throughout the organization. Illustratively, Gregerman (2007) described the practices of a world-class hotel in New York City. On a daily basis, the hotel's staff faced some of the most demanding clients of any industry. Each of the hotel's 450 employees was responsible for providing world-class service. As a result, each employee was empowered to creatively meet the individual needs of each guest. For example, employees had authority to spend as much as \$2,000 in addressing an issue or request. Critically, employees did not have to send the request up the chain of command. Instead,

decisions could be made immediately and by those with the most intimate knowledge of the situation.

Empowerment can be operationalized. Blanchard, Carlos, and Randolph (1996) outlined three components of empowerment. First, empowered team members are engaged through the sharing of information. Sharing information with members throughout the organization communicates trust and responsibility. As members are provided information pertaining to the holistic functioning of the organization, they are equipped to take ownership for the well being of the organization. Context is no longer limited to specific role. Consequently, the second component of empowerment provides team members throughout the organization autonomy to act on the behalf of the organization, while working within defined boundaries. Here, team members are encouraged to innovate, make empowered decisions in alignment with organizational values and objectives, while being provided a clear boundary from which to work. Empowerment does not eliminate roles. It does however, empower within them. Finally, empowerment requires the implementation of self-directed teams in place of old, traditional hierarchies. Self-directed teams work within the infrastructure of the organization, yet allow for innovative, organic decisions to be made. In the process, team members are provided the autonomy to contribute and lead. Decision-making becomes more collaborative, rather than authoritarian (Blanchard et al., 1996). For example, Morrell and Capparell (2001) reported the story of legendary explorer Earnest Shackleton and the expedition *Endurance*. Morrell & Capparell noted Shackleton's intentional efforts to flatten the ship's hierarchy by removing formal layers of management. Shackleton knew each member of the expedition needed to take ownership of each aspect

of the journey. This meant no member, regardless of previous accomplishment, was above menial tasks, including noting ice conditions, nurturing the fire in the furnace, and scrubbing common spaces. Crew members were empowered to contribute their expertise with overt support from Shackleton (Morrell & Capparell, 2001). Further, Peters and Austin (1985) reported reducing bureaucracy the most important strategic objective organizations pursue. As bureaucracy is reduced, team members enjoy greater autonomy. Therefore, team members are able to contribute to innovation and customer service, and foundational functions for organizational success. Employee contribution in turn, facilitates increased ownership, while lack of empowerment becomes restrictive (Peters & Austin, 2008).

Empowerment cannot develop on its own. Certain organizational conditions must first be met. Specifically, Covey (1990) identified empowerment as an outgrowth of trust. In high-trust organizations, evaluation metrics are not focused solely on the attainment of organizational goals. Instead, empowering leaders identify areas of overlap between organizational and personal objectives and self-interest. Pursuit of identified goals now transcends the tension between personal and organizational interests. High-trust organizations require individuals of character, who are technically skilled, seek win-win agreements, embrace the responsibility of self-supervision, accept the support of helpful structures and systems, and accountable for their performance (Covey, 1990). In addition, Kelly (1991) described the self-managing team as one grounded in trust and respect. Teams are small units working together within a particular organizational function. To avoid falling into a silo mentality, members of the team are provided regularly scheduled opportunities to cross-pollinate throughout the organization in

committees and task forces, for example. As a result, members can then bring back holistic context to the team, thereby maintaining an informed position as to how the unit impacts the entire organization. Members of self-managing teams hold one another accountable as opposed to adhering to organizational policies or rules. Teams are comprised of members possessing complementary strengths. As an empowered unit, self-managing teams develop a proactive approach to improving the performance of the organization (Kelly, 1991).

Organizations cannot develop a proactive approach to leadership while following a traditional, hierarchal leadership model. Such a model is not responsive or nimble enough to proactively address issues with affective efficiency. Yaeger (2015) recounted an interview with legendary, Duke University basketball coach, Mike Krzyzewski. Krzyzewski discussed the foundation of the basketball program's success. That bedrock was an empowered culture. Such a culture is committed to a 'horizontal totem pole.' The word picture represents an organization in which every team member is important and plays a crucial role in achieving success. Each team member has both a responsibility to contribute to, and opportunity to share in the celebration of success (Yaeger, 2015). Covey (1990) further asserted empowering leaders align management practice with the values of democracy and pluralism. This is not easy to attain, particularly in comparison to the traditional, authoritative leadership model. Nonetheless, leaders who are willing to embrace this riskier, more participative approach will find it an "...infinitely more effective human resource principle..." (Covey, 1990, p. 218).

Contradictions Within the Practice of Empowerment

In contrast to the literature most prevalent in the 21st century on the subject of empowerment, Bennis and Nanus (1985) suggested empowerment falls short of achieving distributed leadership. Empowerment pulls followers towards objectives set by the leader, as opposed to working towards objectives set through collaboration. As a result, only those in formal leadership positions engage meaningful decision-making. (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). In fact, Sherer (2008) conducted a four-year study of a public middle school in Chicago, Illinois. Sherer described a distributed leadership model in which, though provided leadership opportunities, teachers concluded ultimate authority rested with the school principal. Interestingly, the school principal shared leadership by relinquishing authority to the faculty. As the principal relinquished authority, teacher-leaders were indeed empowered to make instructional and governance decisions. Still, teachers acknowledged the realization that the principal was ultimately the boss, despite the acquisition of legitimate leadership positions. The principal maintained a distinct positional authority, despite making considerable efforts to relinquish it. Thus, empowerment failed to break down the perceived barriers between faculty and principal because teachers did not view themselves as equal participants in school governance (Sherer, 2008). According to Blanchard et al. (1996) empowerment does not indicate power being bestowed on team members. Team members already have power as a result of the knowledge, experience, motivation, and perspective. Instead, empowerment recognizes this and is the action of allowing team members throughout the organization to release their power. It is moving this pre-existing power from latent energy into kinetic energy (Blanchard et al., 1996).

More acutely, empowerment embodies a contradiction (Marquet (2012).

Empowerment represents a horizontal relationship, where employees throughout the organization are provided autonomy and the ability to lead. In practice, it is intended to break down the traditional hierarchy. As a result, how the message of empowerment is disseminated throughout the organization becomes critical. For example, when the boss is needed to ‘empower’ the employees, it suggests the bestowing of power from top to bottom. In messaging, then, this concept of empowerment maintains a leader-follower model. The leader bestows power down the line. Consequently, the employees’ power is not innate, but instead derives from an external source. Additionally, Pisano (2015) suggested only senior leaders within an organization should shoulder the responsibility of making consequential decisions. Pisano posed the question: Within the organization, whose responsibility is setting the strategy to create and implement innovation? According to Pisano, the responsibility falls squarely on senior leadership. Due to the complex nature of the problem, only senior leaders can coordinate and execute such a process. In essence, seeking, identifying, implementing, and nurturing innovation is a responsibility suited only for those at the top of the organization (Pisano, 2015).

Possible Pitfalls of Implementing a Distributed Leadership Model

Distributed leadership is not simply delegating. Delegating does not inspire or result in teacher empowerment. Before a distributed leadership model is embraced by faculty evidence must be present indicating teacher input impacts administrative decision-making. Assigning a teacher to be in charge of bus duty is not sharing leadership; it is duty allocation (Angelle, 2010). As opposed to empowering, such an assignment may become burdensome. Authority must accompany assignment. Citing

Watson and Scribner, Angelle (2010) asserted many schools fail to provide the authority teachers need to perform their roles. Teachers are allocated a role without the authority to succeed in it. Thus, authority is a key distinction between role allocation and distributed leadership. The person given the role should have the same authority as the person who granted the role assignment (Angelle, 2010). In agreement, Ramsey (2011) emphasized the importance of providing authority to those granted the responsibility. Too often leaders provide employees with a title but not the accompanying ability to make decisions. The impact can be profoundly negative. In fact, “Responsibility without authority is an explosive shell of a position” (Ramsey, 2011, p. 304). When this occurs, the leader is communicating a lack of integrity or perceived incompetence on the part of the employee. The organization is void of the requisite trust needed to operate effectively, much less equip new leaders.

The need to accompanying authority with responsibility was supported by Owens and Valesky (2015). While many K-12 schools provide a limited degree of authority to faculty members in the form of venues such as committees, authentic authority is often withheld. This scenario falls short of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership occurs when faculty are empowered to make important decisions. These decisions must be of consequence and connected to integral school objectives or values (Owens & Valesky, 2015). Furthermore, Stone & Sachs (1995) affirmed high-value managers differentiate between delegating and truly empowering. Empowerment involves sharing power as opposed to tasks. It allows the talents and abilities of each team member to be applied to every organizational objective.

Nonetheless, distributed leadership does not suggest school leaders no longer have important leadership roles. Fullan (2011) suggested the role of the leader remains consequential. The key distinction is authority is now indirectly exerted. Authority no longer commands from the top-down. Instead, it moves laterally to equip. Positional authority is leveraged into resource procurement, social and intellectual capital, and other forms of service. Spillane (2006) agreed suggesting the role of the school principal as critical but fitting within a collective model (Spillane, 2006). In fact, Cherkowski and Brown (2013) suggested the role of the school principal is critical in establishing a school culture of shared leadership. Principals must develop a culture of interdependence, where shared responsibility permeates all levels of the school. Hoffman (2015) specifically identified the contribution principals make to an effective school culture by working alongside teachers in professional development. Principals are not absent from the learning process. As a result, principals not only better evaluate what works and what does not as it applies to professional development, but also lead through a shared commitment of direct partnership. Teacher input is carefully weighed and consistently implemented into school governance and instructional decision-making. In this way, principals demonstrate a commitment to teacher leadership and development, while communicating by actions the value assigned to teacher contributions (Hoffman, 2015).

Teacher involvement in instructional decision-making and school governance contribute necessary ingredients in the creation of learning communities. Specifically, Cherkowski and Brown (2013) suggested shared leadership structures allow learning-communities to flourish. A learning community is defined by robust communication and shared vision, values, and goals. The learning community then produces a school where

influence is exerted at all levels. Shared leadership and the learning communities which often result, must be aligned with a clearly defined goal. That goal is student learning. When this occurs, teachers are empowered to make their most meaningful contributions and those contributions are then applied to the organizational goal, to improve student-learning outcomes.

According to Kelly (1991), self-managing organizations are not void of positional management. In fact, positional management serves an important role. Managers serve as coaches, mentors, and coordinators. Setting organizational objectives, outlining goals, and aligning resources towards goals and objectives become the prominent function (Kelly, 1991).

Additionally, Fullan (2011) suggested distributed leadership does not imply the absence of accountability on the part of the school principal. To the contrary, accountability inherits an added level of importance as it must now be interwoven into group practices and infused into the culture of the school (Fullan, 2011). As stated by Towers (1994), accountability must be an integral aspect of the culture. It cannot be merely a buzzword.

According to Slater (1999), distributed leadership does not occur by happenstance. It requires intentionality and rigorous organization flattening. If organizations are to operate at highest levels of effectiveness, the “walls between managers and employees” must be removed (Slater, 1999, p.157). Communication and transparency must be foundational practices. Slater described this process in action at General Electric Corporation throughout the 1990’s. Employees of General Electric Corporation overcame suspicions, mistrust, and the unknown. Though difficult, the

results were glowing as General Electric's sales increased by more than 300% annually and thousands of employees obtained a feeling of inclusion in the core functionality of the business (Slater, 1999).

Kilts (2007) suggested team members must be included in the communication loop. When this occurs, team members become more involved in analytical thinking and organizational decision-making extending beyond static, job descriptions. Kash and Calhoun (2010) further suggested the importance of creating a shared mental model throughout the organization. Such a model creates a clear picture within each team member's mind of how the organization will achieve its objectives and how each role contributes to that victory. In the absence of such a model, divisions within the company often find themselves competing with one another, thereby applying energies and organizational resources towards a counterproductive end. Truly embracing the importance of each role and the need for every function within the organization to work in tandem facilitates an aligned and empowered team (Kash and Calhoun, 2010).

According to Liang and Sandmann (2015), shared leadership cannot be viewed as the cure for all that ails an organization. In schools, the efficacy of a shared leadership model cannot exceed the leadership ability of those within the organization. Teachers must first embrace the model by respecting the leadership of their peers. When leadership is distributed without accompanying mutual respect, the process becomes counterproductive. Secondly, leadership positions and roles must be specifically defined to avoid an ambiguous leadership structure. Further, if distributed leadership is to prove successful in the school, communication must be consistent and clear (Liang and Sandmann, 2015). Consequently, Wright (2008) asserted distributed leadership must be

executed properly and in a democratic manner. Too often, leadership is distributed in a top-down, authoritative context. When this occurs, teachers sometimes feel coerced. Critically, school leaders must be cognizant of their natural position of authority. Schools are inherently political, hierarchal organizations. Thus, school principals must be cautious to seek consensus even as it applies to leadership distribution (Wright, 2008). Lazaridou and Fris (2008) further cautioned the tendency of intended distributed leadership initiatives to gravitate towards a more autocratic application. Accordingly, the strengths and areas of expertise throughout the faculty are not optimally applied to areas of need. This often is the result of an ambiguous delineation of responsibility and an inadequate transfer of operational authority. Again, distributed leadership is not a laissez-faire approach to school leadership. It is a strategic, inclusive, and collaborative one (Lazaridou & Fris, 2008).

Finally, increased school leadership is not a universal desire of all teachers. According to Sherer (2008), in a study of distributed leadership within a public middle school, math and language arts teachers reported different levels of leadership and engagement. Not all teachers demonstrated a desire to embrace leadership (Sherer, 2008).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment represents a critical metric for organizational success. Organizations large and small commit significant investment aimed at producing loyal team members who are enthusiastic about their current, and future, role within the organization. Organizational commitment is universally considered a desired attribute from the perspective of employers. According to Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly

(1990), organizational commitment among team members is positively associated with desired traits such as loyalty, motivation, and engagement. Typically, these traits work in tandem and contribute to a greater commitment level from employee to employer (Caldwell et al., 1990). Further, organizational commitment is believed to result in increased levels of desired outcomes such as employee investment, positive relationships, and performance towards organizational objectives, while decreasing unwanted behaviors such as absenteeism (Erdem & Ucar, 2013; Somech & Bogler, 2002).

Still, organizational commitment has proven to be a cumbersome construct to describe. Mercurio (2015) lamented the complex and often contradictory definitions of organizational commitment. As a construct, researchers have been thus far unable to agree upon organizational commitment's core essence. More succinctly, a critical question remains: which characteristic of organizational commitment comprehensively captures its essence (Mercurio, 2015)? Competing interests, namely those of theorists and practitioners, have created a fragmented framework for the construct. Addressing what organizational commitment is, how it can best be measured, its antecedents, and its consequences results in a multidimensional investigation.

According to Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), organizational commitment can be described as the degree to which an individual is involved in, and identifies with, an organization. Typically, individuals demonstrate commitment to the organization in three ways: alignment and belief in the organization's values; willingness to work diligently for the good of the organization; and fidelity to the organization. Mowday et al. further classified organizational commitment within two levels: behavioral and attitudinal. While behavioral commitment is more tangibly observed through team member actions,

attitudinal commitment requires a more intentional investigation. Mowday et al. sought to measure the critical construct of organizational commitment using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The 15-item, Likert scale survey was comprised of statements representative of an employees' feelings towards the organization for which they worked. Mercurio (2015) summarized the OCQ as measuring an individual's value congruence with, feelings of care for, pride in, and willingness to invest tremendous effort on behalf of the organization.

Allen and Meyer (1990) settled on an organizational commitment description comprised of three components: affective, continuance, and normative. Affective commitment is described as an emotional commitment, or the degree to which a team member identifies with the organization and its values. Continuance commitment expresses the perceived costs team members anticipate if they were to leave the organization. Meyer and Allen (1984) highlighted costs such as lost status, pension benefits, and job-specific skills. Aytac (2015) also suggested continuance commitment not only takes into account the cost of leaving for the individual, but on the organization as well. In this instance, team members remain with the organization, at least in part, to avoid the negative impact of separation (Aytac, 2015). Allen and Meyer (1990) concluded by describing normative commitment as the degree to which a team member feels obligated to remain with the organization. Reasons for perceived obligation vary. One antecedent to normative commitment is the desire on the part of the employee to remain loyal to an organization that has invested heavily in her professional development (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Organizational commitment is a powerful construct because it prominently impacts organizational success. According to Balay (2012), organizational commitment involves not only compliance and participation, but a psychological alignment and identification as well (Balay, 2012). In fact, Erdem and Ucar (2013) specifically described organizational commitment as the psychological relationship employees experience with their workplace. As suggested by O'Reilly & Chatman (1986) and Sarikaya & Erdogan (2016), psychological attachment to the organization is grounded in compliance, identification, or internalization. At the internalization level of commitment, the employee identifies a synergy between individual values and those of the organization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Sarikaya & Erdogan, 2016). Psychological alignment positively correlates with increased commitment to the organization. A healthy relationship produces positive affectations between employee and employer.

Affective Commitment

Choi and Tang (2011) suggested emotion to be an inseparable element of teacher commitment. Teacher commitment cannot be measured simply by the amount of time teachers dedicate to school-related activities. Presence does not necessarily equate to effectiveness, alignment of values, or connection of purpose. Moreover, commitment cannot be measured absent an understanding of teachers' emotional association with the organization. Emotional investment and attitude must be accounted for and valued (Choi & Tang, 2011). Affective commitment is a measurement of a team member's emotional connection to the organization. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) examined the antecedents to affective commitment. Notably, work experience was determined to have a strong relationship with affective commitment. Thus, organizations

must devote significant and careful attention to leadership, management, and professional development practices across the organization. Taking into account the various work experience variables, the degree to which employees perceive organizational support most strongly correlates with affective commitment. Additionally, high levels of affective commitment enjoy a strong correlation with transformational leadership (Meyer et al., 2002). Therefore, evidence suggests leadership models transcending traditional, hierarchal structures facilitate affective commitment among team members. In fact, Jantsch (2012) suggests the highest level of commitment within an organization results when employees realize they are essential contributors to the company culture. This occurs as employees embrace a role within the company not limited to typical flow charts and job descriptions (Jantsch, 2012).

In addition to leadership models, Nyhan (1999) identified trust as a key facilitator of affective commitment. Two constructs of trust were identified: interpersonal trust and systems trust. While systems trust refers to trust between an employee and the organization, interpersonal trust denotes trust between an employee and his manager. Interpersonal trust demonstrated a stronger correlation to affective commitment (Nyhan, 1999). Consequently, it is critical for managers to look beyond the tasks employees perform, and instead recognize and intentionally cultivate relational qualities. In summary, developing a personal relationship and demonstrating care for employees beyond their functionality within the organization is critical in developing affective commitment among employees.

Establishing a school environment conducive to a holistic investment in teachers as people and professionals will become more critical in the coming years. Krishna and

Marquardt (2007) identified generational value differences which employees hold in determining the extent to which they are committed to the organization. The emerging generation of employees value organizational investment more than transactional rewards. Specifically, younger employees prefer to receive organizational investment focused on professional growth and personal wellbeing. These employees want to be valued beyond what they produce for the organization. Appreciation and value derives from a holistic perspective (Krishna & Marquardt, 2007).

Consequently, schools must be vigilant in facilitating emotionally committed teachers. In support, Cherkowski (2011) added school leaders have a responsibility to foster an emotionally responsive school culture. School systems would be wise to facilitate and support teachers' emotional commitment through activities and resources made available to teachers throughout the school day. Cherkowski (2011) went on to suggest emotional commitment speaks to the level of shared purpose between individual and organization in actions and ideology. Emotional commitment reflects an individual's respect for the organization and colleagues.

Motivation is a critical element linked to affective commitment. According to Eby, Freeman, Rush, and Lance (1999), affective commitment increases when employees are intrinsically motivated to perform well for the organization. In fact, the foundational variable in determining an employee's affective commitment is intrinsic motivation. Eby et al. suggested intrinsic motivation to be facilitated by four psychological states: meaningfulness, responsibility, knowledge of results, and empowerment and exchange. Each psychological state aligns with the governance structure of a distributed leadership model. Intrinsic motivation and distributed leadership prove mutually conducive for

several reasons. First, meaningfulness is achieved through task variance and identity with the larger organization. Effective distributed leadership allows team members to work across the organization, expanding beyond the confines of a traditional job description. Meanwhile, the psychological state of responsibility is achieved when team members perceive autonomy. Distributed leadership allows employees to assume a variety of tasks, while enjoying creative freedoms to solve meaningful, complex problems. Next, the psychological state of knowledge of results can be achieved through specific, consistent performance feedback. Organizations embracing a distributed leadership model empower employees through rigorous feedback, which occurs throughout the organization and is not limited to a top-down direction. Finally, the psychological state of empowerment is achieved through participation within an equitable environment. Empowerment results from an authentic distribution of leadership; team members throughout the organization are equitably entrusted with opportunity and resources (Eby et al., 1999). Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001) further extended the importance of equity in facilitating affective commitment among team members. Rhoades et al. found affective commitment to be positively related to organizational rewards, procedural justice, and supervisor support. In short, employees who perceive their actions to significantly impact the organization, while being treated fairly and receiving consistent, purposeful support from management, are likely to develop an increased level of affective commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001). Distributed leadership creates a leadership structure conducive to the development of intrinsic motivation and thus, affectively committed team members.

Cultivating Organizational Commitment in Schools

Organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct (Choi & Tang, 2011; Somech & Bogler, 2002). In fact, teachers develop organizational commitment to various aspects of the profession. The psychological bond associated with organizational commitment may connect teachers to the school itself, individual students, the subject matter, or the teaching profession. Where teacher commitment attaches is a critical distinction. A school principal, for example, increasing teacher commitment to the profession alone may prove insufficient. In this instance, the teacher may take the increased commitment to the teaching profession to another school or school district. In the interests of the principal and school, the loss of this teacher could prove significant. Notably, a teacher's organizational commitment varies depending upon their specific leadership experiences within the school. Somech and Bogler (2002) identified two domains of participation: technical and managerial. In the technical domain, instructional decisions are made directly related to the classroom. On the other hand, the managerial domain refers to building-level responsibilities such as school budgets, personnel decisions, or student scheduling (Somech & Bogler, 2002). Since organizational commitment is multidimensional and depends upon the leadership opportunities presented to the teacher, principals and other school administrators should obtain knowledge of the interests and abilities of each teacher. Such knowledge will allow the principal or school leader to distribute meaningful leadership to the teacher in the area of greatest strength. As a result, the teacher is more likely to make a positive contribution to the school. The teacher will also likely develop increased organizational commitment to the school.

Regardless of which aspect of the profession teachers commit to, a positive school climate is needed to facilitate such a relationship between teachers and their work. Raman, Ling, and Khalid (2015) demonstrated a positive, significant relationship exists between school climate and teacher commitment. Teacher commitment does not exist in isolation. Schools must instead attend to the school environment holistically, in order to develop an environment conducive to committed teachers. Teachers respond with increased organizational commitment to the school when principals are positive, supportive, and foster a transparent system of governance (Raman et al., 2015).

For learning organizations, organizational commitment is paramount. In support, Balay (2012) suggested educational institutions must inspire team members to engage the organization beyond task compliance. A deeper commitment, connection, and motivation for engagement must exist. Cherkowski (2011) illustrates the importance of teacher's organizational commitment reflecting more than a desire to remain employed at a certain school. In a qualitative study of a small inner city, elementary school, Cherkowski (2011) reported teachers and administration expressed an emotionally safe climate builds trust among faculty members. As a result, faculty members enjoyed increased confidence, took risks, and embraced leadership roles within the school. Teacher organizational commitment as a construct resulted from teachers' desire to participate in a professional learning community, where professional growth and relationships with colleagues were both sustained and organizationally fundamental (Cherkowski, 2011).

Furthermore, Erdem and Ucar (2013) identified elements of professional learning communities, such as on-going professional development and a culture of teamwork, as

increasing organizational commitment. Thus, as Cherkowski (2011) suggested, school leaders' attention to teachers as people, not mere employees, increased teacher commitment to the learning community. Sarikaya and Erdogan (2016) asserted the most important leadership change principals and other school administrators can make is to focus on teacher development. Also referred to as the human factor, providing teachers with innovative instructional leadership, supporting their classroom performance with meaningful feedback, and promoting their achievements significantly contributes to teacher commitment. Allocating time, investment, and care for teacher professional development and wellbeing proves highly beneficial in creating committed teachers (Sarikaya & Erdogan, 2016).

School Leadership Impacts Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is affected by team members' perceptions of leadership. Bennis and Nanus (1985) asserted leaders are responsible for assuring commitment from employees. As a result, principals and other school leaders have a responsibility to lead in a manner which inspires teacher organizational commitment. Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2012) identified an antecedent to teacher organizational commitment. Teacher organizational commitment is linked to a sense of calling to the profession, internal hopefulness, autonomy, and responsibility (Bullough & Hall-Kenyan, 2012). Consequently, principals and other school leaders should structure school governance models in alignment with such an environment. The consequences of a distributed leadership model directly align with both teacher autonomy and responsibility. Firestone and Roseblum (1988) asserted teacher organizational commitment is linked to five additional factors. These factors include: relevance, respect

and affiliation, support, expectations, and influence. Teachers desire relevance by identifying with a sense of purpose in the role of teaching, while affiliation equates to the degree teachers feel connected to their colleagues. Teachers also desire to connect with other adults in their school building and form a bond with those who are pursuing the same objective. Further, teachers appreciate supportive principals who set high expectations on teachers. High expectations serve as a motivation and communicate commitment on the part of the principal. Conversely, low expectations can have the opposite effect on teacher commitment. Finally, teacher commitment is achieved when principals provide teachers autonomy and control within their work lives (Firestone & Roseblum, 1988).

As a result, teacher organizational commitment levels are impacted by the actions of the principal. Aytac (2015) asserted leadership styles of school leaders are considered to be critical factors in determining organizational commitment of teachers. Educational organizations recognize the need for managing and retaining talented team members. After investigating the relationship between school's talent management system and teacher commitment to the organization, Aytac (2015) suggests schools must successfully manage talent in order to succeed. Schools are increasingly competing for talented faculty and thus must embrace an increased responsibility to effectively recruit, maintain, and grow such teachers. School leaders are charged with the responsibility to improve teacher organizational commitment. For example, Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2013) suggests servant leadership empowers employees to be more confidently engaged in the work of the organization. In the school environment, servant leadership describes principals who place the needs of teachers above their own, invest in the development of

teachers, and actively engage in areas of school improvement directly. In school settings, teachers benefit from an environment focused on developing a shared vision and commitment to school governance. Within a servant leadership model, employees often report increased organizational commitment (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013).

Notably, Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal (2013) demonstrated the effect school principal leadership style had on teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to the school. Transformational leadership had a significant and positive impact on teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. According to Aydin et al. (2013), transformational leaders foster organizational commitment and motivation through the development of shared vision. Shared vision speaks to a democratizing of purpose. An autocratic leader cannot impute a vision onto employees. A shared vision, mutually embraced, is the result of an empowering leadership approach. Transformational leadership goes seeks to connect with team members at an emotional level and empower them to operate with significant autonomy (Noland & Richards, 2014). Furthermore, Wahab, Fuad, Ismail, and Majid (2014), conducted a quantitative study of 240 primary school teachers investigating the relationship between transformational leadership practiced by school headmasters and teacher job satisfaction and commitment to the school. Transformational leadership was reported to be a critical factor in facilitating teacher satisfaction and commitment. Specifically, transformational leadership allows for schools to move away from a conventional leadership model into a more distributed model where decisions can be made at a more organic level. Also, Wahab et al. (2014) suggested transformational leadership results in a more democratic, equitable, and inclusive school setting, where teacher engagement across the school community

increases. A relational component exists between school leaders and teachers.

Transformational leadership facilitates the strengthening of this relational component and thus the likelihood of satisfied and committed teachers (Wahab, et al., 2014). Aydin et al. (2013) further discussed three, scaffolding dimensions of organizational commitment: compliance, identification, and internalization. At the final stage of internalization, teachers begin to voluntarily impart the organization's values onto themselves (Aydin et al., 2013). At this stage of organizational commitment, affective commitment is established (Meyer & Allen, 1990).

Principals and other school leaders must also support a collaborative school culture. Collaborative school cultures are more likely to foster a positive, relational experience between teachers, staff, and administration. Specifically, Hughes, Matt, and O'Reilly (2015) emphasized the importance of a collaborative relationship between principals and teachers in a study examining teacher retention strategies in hard to staff schools. In short, teacher retention was largely dependent on the degree to which faculty perceived principal support in emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical constructs. Hughes et al. (2015) recommends open-forums for discussion, collaborative reviews in which teachers and administrators assess the needs of the school, and meetings as critical steps towards developing support structures for teachers. In each, teachers are given a voice in the school governance process and influence in addressing the issues (Hughes et al., 2015). Each of these platforms communicates to faculty a responsive and supportive administration.

Summary

The relationship between leadership and affective organizational commitment is one of significance for organizations across every industry. In fact, Krishna and Marquardt (2007) suggested a link between organizational commitment and the organizational citizenship found in shared leadership models. Organizational commitment is positively related to the successful implementation of a distributed leadership governance model. School systems and individual schools are certainly no exception. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) described the importance of developing organizational commitment beyond mere compliance. In fact, an inverse relationship exists between the level of commitment and the need for organizational control systems. As the organizational commitment of team members increases less resources must be invested in monitoring behavior (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Thus, a distributed leadership model is more readily accessible within an organization of committed employees. According to Tichy (1997), leading is much too essential to be left to top-ranking executives. Instead, leadership must be adopted throughout the organization. More than an ancillary function, leadership must be inherently intertwined within the purview of every role. Distributed leadership is an effective strategy to improve school performance throughout all levels of schools and school systems (Tichy, 1997). Beachum and Dentith (2004) asserted when school leadership is distributed to teachers, new insights into existing challenges and future opportunities result. A culture of shared influence and accountability also develops. For example, McAdams (2014) described the need for school system superintendents to consult, keep informed, and collaborate with district school board members. When a prominent faculty member is reprimanded or

dismissed, it is best practice to enlist the support and guidance of the school board. When school system superintendents face critical district-level management decisions, it is preferable for the school board to proactively be included throughout the disciplinary process. Effective superintendents recognize the interdependence between the superintendent and all stakeholders. They relinquish territorial claims over management decisions.

The same process occurs within school walls in relation to principals and faculty (McAdams, 2014). In fact, Marx (2014) suggested leadership has become much less vertical in application and instead significantly more horizontal. Meyer and Allen (1997) observed organizations are reducing layers of management, thus becoming leaner. As organizations flatten management hierarchies, employees' job descriptions become more complex and further integrated into the organization as a whole. Employees take on greater responsibility for the well being of the organization. In response, employers must place more trust in each employee. Increased responsibility on the part of the employee and increased trust on the part of the employer reinforce the critical nature employee commitment holds in the modern organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). As a result, leadership is more concerned with outcomes than traditional power structures.

Distributed leadership accommodates this approach, while remaining focused on solving problems and nurturing team members as people and professionals. Such an approach is considered more applicable to future, educational environments (Marx, 2014).

A distributed approach also addresses key issues in facilitating engaged faculty. Arifin (2015) identified competence, motivation, and organizational culture as three ingredients contributing to job satisfaction among high school teachers. A distributed

leadership model allows teachers to demonstrate competence, establish influence within the building, thereby increasing motivation while facilitating an empowering culture (Arifin, 2015). In addition, Bennis and Nanus (1985) extended the discussion of distributed leadership to include valuing creativity. Successful leaders value a sense of play and creativity, even to the extent of embracing failure. Leaders empower employees to take chances. Further, Jantsch (2012) identified the need for leaders to create committed and connected team members. Free from the constraints of departments, strict hierarchy, and static job descriptions, team members more easily establish connections to one another and the organization as a whole. Team members make authentic connections within a distributed leadership model (Jantsch, 2012). According to Caldwell et al., organizational commitment depends in large measure upon the experiences of individuals within the organization (1990). School leaders have a significant impact on the degree to which teachers will attach themselves to the school.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This study investigated the correlation between teachers' perceptions of distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in the public and private schools in which they are employed. Considerable research is dedicated to the principles of distributed leadership and its companion concepts, including shared leadership, empowerment, democratic leadership, and participatory governance (Lambert, 2006; Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2008). Extensive research has also investigated organizational commitment as a construct, its antecedents, and its consequences (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Nyhan, 1999; Mercurio, 2015). Both concepts are of tremendous importance to school leaders in the modern education environment. If schools are to succeed in overcoming the immense challenges facing them, the full talents and commitments of each school team member is required. How school leaders harness those talents and cultivate organizational commitment is critical in meeting the future challenges within the educational system.

Research Design

The research design replicates Jacobs' (2010) investigation of the relationship between distributed leadership and teachers' affective commitment to their schools. The researcher gained approval from Jacobs before beginning the study (Appendix A). This includes the identification of variables and use of research instruments. An additional dimension of research was added by sampling both public and private school teachers. A correlational research design was utilized. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2006)

described correlational research as relating at least two variable measures, each from the same group of subjects. Importantly, correlational research does not attempt to establish cause between the variables, but instead establishes strength of correlation. Strength of correlation for this study was measured by a quantitative index called the Spearman *rho* coefficient of correlation. The coefficient represents both the direction and size of the correlation. A measurement of -1.0 indicates a perfect, negative relationship, a measurement of +1.0 indicates a perfect, positive relationship, and a measurement of 0 means there is zero relationship between the two variables (Ary et al., 2006). A convenience sample was chosen, using the researcher's current place of employment and a former place of employment. Due to the selection of a convenience sample, a nonparametric test was required. Ordinal data was acquired, resulting from the use of Likert scales in measuring both variables. Thus, the Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient calculation was utilized to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment to the school. In fact, Spearman *rho* was calculated three times: in regards to the private school data, the public school system data, and finally both public and private school data in aggregate.

Population and Sample

Participants were recruited through contacts of the researcher. Faculty within two educational institutions were surveyed: an independent private school, serving second to twelfth grades, and a public school system serving kindergarten to twelfth grade, were surveyed. The goal for sample size was 150 teachers. According to Ary et al. (2006), correlational studies do not require extraordinarily large sample size. The relationship between the variables will manifest in a moderate size sample, for example 50 to 100

participants (Ary et al., 2006). Thus, the size of this study is adequate in addressing the research question.

Description of Instruments

The researcher utilized a two-part survey to collect the data. The independent variable within the study is the measure of distributed leadership in schools, as perceived by teachers. Teachers' perception of distributed leadership in schools was measured by the revised, Leadership Density Inventory (LDI) (Smith, Ross, and Robichaux, 2004). Smith et al. established this instrument through utilizing a panel of higher education faculty members to carefully identify each item included in the LDI as indicative of the leadership density construct. The completed instrument was then piloted to a group of eight teachers.

Internal reliabilities were measured through survey packets, sent to 1,632 teachers. Refinement and revalidation occurred as a result of panel analysis conducted by doctoral level students, as well as, by teacher surveys. The revised LDI utilizes a 16-question survey measuring teacher perceptions of distributed leadership within the school. The survey employs a 7-point, Likert scale, which provides participants with responses ranging from never (1) to always (7). The researcher gained permission from Dr. Roy W. Smith to utilize the revised, LDI in the study (Appendix B).

In addition, the dependent variable within the study is the level of teacher affective commitment to the school of employment. Teacher affective commitment was measured by the revised, Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) designed by Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993). The ACS is part of the Three Component Model Employee Commitment Survey, which includes an original and revised version. Each version

contains three parts: measuring affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, respectively. In alignment with this study's research question, the six questions from the ACS were included in the survey. The ACS utilizes a 7-point, Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Of the six questions found on the ACS, three are reverse-keyed. The researcher attained an Academic License to utilize the TCM Employee Commitment Survey (Appendix C). The combined instrument sent to participants can be found in Appendix E.

Research Procedure and Time Period of the Study

The researcher first requested permission to sample teachers from school leaders in both the private school and public school system. The initial contact also served to introduce the research proposal and purpose. After receiving appropriate approval from school leaders, the researcher emailed the survey to potential participant's school email addresses. The researcher electronically distributed the LDI and ACS surveys to both the public school and private school population using SurveyMonkey. Included in the distribution was an informed consent waiver. In this study, the informed consent waiver served to inform potential participants of the survey's purpose, voluntary nature, and assured anonymity. The informed consent can be found in Appendix D. Surveys were first distributed on January 31, 2016. After two weeks had passed from the original distribution date, the researcher sent a reminder email to these participants who had not yet submitted the survey. The researcher closed the survey window on February 29, 2016.

Data Collection Methods

Prior to data collection, approval was granted through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Carson Newman University. Data were collected utilizing a single page instrument containing both the ACS and LDI (Appendix E). For logistical purposes and faculty convenience, data were collected electronically through a web-based survey tool, SurveyMonkey. The survey instrument was distributed to faculty member's school-based email accounts. Upon submitting the completed survey, faculty responses were electronically sent to the researchers SurveyMonkey account.

Analysis Methods

The study investigated the correlation of distributed leadership in schools to teacher's affective, organizational commitment. Spearman *rho* correlational coefficient was utilized in determining the relationship between the two variables. The study represented a correlational research design, while utilizing a convenience sample. The instruments used for collecting data utilized a 7-point, Likert scale, thus producing ordinal data. The researcher employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in determining three Spearman *rho* measurements.

Ethical Considerations

The study asked teachers to provide personal insights into the leadership practices of, and their personal commitment to, their current employer. As a result, confidentiality remained critical. The surveys were completed online, allowing participants to complete the survey in a private environment. Also, surveys were completed anonymously. The researcher did not, and will not, demographically disaggregate data in any manner beyond identifying the sample as a whole, either public school or private school. Thus,

results will not identify individual participants or participants groups. Additionally, consent to privacy was provided at the beginning of each survey. The researcher will privately store the data electronically for two years, at which time the researcher will delete all electronic data collected from the surveys. In addition, the researcher requested and received permission from appropriate leaders at both the private school and public school system. The Head of school and Executive Director of Curriculum and Institutional Research granted permission on behalf of the private school while the Director of Schools granted permission on behalf of the public school system. Confirmation emails were printed, stored in a locked safe, and will be destroyed after two years.

Summary

The study investigates the correlation of a distributed leadership model on the affective commitment of teachers to their respective school. Schools face complex academic, social, political, and fiscal challenges. Consequently, school leaders must leverage the talents, skills, and commitment of every teacher in meeting the challenges such complexity provides. This requires a significant change in school leadership and governance from bureaucratic, vertical leadership structures. Schools must instead adopt a more horizontal, nimble structure, which catalyzes faculty members to engage in solving complex issues beyond their classroom. Specifically, Hoerr (2005) emphasized the need for school leadership to evolve from rigid hierarchies that defined past decades of school leadership. Teachers desire a relational leader, who intentionally develops trust through a collaborative leadership model. Acquiring a deeper understanding of how distributed leadership relates to teacher affective commitment facilitates school leaders in

developing leaders throughout the school community who are empowered to engage in school improvement initiatives within their classroom and beyond (Hoerr, 2005).

In response, the researcher electronically distributed two instruments within a single survey to faculty members of a K-12 public school system and a 2-12 private school. Teacher's perception of distributed leadership within their school was measured by the revised, LDI of Smith et al. (2004). The sixteen-item survey employs a 7-point, Likert scale ranging from never (1) to always (7). The responses of each participant were averaged to measure the degree to which each participant perceived leadership to be distributed within the school. Furthermore, teacher's affective commitment to their school was measured by the revised, Affective Commitment Scale, designed by Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993). This instrument employs a 7-point, Likert scale providing participants with responses ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The responses of each participant were averaged to measure teachers' affective commitment to the school. In regards to both the LDI and ACS, the researcher chose to average scores as opposed to simply find the sum of all responses. Meyer and Allen (2004) suggested averaging scores of Likert scale surveys reduces the impact of participant error as it relates to participants failing to answer every item within the survey. Data was entered into SPSS software and a Spearman *rho* correlational coefficient was calculated. In this study, the Spearman *rho* correlational coefficient was utilized to determine the degree to which distributed leadership in schools relates to teachers' affective commitment to their school of employment.

CHAPTER 4: Findings and Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment among teachers in public and private schools. The study replicated and extended Jacobs (2010) examination into the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among public school teachers. This study extends the existing research as to the impact of distributed leadership on teacher affective commitment, while additionally providing evidence describing the role school type may play in mediating that relationship. In summary, this study investigated the mediating role of private and public school settings on the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment.

In this chapter a description of instrumentation is first provided. Next, a description of data collection procedures and respondents is detailed. Further, this chapter describes the data analysis process and requisite findings. Finally, a summary section is included, discussing not only the findings, but explaining how they relate to the original research question: What is the relationship between teachers' perceptions of distributed leadership and affective commitment in public and private schools?

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized a two-part survey for data collection. The independent variable within the study was the measure of teacher perception of distributed leadership in schools. Teachers reported their perception of distributed leadership within their school by completing the Leadership Density Inventory (LDI) (Smith et al., 2004). The

LDI utilizes a 16-question survey measuring teacher perceptions of distributed leadership within the school. The survey employs a 7-point Likert scale, providing participants with responses ranging from never (1) to always (7). Additionally, the dependent variable within the study was teacher reported affective commitment to the school of employment. Teacher affective commitment was measured by the revised Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), designed by Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993). The ACS is part of the Three Component Model Employee Commitment Survey, which includes an original and revised version. Each version contains three parts: measuring affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, respectively. In alignment with this study's research question, the six questions from the ACS were included in the survey and utilized a 7-point Likert scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Of the six questions found on the ACS, three were reverse-keyed. The reverse-keyed questions provided accountability for participant acquiescence bias, which occurs when participants simply select responses that are perceived to be agreeable.

Data Collection Procedures

Surveys were distributed to participants through the online tool, SurveyMonkey beginning January 31, 2016. The researcher obtained permission from the appropriate leadership at both the public school system and private school before beginning the data collection process. School leadership at both the public school system and private school was highly respectful of teacher anonymity and its integral nature relating to this study's research question. Next, through SurveyMonkey, the researcher sent the survey to each potential participant's school email address. After a two week period, a reminder

message through SurveyMonkey to all the potential participants who had not yet completed the survey. The researcher closed the response window on SurveyMonkey on February 29, 2016.

Respondents

The researcher established a sample including both public and private school populations. The public school population included 174 teachers. From the 174 invitations, 67 teachers responded. The response rate for the public school population was 39%. Two surveys were only partially completed, thus 65 public school participant surveys were utilized for data analysis, $n = 65$. The private school population included 105 teachers. From 105 invitations sent to the private school population, 75 teachers responded. The response rate from the private school population was 71%. After discarding 6 incomplete surveys, 69 private school participant surveys were utilized for data analysis, $n = 69$. As a result, a total of 134 teacher participant surveys were analyzed for this study, $n = 134$.

Data Analysis and Findings

The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to perform the data analysis. First, the researcher established a foundation for analysis by collecting a set of summary statistics. These statistics allowed the researcher to place the data into context and understand what teachers reported in relation to distributed leadership and affective commitment as individual constructs. For example, the researcher found it helpful to observe the mean distributed leadership score for public school teachers and compare that score to the mean distributed leadership score for private school teachers. Obtaining a thorough understanding of the raw data allows the

researcher to more clearly understand the results of subsequent Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficient analysis. The collection of summary statistics also provides meaningful context for the researcher in comparing and contrasting the data collected with the literature relating to distributed leadership in schools and affective commitment among teachers.

Distributed Leadership Summary Statistics

Summary statistics were collected for both the public and private school populations. First, the combined, mean distributed leadership scores for both public school teachers and private school teachers were calculated based on teacher responses to the 16-item LDI. The mean distributed leadership score for both public and private school teachers combined was 5.20 ($SD = 0.84$) on the standard, 7-point, Likert Scale.

Next, the researcher established the mean distributed leadership score among public school teachers only. Public school teachers reported a mean distributed leadership score of 5.22 ($SD = 0.76$) on the standard, 7-point, Likert Scale. Conversely, private school teachers reported a mean distributed leadership score of 5.18 ($SD = 0.91$) on the standard, 7-point, Likert scale. In terms of statistical significance, public and private school teachers did not differ in their reports of distributed leadership, $t(132) = -0.33, p = .739$.

Affective Commitment Summary Statistics

Then, the combined, mean affective commitment scores for both public school teachers and private school teachers were calculated based on teacher responses to the 6-item, ACS. The mean affective commitment score for both public and private school teachers combined was 5.45 ($SD = 1.17$) on the standard, 7-point, Likert Scale. In

comparison to the construct of distributed leadership, the standard deviation among the combined sample was higher on the affective commitment scale, thus revealing participants varied more widely when reporting affective commitment levels as opposed to perceptions of leadership distribution in their schools.

In addition, public school teachers reported a mean affective commitment score of 5.86 ($SD = 0.92$) on the standard, 7-point, Likert Scale. At the same time, private school teachers reported a mean affective commitment score of 5.06 ($SD = 1.25$) on the standard, 7-point Likert Scale. Notably, private school teachers reported lower levels of affective commitment as compared to public school teachers, $t(124.83) = -4.23, p < .001$.

Spearman's *rho* Correlation Coefficients

In examining the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment, Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficients were computed. The Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficient measures the strength of the relationship between two variables. A measurement of -1.0 indicates a perfect, negative relationship while a measurement of +1.0 indicates a perfect, positive relationship. Meanwhile, a measurement of 0 means there is zero relationship between the two variables (Ary et al., 2006).

Analysis of Public and Private School Teachers Combined

The researcher first determined the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among the entire sample, both public school teachers and private school teachers combined. In the overall sample there was a moderate and positive relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among public school teachers and private school teachers, $r_s(134) = .53, p < .001$.

Analysis of Public School Teachers

The researcher then determined the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among public school teachers. The relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among public school teachers was moderate and positive, $r_s(65) = .53, p < .001$.

Analysis of Private School Teachers

The researcher then determined the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among private school teachers. The association between distributed leadership and affective commitment among private school teachers was also moderate and positive, $r_s(69) = .59, p < .001$. Consequently, the null hypothesis was not supported in this study. Private school teachers reported a higher correlation between distributed leadership and affective commitment as compared to public school teachers.

Fisher's r-to-z Transformation

The Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficients provide a descriptive representation of the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment. Nonetheless, further analysis is needed to determine whether the association between distributed leadership and affective commitment is significantly different among public and private school teachers. The researcher needed to determine whether the strength of the correlation between distributed leadership and affective commitment, differed in terms of strength or direction as a function of school type.

Using Fisher's *r-to-z* transformation, the researcher computed a *z*-test to determine the difference between correlations. In terms of statistical significance, the results revealed that the relationship between distributed leadership and affective

commitment did not differ among public and private school teachers, $z = -0.56$, $p = .575$.

In summary, since $p > .05$, the observed differences in Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficients for public school teachers and private school teachers are not statistically significant. Instead, the correlations are similar and not statistically significant in their difference. As a result, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Summary

The researcher investigated the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment among teachers in public and private schools. The researcher sampled 65 public school teachers and 69 private school teachers. The researcher first established mean distributed leadership and affective commitment scores among public school teachers, private school teachers, and all teachers in a combined sample. Next, the researcher calculated three separate Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficients to determine the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among the entire sample of teachers, public school teachers, and private school teachers.

Among public and private school teachers combined, a moderate, positive relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment resulted, $r_s(134) = .53$, $p < .001$. Additionally, public school teachers reported a moderate, positive correlation between distributed leadership and affective commitment, $r_s(65) = .53$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, private school teachers reported a moderate, positive correlation between distributed leadership and affective commitment, $r_s(69) = .59$, $p < .001$. Finally, utilizing Fisher's *r*-to-*z* transformation, the researcher determined the correlations

between the two variables were similar and not statistically significant in their difference among public and private school teachers.

CHAPTER 5: Summary and Application

Chapter five first provides an overview of this study while framing the importance of distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment within the modern educational environment. The results of this study are summarized and discussed. A succinct conclusion is provided followed by an application to the practice of school leadership. Finally, the researcher provides recommendations for further research. In summary, this study is intended to contribute to the body of knowledge as it relates to: distributed leadership, teacher affective commitment, and the relationship between these two constructs. The results of this study, its application, and the subsequent recommendations for further research should all be applied with a focus on equipping school leaders for the sake of improving student learning.

Overview of the Study

The modern educational environment places extraordinary leadership demands on principals and other school leaders. Expectations include: an increased focus on teacher evaluation, consistent community communication, a competitive hiring and talent retention environment, navigating a technology revolution, and in many cases, attending to all these demands in a fiscally restrictive environment. The ‘hero principal’ model, where principals alone are responsible for school leadership, is simply outdated. Principals must instead adopt a leadership model where leadership is shared with teachers. Principals and school leaders must embrace a more democratic approach to leadership in which teachers’ talents and strengths are utilized beyond traditional

classroom duties. Such an approach distributes leadership throughout the school community and leverages the abilities of individual teachers in solving school issues. Fortunately, distributed leadership is positively correlated with teacher affective commitment (Jacobs, 2010). Affective commitment is of particular importance to school leaders. Affective commitment refers to the emotional commitment and alignment of values that, in this instance, connects teachers to their school (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In addition, affective commitment is the strongest construct of commitment and is most likely to predict teacher job satisfaction and engagement. Certainly, committed and engaged teachers promote student learning and strengthen schools. This study supports the existing research suggesting teachers who are provided authentic leadership opportunities within the school report positive affective commitment towards their school.

This study investigated the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in public and private schools. Distributed leadership was measured using the LDI (Smith et al., 2004). Additionally, affective commitment was measured using the ACS (Allen and Meyer, 1993). A total of 134 participants were included in the study. Of the 134, 69 respondents were private school teachers while 65 respondents taught in public schools.

Summary of the Findings

This study investigated the relationship between two prominent constructs within the modern education environment: distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment. The relationship between these two constructs is of significance to stakeholders across the school community. Specifically, principals may have an acute

interest in implementing leadership models facilitative of emotionally committed teachers. The researcher initially determined the mean distributed leadership scores for both public school teachers and private school teachers based on teacher responses to the 16-item LDI. The mean distributed leadership score for both public and private school teachers combined was 5.20 ($SD = 0.84$). The researcher then established the mean distributed leadership score among public school teachers only, 5.22 ($SD = 0.76$). Next, private school teachers reported a mean distributed leadership score of 5.18 ($SD = 0.91$). The researcher further determined the mean teacher affective commitment scores for both public school teachers and private school teachers combined, 5.45 ($SD = 1.17$). Public school teachers reported a mean affective commitment score of 5.86 ($SD = 0.92$) while private school teachers reported a mean affective commitment score of 5.06 ($SD = 1.25$). Notably, private school teachers reported lower levels of affective commitment as compared to public school teachers, $t(124.83) = -4.23, p < .001$.

Spearman's *rho* correlation coefficients revealed a moderate, positive relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment among public and private school teachers combined, $r_s(134) = .53, p < .001$. Specifically, public school teachers reported a moderate, positive correlation between distributed leadership and affective commitment, $r_s(65) = .53, p < .001$. In comparison, private school teachers reported a moderate, positive correlation between distributed leadership and affective commitment, $r_s(69) = .59, p < .001$. In conclusion, the researcher utilized Fisher's *r-to-z* transformation and determined the difference in correlations between distributed leadership and affective among public and private school teachers was not statistically significant.

Discussion of the Findings

The results of this study provide insight into the constructs of distributed leadership in schools and teacher affective commitment. In this study both public school teachers and private school teachers reported distributed leadership scores greater than five on the 7-point Likert scale. This suggests teachers in both the public and private school populations believe principals embrace a shared leadership model. In addition, public school teachers and private school teachers reported teacher affective commitment scores over five as well, suggesting both populations are emotionally committed to their school of employment.

Interestingly, both distributed leadership scores and affective commitment scores were slightly higher among public school teachers. However, compared to their public school counterparts, private school teachers reported a slightly higher correlation between distributed leadership and affective commitment, $r_s(69) = .59, p < .001$. While the difference in correlation scores was not statistically significant, it is anecdotally noteworthy. Additional research is needed to determine if the stronger correlation in private schools applies beyond this study. It is possible, however, that private school principals and school leaders have a greater impact on the affective commitment of their teachers. For example, if a teacher were to report low scores on the distributed leadership construct and still maintain high levels of affective commitment, it is likely the source of this teacher's affective commitment is not the degree to which leadership is distributed. Perhaps public school teachers tend to report higher levels of affective commitment as a result of other variables such as community and historical attachments to the school. Such an attachment may not be as common among private school teachers who commute

into the school. Regardless, the higher the correlation between the two variables, the more influence principal leadership will have on the affective commitment level of faculty members. This is both empowering and sobering, increasing the impetus for school leaders to consider carefully the leadership style they choose to employ.

Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrate a moderate positive correlation exists between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in public and private schools. While the difference in correlations among public and private school teachers was not statistically significant, the data was instructive nonetheless. Notably, the data aligns with the results reported by Jacobs (2010), investigating the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in a Georgia public school district. The moderate, positive correlation between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment to their school of employment further establishes the need for principals and other school leaders to foster school governance models that effectively share leadership with faculty members.

Application

School leaders face monumental challenges in the modern educational climate. Attracting and retaining talented faculty is essential if schools are to effectively educate their students for the demands of the modern economy. However, facilitating engaged teachers who form lasting emotional connections to their school, its values, and mission is equally important. Applying increased knowledge of the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment will equip principals and other school leaders to establish governance structures more closely aligned with the strengths

of teachers. This study is a contribution to forming a better understanding of how distributed leadership and affective commitment are related. Ultimately, it is a contribution to creating more dynamic places of learning for students.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further investigation into the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment among teachers in public and private schools is needed. The data shed light on the need to more clearly establish the antecedents of affective commitment. Specifically, a subsequent study utilizing a larger sample size would significantly add to the existing body of knowledge and address a limitation of this study. Additionally, a subsequent study investigating the relationship between distributed leadership and affective commitment of teachers in public and private schools with a higher response rate, particularly among public school teachers, would provide a more representative sample.

Additional research dedicated to analyzing the mitigating factor of school type on distributed leadership and affective commitment is recommended. Specifically, the researcher also recommends extending the study by investigating the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in various types of private schools. This study did not take into account the type of private school teachers where teachers provide instruction. Type of private school could be a statistically significant mediator. Furthermore, a replication of this study accompanied by a qualitative research dimension is recommended. Focus groups or individual interviews with participating teachers would allow teachers to explain in more detail the experiences that shaped their perspective and informed their survey responses. An added qualitative

component would also allow the researcher to uncover specific themes or areas within the teaching profession impacting teacher perception of distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment. In conclusion, significant opportunities for additional research exist in exploring the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment in public and private schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Replication Approval

Appendix A: Replication Approval

Dissertation: Distributed Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Dissertation x

Matt Trammell <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX> 10/12/15
to greg.jacobs

Dr. Jacobs,

My name is Matt Trammell and I am working on my dissertation as a student at Carson-Newman University. Would you allow for me to replicate the research design of your study while adding an additional dimension by comparing public v. private schools? I look forward to further investigating these variables in addition to this added dimension to your design, with your approval.

Respectfully,

Matt Trammell

Greg Jacobs <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX> 10/12/15
to me

Yes. Good luck.

Matt Trammell <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX> 10/12/15
to Greg

Thank you very much, sir.

Respectfully,

Matt

Appendix B: Leadership Density Instrument Approval

Appendix B: Leadership Density Instrument Approval

10/11/15

Matt Trammell <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>
to smithwa

Dr. Smith,

My name is Matt Trammell and I am writing my dissertation as a student at Carson-Newman University (TN). My proposed dissertation is entitled, "The impact of a distributed leadership model on teacher job satisfaction in public v. private schools."

I came across your inventory for measuring distributed leadership within the school community. I would like to utilize your inventory in measuring the variable of distributed leadership.

May I utilize your instrument in my proposed study?

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to sharing my results with you, upon your approval.

Respectfully,

Matt Trammell

10/11/15

Wade Smith <XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>
to me

You may Matt. Good luck! Feel free to contact if needed.

Wade

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone on the Verizon Wireless 4G LTE network.

From: Matt Trammell

Sent: Sunday, October 11, 2015 5:46 PM

To: Wade Smith

Subject: Leadership Density Inventory

Appendix C: Affective Commitment Instrument Approval

Appendix C: Affective Commitment Instrument Approval

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **InnoVerify** <no-reply@innoverify.com>

Date: Sat, Oct 17, 2015 at 8:45 AM

Subject: TCM Employee Commitment Survey - File Download is now Available!

To: [xx](#)

Hello John,

Thank you for your purchase of TCM Academic License. You may log in to download the product at this URL: <https://innoverify.com/store/Download/?pid=54dcf78c2007a>

Log in using your email address above. Your access password has been set to: XXXXXX

Please save this message, or the URL for future reference.

Regards,

TCM Employee Commitment Survey

Appendix D: Informed Consent

Appendix D: Informed Consent

Welcome to my survey.

Informed Consent:

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is important. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible. These questions concern the relationship between teacher leadership and teacher commitment to the school.

The purpose of this survey is to measure the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher affective commitment to the school.

I do not anticipate taking this survey will contain any risk or inconvenience to you. Your responses will be shared directly with me and neither your fellow teachers nor administrators will have access to your responses. Further, your participation is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Please see the [privacy policy](#) and [security statement](#) SurveyMonkey provides, should you have any concerns.

All information collected will be used only for my research and will be kept confidential. There will no connection to you specifically in the results or in the future publication of the results. Once the study is completed, I would be happy to share the results with you if you desire. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact me at:

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX](#)

By clicking Next, you are verifying that you have read the explanation of the study, and that you agree to participate. You also understand that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

Appendix E: Leadership Commitment Survey

Appendix E: Leadership Commitment Survey

Leadership and Commitment Survey

1. In this school the principal guides instructional decisions much like a conductor guides and orchestra...
 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
2. In this school the principal willingly allows and encourages teachers to assume leadership roles...
 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
3. In this school teachers assume many leadership roles...
 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
4. In this school the principal encourages experimentation and innovation in regards to teaching and learning...
 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
5. In this school diverse solutions to problems are actively solicited by the principal...
 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
6. In this school teachers willingly take on leadership roles as they arise...
 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
7. In this school active experimentation is encouraged in the pursuit of school goals...
 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always

8. In this school students voluntarily assume leadership roles when they arise...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
9. In this school students readily volunteer their experience and knowledge with the class...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
10. In this school teachers encourage students to share their knowledge with other students in the class...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
11. In this school students volunteer to help each other...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
12. In this school teachers implement cross curricular activities...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
13. In this school teachers recognize the contributions of other teachers to the overall accomplishment of school goals...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
14. In this school a tight chain of command is followed...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
15. In this school students regularly engage in mastery demonstrations of acquired knowledge...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
16. In this school teachers regularly share effective instructional strategies...
- 1: Never 2 3 4: Sometimes 5 6 7: Always
17. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
- Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly disagree Undecided Slightly agree Agree Strongly agree

18. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly disagree Undecided Slightly agree Agree Strongly agree

19. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. (R)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly disagree Undecided Slightly agree Agree Strongly agree

20. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. (R)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly disagree Undecided Slightly agree Agree Strongly agree

21. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. (R)

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly disagree Undecided Slightly agree Agree Strongly agree

22. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly disagree Undecided Slightly agree Agree Strongly agree